



New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

New York State has 3,400 miles of diverse coastline and is the only state in the U.S. bordering both the Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean. More than 85% of NY's population lives in a coastal region.



New York Sea Grant regional offices provide innovative research, technical assistance, and outreach on such issues as water quality, coastal resilience, marine & freshwater fisheries, invasive species, algal blooms, aquaculture & seafood, coastal literacy, and shoreline community development.

New York Sea Grant
112 Rice Hall, Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
www.nyseagrant.org

NYSG Focus Area
for this project summary:

Resilient New York
Communities & Economies

Written by
Great Lakes Outreach Coordinator
Megan Cochran
716-279-2490
mk2236@cornell.edu

January 2025

NYSG Administers Small Grants Funding to Empower Local Plan Implementation

Small grants projects converted eight local community plans into action, utilizing ecosystem-based management principles to advance NY's Great Lakes Action Agenda.

Communities across New York's Great Lakes region invest significant time and resources into developing plans, such as Watershed Management Plans and Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans, which outline critical strategies for environmental protection and sustainable development. The transition from planning to implementation, however, often stalls due to funding and resource gaps.

The New York Great Lakes Basin (NYGLB) Small Grants Program, administered by New York Sea Grant (NYSG), bridges these gaps by empowering communities to implement actions specifically identified within their community-based plans, addressing local priorities while supporting the goals of the Great Lakes Action Agenda. In 2023, the NYGLB Small Grants Program prioritized projects that directly advanced locally supported plans and aligned with ecosystem-based management principles that integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations. NYSG facilitated funding to eight projects, totaling \$388,289 in NYGLB small grants. The initiatives tackled issues ranging from sediment transport, watershed regulation review, and shoreline resilience to community education about water quality, and digital outreach. Grantees included municipalities, environmental organizations, and academic institutions, locally working collaboratively to translate planning into impactful action.

By fall 2024, all eight projects were successfully completed, delivering tangible benefits to local ecosystems, economies, and communities from Lake Erie and western New York to the Lake Ontario and Finger Lakes regions and the watershed of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Project outcomes included restored habitats, improved water quality and community resilience, and strengthened community partnerships. These efforts illustrate the value of connecting local priorities with broader state-level goals, helping communities to take meaningful steps toward addressing shared environmental challenges.

For more information about these projects and previous funding rounds, visit <https://nyseagrant.org/glsmallgrants>.

Project Partners/Funders:

- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Funding: New York State Environmental Protection Fund under the authority of the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Act

New York Sea Grant: Bringing Science to the Shore Since 1971



Before and after shoreline restoration work completed by Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper (BNW) at Ellicott Island Park. Photos: BNW