

New York Coastal Resilience Law and Policy Fellows Assemble Resources to Help Communities

Coastal communities are exposed to a host of unique natural, ecological, and man-made concerns which impact their shorelines, economies, and residents. Development and redevelopment can be challenging in these areas with climate change-given sea level rise, extreme storms and precipitation, and other natural stressors.

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) received two Legal Capacity Building grants from the National Sea Grant Law Center to explore the creation of a New York Coastal

Resilience Law and Policy Program. For the first grant, NYSG interviewed law school professors and local governments to assess needs that such a potential program could serve. At a subsequent workshop, the participating law school professors and NYSG Extension professionals reviewed the findings, brainstormed options to create a Law and Policy Program, and determined that NYSG should apply for a second grant to hold a Summer Fellowship program. This mutually-beneficial collaboration among NYSG, University at Buffalo School of Law, Pace University School of Law, and the City University of New York School of Law would create tools for communities and provide law students with real-world policy experience.

During the summer of 2020, three law fellows, one from each participating university, worked with NYSG Extension specialists on a project specific to their geography and local community needs. The results included a white paper and ArcGIS story maps (www.nyseagrant.org/lawfellowships):

- 1) *Planning for Climate Change Where You Live: A Guide for Local Governments and Community Members on the Hudson River* (Emma Campbell),
- 2) *The Lower Scajaquada Creek: Empowering Communities Through Historical and Legal Analysis* (Nicholas Pistory), and
- 3) *Carnasie Resilient: Navigating Resiliency on Brooklyn's Jamaica Bay* (Connor Lie-Spahn).



L to R: 2020 NYSG Coastal Resilience Law and Policy Fellows: Connor Lie-Spahn, Emma A. Campbell, Nicholas Pistory.

"I plan to use my background in geology, sociology, and environmental law to have a positive impact on the world. I learned a lot working with New York Sea Grant, including how to engage with community members and community groups."
— Nicholas Pistory, University at Buffalo law student, 2020 NYSG Coastal Resilience Law and Policy Fellow

This new partnership created a fellowship program that provided law students with an opportunity to apply legal skills while developing resources needed by local communities in three distinct areas of New York State.

Project Partners:

- City University of New York School of Law
- Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University
- University at Buffalo School of Law
- Funding: National Sea Grant Law Center

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Resilient New York Communities and Economies.

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.
Contact: New York Sea Grant Extension, 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; www.nyseagrant.org.

Project summary was written by Associate Director Katherine Bunting-Howarth, Ph.D., J.D., 607-255-2832, keb264@cornell.edu.