



New York Sea Grant responds to shoreline erosion during a pandemic by designing and implementing an online advisory service

NYSG Offers Virtual Shoreline Visits for Great Lakes Shoreline Erosion Management

Due to the novel Coronavirus pandemic in the United States in 2020, it was necessary to move to virtual methods of communication. New York Sea Grant (NYSG) designed a “Virtual Site Visit” process for New York shoreline property owners to request shoreline erosion consultations.

NYSG utilized a public-use geographic online survey (ArcGIS Survey123) to develop an online form for shoreline residents to report shoreline erosion issues and request assistance from professionals working in shoreline erosion management, shoreline construction, and state and local permitting. Using the form, residents can select their property location on a map, add a detailed description of their current erosion issues, upload photos of damage to shorelines and shore structures, and request assistance in finding shoreline erosion solutions.

As of December 2020, the Virtual Site Visit request form: (<http://www.nyseagrant.org/glcoastalvirtuallsitevisit>) and its associated public releases had resulted in 38 new inquiries from around New York State, including from property owners along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, as well as the Niagara River and the Finger Lakes.



The map shows Virtual Site Visit request locations (green dots) that included the Scriba, New York, property seen in the photo. Map: Google Earth; photo: Roy Widrig/NYSG

In an effort to provide New York’s Great Lakes residents with shoreline erosion consultation during an ongoing pandemic, NYSG developed the online form for residents to request and receive shoreline erosion assistance. The program resulted in an increased number of inquiries from shoreline residents and an increased geographic reach for NYSG. The form linked shoreline residents with shoreline professionals in the fields of geology, construction, and permitting in New York State.

Project Partners:

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

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 Great Lakes Coastal Processes & Hazards Specialist Roy Widrig, 315-312-3042, rlw294@cornell.edu.