



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.

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NYSG Focus Area
for this project summary:
Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development
in New York

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New York Sea Grant Trains Cornell Climate Stewards

NYSG-trained extension educators in turn train volunteer cohorts to lead projects that will increase climate resilience and adaptation capacity in their NY counties.



2024 Cornell Climate Stewards CCE educators cohort. Photo: Kayla Walsh/NYSG.

Barriers to climate change action must be addressed for communities to improve sustainability and resilience. A Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences feasibility study for climate change volunteer programs in the northeastern U.S. identified a lack of capacity and funds to start and manage local climate change projects. To address these needs, the Cornell Climate Stewards (CCS) program trains Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) educators, with roots and networks within their county communities, to train volunteers who then facilitate local projects that improve the capacity of local governments and municipalities to begin addressing local needs.

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) worked with CCE to coordinate and support a “Train the Trainers” program in September 2024, delivering a 12-week curriculum to 19 new educators from 17 counties’ CCE offices across the state. These educators will train volunteer cohorts in 2025 to lead projects that increase climate resilience and adaptation capacity in their communities. Past CCS projects include building pollinator pathways, creating a fossil fuel-free school district, implementing art and educational programs related to climate action, leading wetland management projects, and more.

As of 2024, NYSG has expanded the CCS program by training 48 educators throughout the state. One hundred and four (104) Climate Steward volunteers in 15 counties have dedicated more than 563 hours to climate resilience and adaptation projects, often helping their municipalities receive points toward Climate Smart Community accreditation by New York State. The 2024 cohort of educators will work with NYSG and the statewide CCS network to recruit, train, and guide volunteers in 2025. NYSG will continue to support these trainers as they prepare to launch their programs.

NYSG is helping to increase the capacity of local governments to address community resilience and adaptation needs by providing training and support through the Cornell Climate Stewards program, empowering volunteers who know the needs of their communities and are dedicated to leading local action. Learn more at <https://climatestewards.cornell.edu/>.

Project Partners:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

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