



# Sustaining Champions of Climate Adaptation in Coastal Communities: A Northern New England Study

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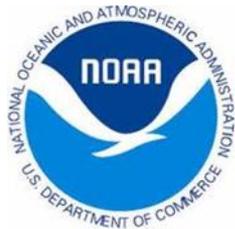
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**University of New Hampshire**  
Cooperative Extension

# NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup Partners

Federal    State    Regional    Municipal    Academic    Non-profit    Business



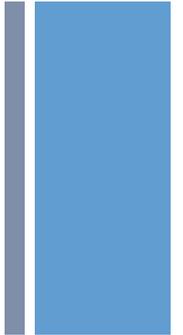
# + CAW Engages with Coastal Community Leaders through....

- Workshops and Forums
- Community Specific Projects

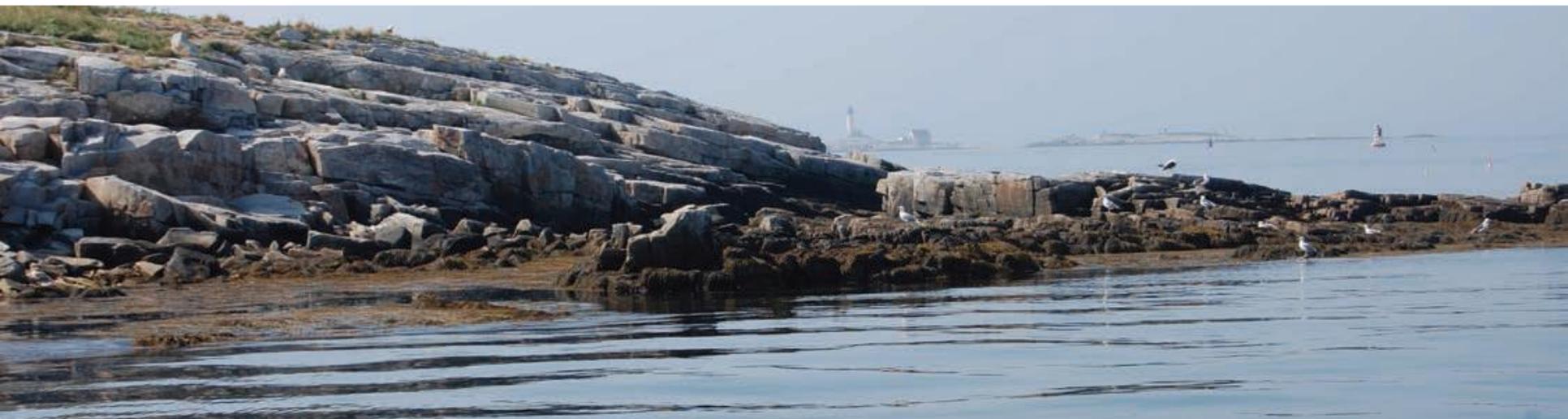




# Climate Adaptation Community Champion: Definition

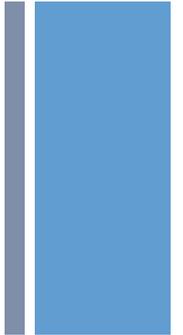


**An individual who promotes the adoption of climate adaptation strategies at the local level through direct (elected, appointed, or volunteer official) or indirect (volunteer or active community member) influence**





# Climate Adaptation Community Champions: Three Levels



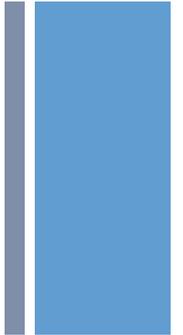
Policy champions can occur on **three** levels (Devlin-Foltz and Molinaro 2012)

- **Level I:** Educates self about the issue – a “potential champion”
- **Level II:** Educates others about the issue – a “new champion”
- **Level III:** Influences action and change through policy or other means – a “champion”





# Study Overview: Objective

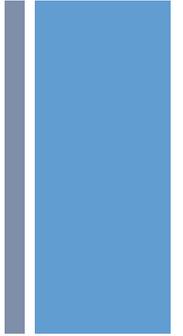


**Identify the role climate adaptation community champions play in adopting climate adaptation strategies in local coastal communities and understand how professional climate adaptation assistance providers can best support these champions.**





# Study Overview: Research Goals



1. Understand the role of local climate champions
2. Discover who the champions consider their allies
3. Identify major achievements and barriers in adopting climate adaptation strategies

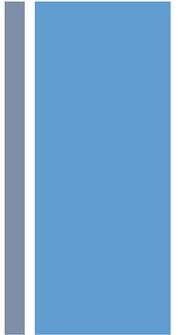
# + Communities represented:

- Amesbury, MA
- Hampton, NH
- Rye, NH
- Dover, NH
- Newburyport, MA
- Seabrook, NH
- Durham NH
- Newfields, NH
- York, ME
- Ellsworth, ME
- Portsmouth, NH
- Exeter, NH



+ Findings

# + **Finding 1:** Champions are most concerned about climate impacts on their economies, public safety, and critical infrastructure



- Sea-level rise
- Flooding
- Increased frequency of severe storms

*“Cost, public safety, public health, quality of life, desirability of location, being able to buy and sell homes- the benefits of adaptation occur on so many different levels.”*



## + **Finding 2:** Local adaptation projects may help create new champions

- **Finding 2.1:** Champions become educated about climate change issues through websites and workshops
- **Finding 2.2:** Champions educate their communities about climate change issues
- **Finding 2.3:** Many champions have added climate adaptation to their community's master plan



+ **Finding 3:** Most champions say public awareness is their largest achievement in climate adaptation efforts

*How did they gain public awareness?*

- Adaptation projects
- Town involvement
- Media





# + **Finding 5:** Champions need projects brought to their community and additional technical support

- Additional technical support for specific projects
  - GIS and mapping professionals
- Access to local data
  - Storm-surge data, storm-flood information, flood maps
- Opportunities to participate in specific projects
  - Projects with professional, technical, and grant support



**\*Connect champions with available resources\***

## + **Finding 6:** Champions want additional education and outreach opportunities for their communities

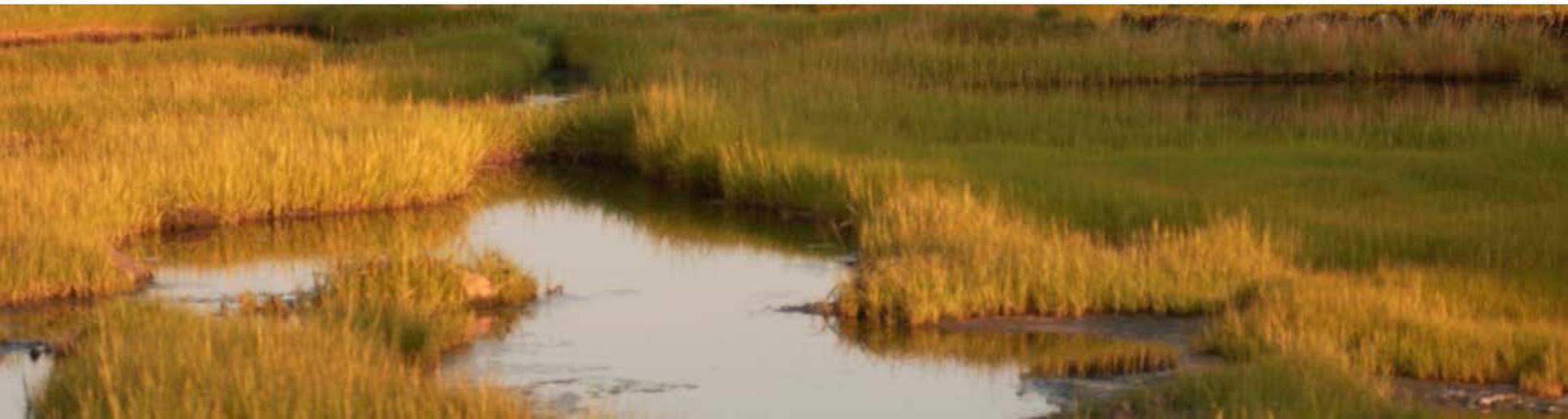
- Education is necessary in their community
  - Need to target the *general public*
- Facilitation for public forums



\*Continue workshops for a new audience\*

## + **Finding 7:** Champions could use additional support from grassroots organizations

- Smaller climate adaptation projects
- Volunteer- driven projects
  - Storm drain data collections



## + **Finding 8:** Champions need climate adaptation professionals to support their work

- Champions say that without their allies, the work they do would not be possible
  - Members of NHCWA
  - Rockingham and Strafford Regional Planning Commissions
  - UNH and UMaine



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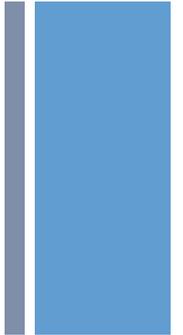
## Finding 9: Communities without planners need more support

*“We don’t have a town planner so that department is sort of rudderless boat in terms of looking ahead and planning for the eventualities to come”*





# What Champions Need



- Projects
- Public Education and Outreach
- Technical Support



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# Thank you!

