



# Resilience Roundup

September 28, 2015

*A service of the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA)*

## CIRCA in the News

- September 14, 2015 - *Senator Murphy joins with marina owners in supporting dredging plan, The Day New London*

## Local and State News Clips

- September 23, 2015 - *Climate change costing local homeowners; cities prepare for future, WTNH*
- September 21, 2015 - *New London meeting to talk about flood preparedness, WTNH*
- September 15, 2015 - *Flood Risk Studied In Plainville As Fed Implements Rate Hikes, Hartford Courant*
- September 14, 2015 - *Corps' dredging plan for Sound is sound, The Day New London*

## National News Clips

- September 22, 2015 - *Bracing for the Storms, Huffington Post*
- September 21, 2015 - *Floods may increase 300-fold on Atlantic, Gulf Coasts, CBS News*
- September 17, 2015 - *The Role Of Climate Change In Utah And Arizona's Deadly Floods, Huffington Post*
- September 16, 2015 - *Feds urge states to prep for climate change during upgrades, Energy & Environment News*
- September 16, 2015 - *FEMA Extends Deadline to Refile Hurricane Sandy Insurance Claims, NY Times*
- September 15, 2015 - *Arctic sea ice is 'far from recovering,' just hit its fourth-lowest level on record, Washington Post*

## Announcements

- September 28, 2015 - Informational webinar on CIRCA Municipal Resilience Grant Program. Slides [posted](#).
- September 24, 2015 - Video case study on Guilford, CT resilience plan [released](#) by The Council of State Governments/Eastern Regional Conference
- October 15, 2015 - [CIRCA Municipal Resilience Grant program](#) applications due. Up to \$100K
- October 21, 2015 - Connecticut Association of Flood Managers 2nd Annual Conference. [Registration Open](#)
- November 19, 2015 - Rockfall Foundation Environmental Grants Applications Due
- December 1- 2, 2015 - [Registration Now Open!](#) Living Shorelines: 1st National Technology Transfer Meeting and Regional Workshops, Hartford, CT. Sponsored by CIRCA and Restore America's Estuaries

## CIRCA in the News

[September 14, 2015 - Senator Murphy joins with marina owners in supporting dredging plan, The Day New London](#)

Groton - Agreeing that Long Island Sound's maritime economy is at stake, Sen. Chris Murphy heard from about 30 marina owners and state officials Monday concerned that opposition in New York state could derail a plan for handling dredge spoils from Long Island Sound for the next 30 years.

"We will perish as a shoreline economy" without offshore dump sites for the silt and sand that accumulates in harbors, navigation channels and marinas, Murphy told the group, meeting at the University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus. Without the ability to dredge periodically, he said, 15 to 20 percent of the state's navigation channels, marinas and harbors would become too shallow for boats to use in the coming decades.

Steve Karlson, representative of the owners of the Pine Island Marina in Groton and two others on Long Island Sound, spoke for other members of the Connecticut Marine Trades Association at the meeting in stressing that dredging is essential to maintaining a viable business.

"We need to dredge 16,000 cubic yards. We're losing slips and customers," he said, referring to silting at the Pine Island Marina that intensified after Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy.

The roundtable meeting was called by Murphy in advance of two public hearings this week on the dredge plan released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month. The first hearing will take place at the Hotel Indigo in Riverhead, N.Y., on Tuesday, and the second on Thursday at the Omni New Haven Hotel. Registration for both sessions will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the hearings at 6 p.m. Four hearings have already taken place.

The plan calls for keeping offshore dredge disposal sites in New Haven and western Long Island Sound open, but also recommends eight other sites that could receive the material, depending on the particular project. In the eastern Sound, disposal sites at Comfield Shoals off Old Saybrook and near New London and Fishers Island are slated to close in December 2016. A separate study is underway to find new sites in the eastern Sound for future use. The plan estimates that about 52.7 million cubic yards of material will need to be dredged from the Connecticut and New York sides of the Sound over the next three decades.

The Army Corps is accepting public comment through Oct. 16. Mark Habel, chief of the navigation section, engineering/planning at the Army Corps, told those at the meeting that about 29 percent of the dredged material is suitable for reuse to rebuild beaches, marshes and islands. About 6 percent is contaminated and cannot be disposed of in open waters. The remaining 65 percent is "too silty" for reuse and must be disposed of elsewhere.

Habel said the Army Corps has received 260 letters thus far opposing the plan and a dozen in favor. Much of the opposition is coming from environmental groups and individuals in New York state who argue that the dredge material is polluting the Sound and should be reused.

"We know we have a fight ahead," Murphy said, urging those at the roundtable and others who support the dredge plan to write letters to the Army Corps and attend the upcoming hearings.

Among the 12 letters in favor is one signed by all seven members of Connecticut's congressional delegation. State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Rob Klee also supports it.

Christian McGugan, owner of Gwenmor Marina and Gwenmor Contracting in Mystic, said opponents of the plan are making "baseless claims" about the environmental harm done by dredge spoils.

Brian Thompson, director of the Office of Long Island Sound Programs for DEEP, emphasized that dredge materials are tested before a decision is made about where they will be put.

"If it's material that's not suitable for offshore water disposal, it doesn't go there," he said. He added that DEEP "promotes reuse whenever we can," referring to a project that placed 40,000 cubic yards of dredge material at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

Marine Sciences Professor James O'Donnell, executive director of the Connecticut Institute for

Resilience & Climate Adaptation, suggested that Connecticut should emphasize to officials at the Army Corps and in New York that it is "actively looking to reduce the amount" of material dumped at offshore sites through reuse.

Bob Ross, executive director of the state Office of Military Affairs, said having unified support in Connecticut will be key to getting the plan passed. After the comment period ends, the Army Corps will craft a final rule by December. In January the Environmental Protection Agency would issue a regulation that would become final by spring, Habel said, meaning the new rules would be effect for the 2016-17 dredging season.

Ross said maintaining the availability of dredge disposal sites is particularly important for the Naval Submarine Base and Electric Boat in Groton. Without disposal sites, the cost of maintaining these facilities could becoming prohibitively expensive, he said.

## Local and State News Clips

### [September 23, 2015 - Climate change costing local homeowners: cities prepare for future. WTNH](#)

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (WTNH) - FEMA flood maps typically every five years, but after the one-two punch of Irene and Sandy, FEMA released two maps in two years, adding new areas to their maps that were never in a flood zone before.

"Everything costs a ton of money," said Michael Granoff of New Haven. "It's unbelievable how insurance companies have our hands tied."

Granoff owns a three family house on Brownell Street in New Haven. He said in 90 years, the house has never flooded. But, seemingly overnight, his flood insurance bill skyrocketed from \$2,700 a year, to over \$4,000.

"Insurance rate went up 30 percent from last year," said Granoff.

His rates show the effects of climate change. FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers released maps showing potential flooding during a storm like Sandy. Parts of New Haven are included that never were before and the city is now having to prepare for the effects.

"Whenever we do a project, we look at effects of sea level and climate change," said New Haven City Engineer Giovanni Zinn.

Work just finished on a seawall at one of the storm water outfalls in the city. It's built three feet higher than the old one.

"That's something we did, not only to protect the area better, but to address sea level rise and higher water levels that will be more frequent in the future," said Zinn.

During his speech on the lawn of the White House Wednesday, Pope Francis focused heavily on climate change. Cities on shorelines across the globe are seeing the effects, and some are planning for the future.

"Our mayor has tasked us with planning for the future responsibly and that has to take into account sea level and climate change," said Zinn.

New Haven is working to improve what's called the Community Rating System. A higher score could result in lower insurance premiums for residents.

### [September 21, 2015 -- New London meeting to talk about flood preparedness. WTNH](#)

NEW LONDON, Conn. (WTNH)-Connecticut did not get a lot of rain this summer, but just one day of rain caused flash floods in some areas. One of those areas was Bank Street in New London.

The water was hip-deep in some places there, leaving cars stranded in the middle of the road. It also poured into a few restaurants, leaving up to a foot and a half of water in store basements, and a whole lot of mess to clean up.

It even warped the gym floor at the local high school because a drain pipe was clogging underneath it.

On Monday, the city council's public works committee is meeting, and on the agenda is flood analysis. Some say the city's pumping station should have prevented the whole mess.

News 8 spoke with the interim public works director, who says the three pumps powered by 190-horse power diesel engines were all turned on before the first raindrop fell.

"We made sure all three pumps were working, and fired them up. So when the rains came, we were running and it did drain the water off that whole water shed," said interim Public Works Director Brian Sear. "Bank Street did flood for a short while but it wasn't a stagnant situation it was actively pumped."

Sear told News8 that as soon as the rain ended, the pumps cleared the water from the streets pretty quickly.

He said with more than two inches of rain falling an hour, the intensity was like a 75 to 100 year event.

#### [September 15, 2015 Flood Risk Studied In Plainville As Fed Implements Rate Hikes, Hartford Courant](#)

PLAINVILLE - Dredging a bend of the Pequabuck River is one suggestion offered by an engineering firm that studied chronic flooding along the Farmington River tributary.

The Pequabuck starts in Plymouth, flows through town centers in Bristol and Plainville, and converges with the Farmington River in Farmington.

The flood mitigation report proposes ways to reduce flood damage, but concluded that there is no spot along the river to construct a dam and end the flooding entirely. The report was compiled by AECOM, a technical engineering firm that has offices in Rocky Hill and Groton.

As the federal government implements major reforms to the National Flood Insurance Program - which may result in significantly higher flood insurance premiums - watershed communities are trying to determine what they can do to lessen the danger of flooding and keep costs down.

The study will also help towns along the Pequabuck determine how the 100-year flood zone may have changed in recent years because of development and shifts in river conditions.

The area affected by 100-year floods - those are floods so widespread that they only occur once a century - is the benchmark used by lenders to judge if a property owner needs flood insurance. The maps used to determine the zones are produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA is updating its floodplain maps nationwide.

"There is no magic bullet but there are steps to consider to lessen flood damage," said Mark DeVoe, the town planner. The study found that major structural projects - dams - "are not engineering-feasible and cost-effective."

The study used flood data from Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011 and found the 100-year floodplain in Plainville has shifted, covering 510 acres instead of the 523 in the current FEMA map. But the 510 acres includes more buildings - 92 instead of the 76 in the current map.

DeVoe said town staff is preparing a report to the council on steps the town could consider.

The AECOM report has three "priority projects" for the Pequabuck section in Plainville.

The most expensive is underway - the voluntary acquisition by the town of flood-prone properties in the Robert Street Extension and Forestville Avenue areas. So far, the town has purchased 13 homes. The project costs \$4.4 million, with 25 percent paid by the town.

The homes are being torn down and the land will remain undeveloped. The town began the voluntary program in 2013, part of a federal program to reduce recurring flooding costs.

The priority list also includes dredging 4,000 cubic yards from the river at Railroad Bridge, which would deepen the channel, lower the flood risk, and remove the police station and eight other nearby buildings from the 100-year floodplain. The dredging would cost \$600,000.

The third suggestion is a flood-proofing program for commercial and industrial buildings in the floodplain. Properties could be inspected and plans made for each site outlining steps to reduce flood damage and increase eligibility for federal post-flooding grants. The cost would be \$25,000 for each site reviewed.

The federal government implemented the National Flood Insurance Program in 1968 to provide flood insurance to property owners in flood-prone areas. The NFIP Reform Act of 2012 requires the NFIP to raise rates to "reflect true flood risk," according to FEMA. The changes will mean as much as a 25 percent per year increase in flood insurance premiums until the rate more accurately matches the risk.

#### [September 14, 2015 - Corps' dredging plan for Sound is sound, The Day New London](#)

The most environmentally sensitive alternative to protect Long Island Sound would be not dredging any material from its harbors, coves and navigation channels. That, however, is not a viable choice, not if residents of Connecticut and New York want to enjoy the recreational and economic opportunities the magnificent waterway provides.

The challenge, then, is to produce a plan for dredging that best balances environmental protection and engineering needs. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has done just that in producing a draft plan that considers land-based alternatives for using dredged material and seeks to diffuse the impact of material that must be dumped to the bottom of the Sound.

Dredging is not an attention-grabbing policy topic, but it sure is important. The "Draft Dredged Material Management Plan" and accompanying environmental impact statement estimate that 52.7 million cubic yards of silt and sand must be removed to keep marine navigation channels in the Sound open. Without this work, an economic analysis concludes that the region will see a 15 percent drop in navigation-dependent economic activity and miss the opportunity to better utilize Connecticut's deep-water ports.

All of which is why the draft is attracting widespread support. On Monday, Town of Groton Mayor Rita Schmidt, Waterford First Selectman Dan Steward and Stonington First Selectman George Crouse joined Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., at the Avery Point Campus of the University of Connecticut in a show of support for the dredging plan. Also in attendance were state Reps. Devin R. Carney of the 23rd District and Aundre Bumgardner of the 41st, both Republicans.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, in a Sept. 6 guest commentary published by The Day, wrote that "revitalizing our ports ... will be contingent on a continued effort to maintain our channels and harbors properly." Because the dredging plan would do that, "It deserves support and quick approval," wrote the congressman.

The state's entire Washington delegation - two senators and five congressmen - sent a letter in support of the plan to the Army Corps. Also backing the dredging blueprint is Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Rob Klee. He said the plan would provide "practical, cost-effective, and environmentally acceptable management alternatives ... (to) meet the needs of our ports and harbors."

None of this means the plan will be accepted without criticism or controversy.

Many environmental activists had hoped for more reuse of dredged materials - including marsh restoration and rebuilding and re-nourishing beaches - and little or no dumping of dredged soils into the Sound. Instead, the plan calls for only moderate reuse, with the focus remaining on traditional open-water dumping.

The Army Corps concluded that because much of the material is too fine, has pollutants or is laden with salt water, it is not suitable for land-based uses. Trying to convert more of the spoils for reuse would prove "prohibitively expensive and logistically difficult," according to Corps' engineers.

To minimize any adverse results from dumping, the Army Corps plan points to 10 potential disposal sites that can be matched with 60 dredging projects. The intent is to match disposal locations with individual dredging projects to find the options that are the least costly and best environmentally. Locally, the Cornfield Shoals disposal site off Old Saybrook and the New London disposal site near Fishers Island would close by the end of next year.

An extensive review and hearing process continues, including a hearing Thursday at the Omni New Haven Hotel, 155 Temple St, New Haven. The hearings begin at 6 p.m. with registration at 5:30.

Connecticut launched its new Port Authority on July 1. The authority's mission is to reverse a decline in freighter utilization of the deep-water ports in New London, New Haven and Bridgeport. It cannot succeed without a plan that properly maintains Connecticut channels and harbors. According to the draft management plan, economic activities utilizing the Sound contribute more than \$9 billion in economic output, supporting 55,000 jobs.

While adjustments to the proposal will be part of the process, the draft plan protects the Sound as an economic asset without exploiting it environmentally.

## National News Clips

### [September 22, 2015 - Bracing for the Storms. Huffington Post](#)

Ten years ago this week, Hurricane Rita – the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the Gulf of Mexico – made landfall on the Gulf Coast, wreaking terrible destruction across the entire Louisiana coast and well into Texas. Rita's storm surge exceeded 18 feet, and the storm caused approximately \$12 billion in damage. Rita made landfall less than a month after Hurricane Katrina had devastated the Gulf Coast, killing more than 1,200 people and causing a staggering \$108 billion dollars in damage.

Half the world's human population lives within about 40 miles of a coastline. And of course, the world's coasts also harbor enormously productive natural ecosystems. For many of us, life on land is also life at the edge of land.

And so, in an age of sea-level rise, increasingly stronger storms, and densely populated coastlines, a very big, very important question as we consider Sustainable Development Goal 15 is how we will protect people, reverse loss and degradation of coastal land, and preserve biodiversity in ecosystems on the edge?

Today, coastal land is disappearing all over the world, damaging ecosystems and economies and putting people's lives at risk. One of the starkest examples is right here in the United States, along the coast of Louisiana.

Since the 1930s, Louisiana has lost nearly 1,900 square miles of land. That's enough land to make up the entire state of Delaware. Rich, productive forests – once life-saving rest stops for millions of birds that fly nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico twice each year – are gone. Coastal prairies and wetlands are gone. Islands are gone. And as the land disappears, the people of the Gulf Coast become more and more vulnerable to the sea. Sixty miles of wetlands can reduce the height of a storm surge by an estimated 20 feet. But if the land is gone, the water roars in.

Several factors are driving the collapse of Louisiana's coast, from saltwater intrusion and erosion caused by the digging of oil and gas canals to the leveeing of the Mississippi River, which has cut off land-building sediment from the river's vast delta in southern Louisiana. Without the replenishing sediment, Louisiana's soft, young soils sink inexorably into the sea.

The dramatic collapse of land across the region contributed directly to the economic damages and human suffering caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. And in something of a vicious cycle, the hurricanes also further damaged Louisiana's fragile land, leaving it even more vulnerable.

For example, Audubon's oldest and largest wildlife sanctuary is the Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary in southwest Louisiana. Our sanctuary lost hundreds of acres of marsh because of Hurricane Rita, and many thousands of additional acres were lost across the rest of southwestern Louisiana. The salty storm surge killed vegetation, and subsequent wind and storms simply rolled it up like carpet, leaving open water behind.

Rainey Sanctuary provides vital migratory rest stops and nesting grounds for more than 200 species of birds, including threatened species like Whooping Cranes, Mottled Ducks, Reddish Egrets, King Rails, Piping Plovers, Least Terns and others. It also buffers inland human communities from storms like Rita.

So we knew giving up on Rainey was not an option. In the aftermath of Rita, we set out to rebuild damaged habitat within the sanctuary and to execute an ambitious plan to help address Louisiana's land-loss crisis for the good of birds and people.

We turned Rainey into a living laboratory to help develop science and best practices for restoring coastal wetlands. Eighty-five percent of land in Louisiana's 10-million-acre coastal zone is privately owned, so restoring the coast depends in no small part on solutions that other landowners can apply to their own properties. We developed a two-pronged approach:

1. We partnered with our neighbors and the regional nonprofit Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana to repair and protect one of the worst-damaged areas with a "terracing" strategy that built tiered earthen barriers and planted native marsh grasses to stop loss of land and let it slowly begin to heal.

2. We also began actually building land at Rainey with the John James mini-dredge. The dredge strategically deposits sediment to build land over time. With the support of Louisiana State University, the team planted native marsh grasses to strengthen this new land and help it take root. The dredge has been so successful that it has attracted new partners, new funding, and new technology, and it is providing a model for other landowners to address land loss on their own properties.

We also helped start the Restore the Mississippi River Delta Coalition to advance large-scale, science-based coastal restoration in Louisiana.

Changing course in Louisiana will require unprecedented cooperation among federal, state, and local partners, industry, and individual landowners. Louisiana's visionary 50-year master plan charts a course.

Louisiana is a model for others around the world who face the challenges of ensuring sustainable human use and protecting biodiversity in terrestrial ecosystems along the world's coastlines. We must rely on shared knowledge, strategic partnerships, and innovation to build a strong, sustainable future for coastal communities worldwide.

[September 21, 2015 - Floods may increase 300-fold on Atlantic, Gulf Coasts, CBS News](#)

A truck drives down a flooded street on October 30, 2012, in Little Ferry, New Jersey, after Hurricane Sandy left much of the region flooded and without power.

Sea-level rise along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts combined with more frequent and violent storms could increase flooding from the Northeast to Texas by several-hundredfold, according to a new study out Monday.

Over the past century, the East Coast has seen sea-level rise far above the 8-inch global average - up to a foot in much of the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, including New York City. It is expected to increase as much as four feet by 2100, mostly due to the melting ice sheets as well as the expansion of the seawater as the oceans warm.

At the same time, several studies have suggest the North Atlantic could see more intense storms, since warmer warmers contain more energy.

"When you look at hazards separately, it's bad enough, but when you consider the joint effects of two hazards together, you can get some surprises," said Radley Horton, a climate scientist at Columbia University's Earth

Institute and study coauthor. "Sometimes, 1 plus 1 can equal 3."

The two factors have in the past mostly been considered independently. But this study, published in Nature Climate Change Monday, scientists from Columbia, Princeton, Rutgers and several other institutions for the first time looked at them together.

The authors analyzed 15 climate models at five locations: Atlantic City, N.J.; Charleston, S.C.; Key West, Fla.; Pensacola, Fla.; and Galveston, Tex. Among the things they looked at was the probability that the two factors could act together to lethal effect. Five models simulated both high local sea-level rises and increases in the strongest storms.

The authors also looked at the extent of the flooding if world leaders, meeting in Paris later this year, take action to cut emissions to stem global warming or if nothing is done. Frustratingly, the flooding is projected to increase even if the world works to cut emissions and keep temperatures from rising 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over what they were in preindustrial times.

The reduced-emissions calculations suggest a four- to 75-fold increase in the flood index - that is, the combined heights and durations of expected floods - across the five locations. If no action is taken, the flood index might go up 35 to 350 times.

"It's an aggregate number over a big area - not a specific prediction for any one place," said lead author Christopher Little of Atmospheric and Environmental Research, a company that performs weather and climate research, and related risk assessments. "But these projections help lay the groundwork for more specific research that will be valuable for adapting to climate change."

### [September 17, 2015 - The Role Of Climate Change In Utah And Arizona's Deadly Floods. Huffington Post](#)

Climate change isn't what's causing the deadly flash floods in Utah and Arizona this week, but it's part of what's making them so catastrophic, one expert warned.

As of Wednesday evening, at least 18 people have been killed by intense flooding near the Arizona-Utah border that began Monday, while others remain missing, including 6-year-old Tyson Lucas Black.

Flooding that powerful is an example of how the warmer atmosphere turns ordinary weather events into more extreme ones, Kevin Trenberth, a senior scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, told The Huffington Post.

"The climate change aspect of this is that the atmosphere is warmer, and for every 1 degree Fahrenheit increase in temperature, the atmosphere can hold about 4 percent more moisture," he explained.

"When the right weather system comes along," such as the storm above Utah and Arizona, Trenberth said, "that weather system can be thought of as a device for reaching out - quite a ways at times - and grabbing the available moisture and bringing it in and dumping it down."

"Climate change is not the cause, but it is - I'm tempted to say - a minor contributor," he added. "Even that minor contribution can be that straw that broke the camel's back."

Prolonged drought in Utah and Arizona, which are facing moderate to severe dryness in about 90 percent of each state, is also partly responsible for the water buildup, Trenberth explained.

"In the case of a drought, the ground is often not receptive to moisture," he said, explaining that lighter, more frequent rains would be absorbed more easily. "Not much of it soaks in, and it all tends to accumulate, and the next thing you know, you've got a flood on your hands."

Such extreme floods are occurring more frequently than in previous decades, Trenberth said, pointing to flooding in Japan this week that killed at least seven people and flooding in Texas and Oklahoma in May that killed at least 21 people.

Michael Mann, a climate scientist and director of Penn State's Earth System Science Center, echoed Trenberth's view that climate change exacerbates these weather events when he spoke to HuffPost in May about the Texas floods.

"There are many factors that came together here -- an incipient El Niño event, and the vagaries of weather," he said. "But human-caused climate change is, in many cases, the straw that broke the camel's back, that extra fuel that takes what would have been a really bad flood and turns [it] into a catastrophic flood."

### [September 16, 2015 - FEMA Extends Deadline to Refile Hurricane Sandy Insurance Claims, NY Times](#)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said on Wednesday that it would extend by another month the deadline for homeowners to request a reopening of their flood insurance claims from Hurricane Sandy.

In May, the agency had invited flood insurance policyholders to refile their claims amid mounting pressure from elected officials and victims of Hurricane Sandy who had complained that their payouts had been too low, and that their claims had been tainted by possible improprieties relating to engineering reports that the insurance companies relied upon.

Revelations that engineers assessing flood damage for insurance companies altered some of their reports, leading to lower insurance payouts, were documented by The New York Times and "60 Minutes," among other news organizations. At least one criminal investigation, started by the New York State attorney general, Eric T. Schneiderman, is now underway.

For months, the number of policyholders who had requested fresh reviews of their cases has been disappointingly low to many advocates and politicians, who said many residents were simply too beaten down by the prospect of more government bureaucracy.

Some residents also hesitated because they worried that they might, under federal rules, have to pay back some of the relief that they had already received.

But on Wednesday, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that it would ease its rules, as urged by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York, among others, so that any additional flood insurance payments, up to \$20,000, would not be treated as "duplicative." As a result, FEMA said it would extend the deadline for people to reopen their cases to Oct. 15.

"We hope by extending the deadline we are addressing any remaining concerns some may have about entering the claims review process," said Roy E. Wright, the agency's deputy associate administrator for insurance and mitigation. "FEMA is dead set on restoring trust in this important program, and no one should be discouraged from having their claim reviewed."

So far, almost 14,000 people - only about 10 percent of eligible homeowners - have asked FEMA to reopen their cases. Among the 715 refiled cases that have been reviewed so far, the agency has offered homeowners an additional \$16,000, on average, with a high payment of almost \$104,000 and a low of \$130.96.

[September 16, 2015 - Feds urge states to prep for climate change during upgrades. Energy & Environment News](#)

States should take advantage of major upgrades to roads, bridges and transit systems to better prepare for the effects of climate change, a senior Federal Highway Administration official said this morning.

"When you've got a chance to construct something, reconstruct something, that's the time you need to look at how to ... take things like climate change resiliency, adaptation into consideration," said Gloria Shepherd, the agency's associate administrator for planning, environment and realty. When states object that the price is too high, Shepherd said her response is, "You're going to pay for it now or you're going to pay for it later."

She was among the leadoff speakers at what's being billed as the first international conference on surface transportation resilience to climate change and extreme weather.

The event, whose sponsors include the highway administration and the Federal Transit Administration, is organized by the Transportation Research Board, a part of the National Academy of Sciences. Other speakers come from as far afield as Denmark and Pakistan.

Shepherd, whose office has a Web page dedicated to climate adaptation, also stressed the importance of working with states that have the lead on roadbuilding and maintenance. In parts of the country where mention of climate change remains taboo, Shepherd said, the issue can be framed in terms of the impact on paving materials and long-term maintenance.

"I don't care what we call it," she said, "as long as we do something about it."

[September 15, 2015 - Arctic sea ice is far from recovering. just hit its fourth-lowest level on record. Washington Post](#)

Arctic sea ice reached its annual minimum extent on Sept. 11, according to the Boulder, Color.-based National Snow and Ice Data Center - and only three years on record have seen a minimum ice extent that was lower than this one: 2007, 2011 and the current record-holder, 2012.

"The minimum ice extent was the fourth lowest in the satellite record, and reinforces the long-term downward trend in Arctic ice extent," the center said in a statement. The lowest extent this year, reached on September 11, was 1.7 million square miles. That's quite low, but still 394,000 square miles above the low extent that occurred Sept. 17, 2012, when ice only covered 1.31 million square miles at the top of the world.

"The nine lowest extents in the satellite era have all occurred in the last nine years," added NSIDC - yet another clear indicator that declining sea ice is very likely part of a trend tied to global climate change. Indeed, this year's low sea ice extent was nearly 700,000 square miles less than the average from 1981-2010. (Satellite records began in 1979.)

The center warned that this is a preliminary announcement - it is still possible that ice extent could drop further, though this is the "likely" minimum extent for 2015.

The amazing thing about this year, says Ted Scambos, who heads the NSIDC science team, is that it wasn't particularly extraordinary in an atmospheric sense - unlike 2012, when storms broke up a great deal of ice. And yet still, it was the fourth lowest extent on record. "It's showing us that the Arctic is truly evolving from a different state, and far from recovering, even relatively typical summers in the Arctic lead to relatively low sea ice extents," he says.

"The sea ice decline has accelerated since 1996," added NASA in a discussion of the annual low. The agency, which funds NSIDC, went even further in noting how low ice has plunged in recent years, noting that "The 10 lowest minimum extents in the satellite record have occurred in the last 11 years."

As the low was announced, NOAA's Environmental Visualization Laboratory released this stunning image, showing just how much less ice there is this year than the long term average:

(See image at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2015/09/15/arctic-sea-ice-just-hit-its-annual-low-and-it-was-the-fourth-lowest-on-record/>)

On Sept. 11, sea ice in the Arctic most likely reached its minimum extent for 2015. The minimum ice extent was the fourth lowest in the satellite record began in 1979, and continued the long-term downward trend in Arctic ice extent. This image shows the sea ice concentration data from the SSMI/S sensor on the DMSP weather satellite, operated by NOAA/NESDIS. A yellow line shows the historical ice edge (median) for Sept. 11. (NOAA)

The consequences of less sea ice in the Arctic are myriad, ranging from potentially better navigability through sea routes like the Northwest Passage (although recent research suggests that that remains quite challenging) to the loss of habitat for iconic organisms like walrus. Tens of thousands have clustered on the Alaskan coast this year until the sea ice starts to grow again.

"Dwindling sea ice is a stark reminder of the destruction climate change wages on our most vulnerable wildlife and communities," said Margaret Williams, managing director for Arctic programs at the World Wildlife Fund, in a statement. "Recent images of 35,000 walrus literally climbing onto Alaska's shores, paint a dramatic visual of our rapidly unraveling Arctic."

There are also increasingly prominent theories about how the melting Arctic may be influencing mid-latitude weather - perhaps through its effect on the northern hemisphere jet stream. "Having the white cap on the ocean essentially almost disappear for a few weeks in the summer, the fact that it nearly disappears, has to have an impact on atmospheric circulation, and therefore weather," says NSIDC's Scambos, although he says precisely how that is playing out remains debated.

Following the 2012 all-time sea ice low, there had appeared to be something of a rebound - while 2012 saw only 1.3 million square miles of sea ice extent, 2013 saw 1.95 and 2014 saw 1.94. So the drop back down to 1.7 million in 2015 is noteworthy in this respect. The fact that the 9 lowest extents have all occurred in the last 9 years, adds Scambos, "just tells you the Arctic isn't going to recover, is heading in another direction."

Scientists have long predicted that Arctic sea ice decline would be a key manifestation of a warming planet - and further, that it would be self-reinforcing, as less ice cover allows for more absorption of solar energy by the darker sea surface, trapping still more heat.

This is 2015's second time on the Arctic sea ice record books - and perhaps not its most significant entry. In February, the time of year when there is the most ice over the Arctic, there was nevertheless the lowest maximum extent of ice on record, according to NSIDC.

## Announcements

**September 28, 2015** - CIRCA Webinar for Municipal Resilience Grant Program. Slides [Posted](#)

CIRCA Director of Community Engagement, Rebecca French and Program Manager, Jessica LeClair hosted a webinar presentation on how to apply for the Municipal Resilience Grant Program. The presentation walked through the required application materials and process as well as providing an overview of climate impacts on Connecticut's municipalities. After the presentation, CIRCA staff were available to answer your questions.

**September 24, 2015** - Video case study on Guilford, CT resilience plan [released](#) by The Council of State Governments/Eastern Regional Conference.

*Confronting a New Reality Guilford, Connecticut: A Case Study in Building Resilience*

This 11-minute video case study documents efforts by officials in Guilford, Connecticut, together

with The Nature Conservancy, to develop a Community Coastal Resilience Plan. The video includes interviews with: state officials who were part of the Connecticut Shoreline Preservation Task Force, which conducted hearings in communities across the state to assess their level of preparedness to deal with future extreme storms; local officials and homeowners in Guilford; and the director of science at The Nature Conservancy.

**October 15, 2015** - [CIRCA Municipal Resilience Grants Program](#) applications due.

CIRCA is requesting grant proposals from municipal governments and councils of government for initiatives that advance resilience, including the creation of conceptual design, construction (demonstration projects or other) of structures, or the design of practices and policies that increase their resilience to climate change and severe weather. This program is focused on implementation. The CIRCA Executive Steering Committee has made up to \$100,000 in funds available to municipal governments and councils of government for the execution of resilience initiatives.

Project proposals should develop knowledge or experience that is transferable to multiple locations in Connecticut and have well-defined and measurable goals. Preferable projects will be implemented in no more than an 18-month time frame. Preference will also be given to those projects that leverage multiple funding sources and that involve collaboration with CIRCA to address priority areas identified in the program materials found here.

Eligible applicants are all Connecticut municipalities and councils of government. Partnerships are encouraged.

Proposal Deadline: October 15, 2015 by 4:00 PM.

**October 21, 2015** - [Registration Open](#). Connecticut Association of Flood Managers 2nd Annual Conference

Where: Water's Edge Resort and Spa, 1525 Boston Post Road, Westbrook, CT 06498

Time: 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

**November 19, 2015** - Rockfall Foundation Grants Program.

The Rockfall Foundation invites representatives of non-profit organizations, municipalities, and schools to apply for grants for projects that contribute to the general environmental education of the public, promote environmental planning, contribute to the preservation of the Connecticut River watershed, or fund an internship with a non-profit organization for an environmental project. For the 2015-2016 Grant Cycle, Rockfall will entertain grant applications for amounts ranging from \$500 to \$15,000. Proposals must have ties to Middlesex County in order to be considered. This includes projects or programs based in Middlesex County as well as applicants based in Middlesex County. Proposals that focus on the Connecticut River corridor or Long Island Sound will also be considered as long as there is a demonstrated impact on Middlesex County. Special consideration will be given to projects that impact youth (preschool through college) or are multi-generational.

The FY2015-16 guidelines and application form, as well as additional information about The Rockfall Foundation, are available on the Rockfall website: [www.rockfallfoundation.org](http://www.rockfallfoundation.org). The application deadline is 12:00 noon, Thursday, November 19, 2015; grant awards will be announced and funds distributed early in 2016.

Anyone with questions should contact Tony Marino, Interim Executive Director, at [tmario@rockfallfoundation.org](mailto:tmario@rockfallfoundation.org) or 860-347-0340.

**December 1- 2, 2015** - [Registration Now Open!](#) Living Shorelines: Sound Science, Innovative Approaches, Connected Community 1st National Technology Transfer Meeting and Regional Workshops

When: December 1-2 2015

Where: Hilton Hartford Hartford, CT

Restore America's Estuaries, in partnership with the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and

Climate Adaptation, is pleased to announce a first-of-its-kind living shorelines event! This Summit - Living Shorelines: Sound Science, Innovative Approaches, Connected Community - will feature nationally-relevant issues and discussions along with region-specific workshops.

Whether you call them "soft shorelines," "living shorelines," "soft armoring," or "soft stabilization projects," you belong at this gathering!

Follow on twitter @LSSummit2015

Contact Jeff Benoit - [jbenoit@estuaries.org](mailto:jbenoit@estuaries.org)

Any Questions? Contact Suzanne Simon - [ssimon@estuaries.org](mailto:ssimon@estuaries.org)

**The *Resilience Roundup* highlights [CIRCA's](#) presence in the news, provides links to recent local/state/national news articles related to resilience and adaptation, and announces upcoming events and seminars.**

**The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation's (CIRCA) mission is to increase the resilience and sustainability of vulnerable communities along Connecticut's coast and inland waterways to the growing impacts of climate change and extreme weather on the natural, built, and human environment. The institute is located at the University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus and includes faculty from across the university. CIRCA is a partnership between UConn and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). [circa.uconn.edu](http://circa.uconn.edu)**



CIRCA, UConn Avery Point Campus, 1080 Shennecossett Road, Groton, CT 06340

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [circa@uconn.edu](mailto:circa@uconn.edu) in collaboration with



Try it free today