

Empowering Resilient Schools for New York City

Climate change poses significant risks to New York City's communities and infrastructure, including schools. Hurricane Sandy focused attention on the effects that extreme climate events can have on New York City (NYC), reminding New Yorkers that the city is vulnerable now and into the future.

During 2017, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) worked with NYC-based educational partners to launch a novel environmental literacy program called the Resilient Schools Consortium (RiSC). This after-school climate science and resilience education program is funded by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Environmental Literacy Grant. Project partners include Brooklyn College, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF)'s Eco-Schools USA program, and seven middle and high schools in the vulnerable coastal area of South Brooklyn, the community hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy.

In 2017, NYSG worked closely with RiSC project curriculum developers, consulting on content. The NYSG curriculum package of Hudson River Climate Change Lesson Plans, developed in 2014, inspired the structure and content of the RiSC after-school learning modules (22 lessons). These climate literacy modules are being implemented at schools in 2018.

Student and teacher participants in RiSC will implement a resiliency project at their schools, for example, developing a school rain garden or other infrastructure improvements.

The RiSC curriculum will be disseminated locally and nationally through partner channels and student-



Above, RiSC students at Mark Twain High School, Brooklyn. Below, a artwork by RiSC student at Rachel Carson High School for Coastal Studies, Coney Island. Photos: NWF

generated social media. Scheduled youth summits will provide opportunities for the students to interact with NYC's climate resilience resource managers.

The three-year project is engaging up to 500 middle and high school students and more than 12 teachers. The participating schools were either directly damaged by Sandy or served as shelters.

NYSG is contributing its expertise in New York-specific, science-based curriculum to youth education related to proactively developing resiliency for the NYC schools and communities most vulnerable to such climate change hazards as drought and extreme heat events, rising seas and flooding.

Partners:

- National Wildlife Federation Eco-Schools USA
- Science and Resiliency Institute at Jamaica Bay
- Brooklyn College
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Environmental Literacy Grant Program



The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is New York Resilient Communities & Economies

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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