



From Planning to Implementation: Building Capacity in the Town of Sandy Creek

Recommendations to Continue Ecosystem-Based Management
in the Little Sandy Creek Watershed

Sponsor: State University of New York at Stony Brook, New York Sea Grant Institute
New York Sea Grant Small Grants Program

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Associated document:

Watershed Quality Assessment: Town of Sandy Creek, New York

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Cover image: Little Sandy Creek near Sandy Creek Town Hall, 2019.

Town of Sandy Creek – Recommendations to Continue Ecosystem-Based Management in the Little Sandy Creek Watershed

Introduction:

SU-EFC has selected recommendations from **existing management plans** relevant to the Little Sandy Creek watershed, to address resiliency planning to continue ecosystem-based management within the Town’s jurisdiction.

SU-EFC has compiled recommendations into a table format, **including suggested funding opportunities, governance changes, partners and actions**. A rationale is provided for each selection, based on conversations with stakeholders from November 2019 – April 2020.

Existing management plans reviewed include the Town of Sandy Creek’s draft *Comprehensive Plan*, the *Sandy Creeks Watershed: Ecosystem-based Management Strategy*, and several others.

Key Messages:

1. The lakeshore, dune environments, creek, parks, and natural areas within the Town of Sandy Creek’s jurisdiction are socially, environmentally, and economically valuable to the Town in the present and the future.
2. These unique natural assets are a gift for the Town, but a great responsibility as well. Water quality, particularly in North Pond, continues to decline. Degraded water quality will lead to permanent ecological changes that will cause residents and visitors to relocate to more pristine areas, resulting in economic and social decline for the Town.
3. The Town Board may seek assistance managing the Town’s wealth of natural assets before decline becomes costlier and, perhaps, irreversible. SU-EFC recommends the Town Board create a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC). See Recommendation 1.
4. The Town Board needs to form/maintain/reinvigorate partnerships with state, local and regional government agencies, nonprofits, and community groups, to take advantage of technical assistance, volunteer labor, and funding resources. Numerous and knowledgeable partners are waiting to assist; SU-EFC calls particular attention to Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District and Oswego County Planning and Community Development. The Conservation Advisory Council can be tasked with using assistance from these partners.
5. Town residents were surveyed in 2011 for the Comprehensive Plan.
 - a. 79% of respondents wanted to see preservation of scenic views and natural areas in the Town, and protection of natural resources (air, water, wetlands, sand dunes, etc.)
 - b. 65% of respondents wanted to see regulation to address land uses that adversely impact environmental quality.
 - c. 58% wanted to see regulations to address degradation of environmentally-sensitive areas, and want an inventory of failing septic systems.

As demonstrated by survey responses, the majority of Town residents want to see active care of the Town’s valuable natural assets. The Town government plays the lead role in managing and directing this care, for present and future generations. The following recommendations are intended to assist the Town Board to be responsive to residents’ concerns.

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Each recommendation is sourced from existing management plan(s); each plan is identified by an acronym.

BCR= Sandy Creeks Watersheds: Baseline Conditions Report. Prepared by: Camoin Associates/Biohabitats for The Nature Conservancy & NYS Department of State. Publication Year 2008.

CP= Comprehensive Plan: Town of Sandy Creek, Village of Sandy Creek, Village of Lacona. Prepared by: Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. Publication Year: 2014.

EBMS= Sandy Creeks Watershed: Ecosystem-based Management Strategy – FINAL DRAFT. Prepared by: Tug Hill Commission with direction from New York State. Publication Year: 2008.

NPRP= North Pond Resiliency Project: A Comprehensive Analysis of Shoreline Change and Inlet Dynamics on the Eastern Shore of Lake Ontario. Prepared by New York Sea Grant and Nature Conservancy. Publication Year 2017.

SCWI= Sandy Creeks Watershed Inventory and Landscape Analysis. Prepared by the NY Natural Heritage Program. Publication Year 2011.

#	Recommendations, organized by Ecosystem-Based Management Principles	Funding Opportunity	Governance Changes	Partners	Rationale	Suggested Action Item(s)
Ecosystem-Based Management Principle: <i>Human Inclusion/Human Impact</i>						
1	<p>Create a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) for the Town of Sandy Creek</p> <p>-CP, BCR, SCWI, EBMS</p>		<p>Town of Sandy Creek Board establishes CAC by resolution, ordinance or local law.</p>	<p>New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC)</p>	<p>Alleviate workload on Town Board members and leverage momentum of recent projects by charging CAC to conduct natural resource-based planning and advise the Town on environmental matters.</p>	<p>-Town Board designates member(s) to work with NYSACC to assist with establishment of CAC, contact Simon Skolnik.</p> <p>-Town Board develops a charge for CAC, which can be informed by 2014 draft Town of Sandy Creek Comprehensive Plan, see page 10.</p>

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2	<p>Develop a vision and pre-development masterplan for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -improving community access to North and South Pond waterfronts. -improved fishing access to Sandy Creek in or near the Villages. -public park amenities such as seating, playgrounds, and river (creek) viewing areas. -trail connections to a Town-wide system of recreation points of interest. -CP, EBMS 	New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)	<p>Town Board adopts vision and plan.</p>	<p>Oswego County Planning & Community Development (PCD), NYS DOS</p>	<p>Systematic planning can define a cohesive vision for recreational and community access, which boost economic benefits, protects property values, incentivizes water quality protection, and improves quality of life.</p>	<p>Town Board to task CAC with developing action steps to secure LWRP funding, and use LWRP grant for vision and masterplan development. NYS DOS Office of Planning, Development and Community Infrastructure has prepared a LWRP guidance document.</p>
3a	<p>Use Site Plan Review and adopt Town and Village zoning and land use regulations such as Conservation Subdivision regulations to ensure that the goals and recommendations in 2014 Comprehensive Plan are met.</p> <p>-CP</p>		<p>Town Board institutes Site Plan Review and adopts Town zoning and/or land use regulations.</p> <p>Adoption of Intermunicipal Agreements as needed, examples are here.</p>	<p>Oswego County PCD, NYS DOS Division of Local Government Services</p>	<p>The need for the Town to manage land use to protect natural heritage is a consistent theme across the many plans prepared for the Town.</p> <p>Proactive land use management will protect water quality and shoreline property; over the long-term protecting the Town’s tax base and economic viability.</p>	<p>-Town Board designates member to consult with David Turner, Oswego County PCD, for technical assistance. Model language for local regulations can be found at this link.</p>
3b	<p>Adopt local zoning to implement the following recommendations:</p>		<p>Town Board bolsters</p>	<p>OCPCD, Central New</p>		<p>-Town Board designates member to</p>

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	<p>-include overlay districts to protect valued scenic, historic and waterfront areas;</p> <p>-to ensure the prevention of soil erosion in trail development areas;</p> <p>-to protect areas of natural or cultural significance from negative impacts of incompatible development;</p> <p>-encourage infill and reuse in existing commercially developed areas and in close proximity to the Villages prior to considering new “green field” development areas for new commercial growth; and</p> <p>-manage development pressure: loss of farmland, rural character and open space; rural/urban conflicts.</p> <p>-CP, EBMS</p>		<p>existing Site Plan Review process by adopting land use regulations.</p>	<p>York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB)</p>	<p>Increasing weather extremes and lake level variation now require a new approach by Town government, using time-tested tools such as zoning and site-plan review – methods in use by the majority of communities in Oswego County.</p>	<p>consult with David Turner, Oswego County PCD, for technical assistance; land use management on the waterfront/ dune system is particularly emphasized, including the use of overlay districts. (Note that overlay districts may be accomplished without zoning.)</p> <p>Model language for local regulations can be found at this link.</p>
4a	<p>Ensure that code enforcement is sufficient, fair, and effective in protecting the community in related health and safety issues.</p> <p>-CP, EBMS</p>		<p>Town Board provides Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) with training resources and takes an active role in overseeing enforcement</p>	<p>New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) Bureau of Flood Protection, OCPD, New</p>	<p>Oversight of local land use regulation enforcement is the responsibility of town government. Increasing weather extremes and lake level variation warrant closer compliance with</p>	<p>-Town Board to fund NYSFSMA membership.</p> <p>-Town Board tasks CEO to contact Bill Nechamen, NYSFSMA, to inquire about training and technical assistance.</p>

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			of local flood plain law.	York State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association (NYSFSMA)	existing local floodplain law.	
4b	Work with NYS DEC, New York Sea Grant (NYSG), and Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to ensure that sensitive dune and shoreline areas are protected from over-development where outdated or incorrect mapping of lake water levels continue to be used as a basis for environmental and building permits. -CP, EBMS	New York's Sea Grant Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program Eastern Lake Ontario Dunes Foundation	Town Board institutes routine Site Plan Review and adopts Town land use regulations, see 3a.	Eastern Lake Ontario Dune Coalition (ELODC), NYS Parks. NYS DEC Bureau of Flood Protection, Oswego County PCD, NYSFSMA, Oswego County SWCD	Variable lake levels require proactive land use management to protect water quality and shoreline property; protecting tax base and long-term economic viability of the Town.	-Town Board tasks CAC to communicate regularly with ELODC and NYS Parks and function as liaison. -Town Board tasks CEO to contact David Turner , Oswego County PCD for technical assistance to address mapping.
Ecosystem Based Management Principle: Sustainability						
5a	Ensure that aging infrastructure is identified (including septic systems) and that future needs and improvements are considered in all plans so that upgrades can be made in a timely manner and to avoid infrastructure failures or impacts to environmental or community health.	NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYS EFC)/DEC Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant Program	Develop or update policy for septic system inspection upon property sale, deed changes, and rebuild. Consider	Oswego County PCD Barton & Loguidice (B&L) NY Rural Water Association	Institute an infrastructure asset management program to avoid infrastructure failures or impacts to environmental or community health. Address water quality impairment	-Town Board tasks Town Water Superintendent to contact partners, engage NYRWA or EFC for technical assistance.

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	-CP, BCR, EBMS		defining geographic area, i.e., waterfront or west of Rte 3.	(NYRWA) Environmental Finance Center	from failing septic systems.	
5b	Investigate funding opportunities for improved wastewater treatment, through testing and retrofitting failing septic systems and tracking upstream sources of nutrient inputs -CP, BCR	Lakeshore Septic Replacement Grant Numerous funding sources, see SU-EFC Funding Source Guide		Oswego County PCD B&L Oswego County SWCD	Address water quality impairment from failing septic systems and nonpoint inputs.	-Town Board tasks the Water Advisory Committee to develop a funding strategy with B&L, report to Board.
5c	Wastewater management: invest in decentralized wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure -BCR, CP,	Numerous funding sources, see SU-EFC Funding Source Guide Including: Northern Border Regional Commission		B&L, NYS DOS Local Government Division	Address water quality impairment from failing septic systems with decentralized approach.	-See 5b.
6	Develop public services rate structures (water, sewer, etc.) that ensure an adequate municipal reserve fund for public facility maintenance and necessary upgrades. -CP		Town Board adopts revised rate structures, if needed.	Environmental Finance Center Network B&L	Protect water quality and property values by ensuring an adequate municipal reserve fund.	-Town Board tasks Water Superintendent to engage B&L and EFCN for rate setting technical assistance.

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7	<p>Work with New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA) to map all aquifers serving the Town, and their recharge zones.</p> <p>-CP, BCR, EBMS</p>	<p>Funding for projects for source water protection: NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP)</p>		<p>Tug Hill Commission and NYRWA</p>	<p>Take protective measures for this natural resource: Villages of Lacona and Sandy Creek rely on aquifer for drinking water.</p>	<p>Town Board tasks Town Water Superintendent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Contact Katie Malinowski, Executive Director, Tug Hill Commission, to access mapping resources, review 2019 report. -Contact Steven Winkley, Source Water Protection Specialist, NYRWA, for free technical assistance to develop and implement a local source water protection plan.
8	<p>Plan for proper emergency response to formation of ice dams in the North Pond Inlet. Pond flooding caused by ice dams may result in significant property damage as well as impacts on environmental quality.</p> <p>-NPRP</p>			<p>Oswego County Emergency Management Office, US Army Corps of Engineers, NY SG UAV program</p>	<p>Protect property values, reduce municipal liability, and protect Town investment in the North Pond Resiliency Project.</p>	<p>Town Board to task Highway Superintendent with contacting Cathleen Palmitesso, Director, Oswego County Emergency Management for technical assistance.</p>
Ecosystem Based Management Principle: <i>Ecological Health</i>						
9	<p>Identify ecological indicators that have robust literature support for</p>			<p>NYS DEC Rotating Integrated</p>	<p>Verify and update water quality assessments for</p>	<p>Town Board tasks a member or CAC to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contact

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	<p>their use as effective indicators of watershed health.</p> <p>-BCR, EBMS</p>			<p>Basin Studies (RIBS) program; NYS DEC Biomonitoring Program</p>	<p>North & South Ponds, Little Sandy Creek; impairment status is linked to NYS DEC WQIP funding program eligibility.</p> <p>DECinfo Locator is an online, interactive map useful for looking up water quality assessments.</p>	<p>Alexander Smith, Chief, Stream Monitoring and Assessment Section, NYS DEC, to request a special survey in targeted catchments, particularly North Pond.</p> <p>- contact The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Pulaski office to understand their monitoring efforts and findings.</p>
10a	<p>Document the condition of the riparian buffer along stream networks.</p> <p>-BCR, EBMS</p>			Oswego County SWCD	Create opportunities to work with local landowners to protect or improve water quality.	-Town Board tasks a member or CAC to Contact Joe Chairlovotti , District Manager, Oswego County SWCD for partnership assistance with landowners.
10b	<p>Encourage green infrastructure at the site and community scales to increase protection and resilience from environmental hazards. Work with the Oswego County SWCD to develop guidelines for the protection of sensitive areas prone</p>	<p>NYS EFC Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP)</p> <p>NYS DEC Trees for Tribs Grant Program</p>	Town Board to adopt guidelines for the protection of sensitive areas prone to soil erosion, based on	Oswego County SWCD, NY SG (for additional lake shore and pond expertise)	Soil erosion will impair ecologically and recreationally valuable waterways, causing long-term damage to farm viability and	-Town Board tasks a member or CAC to Contact Joe Chairlovotti , District Manager, Oswego County SWCD for advice on green infrastructure and

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	to soil erosion that may contribute to siltation of water resources. -CP, EBMS	USDA Forest Service (USDA FS) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	advice from Oswego County SWCD.		economic viability of Town.	guideline-development assistance.
10c	Implement structural and/or non-structural stormwater management measures to mitigate sediment loss in priority areas and adopt legislation to minimize the application of phosphorus and nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides in the creeks and ponds watersheds. -CP, EBMS	NYS EFC GIGP NYS DEC Trees for Tribs Grant Program USDA FS Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	Town Board to adopt legislation to minimize landowner application of unnecessary chemicals, based on advice from Oswego County SWCD.	Oswego County SWCD	Excessive nutrient and pesticide runoff will impair ecologically and recreationally valuable waterways, causing long-term damage to natural heritage and economic viability of Town.	- Town Board tasks a member or CAC to Contact Joe Chairlovotti , District Manager, Oswego County SWCD, see above.
11a	Prepare a North and South Ponds Watershed Management Plan that identifies areas of excessive sediment, or nutrient runoff, and wastewater disposal to Sandy Pond, Sandy Creek, Little Sandy Creek, Blind Creek, Mud Creek and other surface waters. -CP, EBMS, BCR	NYS DEC Non-Agricultural Nonpoint Source Planning Grant New York's Sea Grant Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program	Town board adopts plan.	CNYRPDB, ELODC, Oswego County PCD	Plan for water quality protection, continued recreational use, and flood resiliency; develop science-based rationale for projects and funding.	Town Board tasks CAC to collaborate with ELODC, integrate with LWRP planning, see Recommendation 2.

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11b	<p>Implement a naturalized shoreline program around North and South Ponds; and develop Green Infrastructure projects in key locations throughout the watershed; with an educational component.</p> <p>-CP, EBMS</p>	<p>NYS EFC GIGP</p> <p>USDA FS Great Lakes Restoration Initiative</p> <p>NFWF National Coastal Resilience Fund</p> <p>New York's Sea Grant Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program</p>		Oswego County SWCD, NY SG, ELODC	Leverage North Sandy Pond Resiliency Project and implement Lake Ontario Shoreline Stabilization Study recommendations to protect water quality and shoreline property; over the long term protecting tax base and economic viability of Town.	Town Board tasks CAC to collaborate with ELODC to prioritize action steps and develop a funding plan, see 11a.
12	<p>Landowner communication remains a critical issue. Much of the area is in private ownership so access to private land is necessary to continue to document the biodiversity of the region.</p> <p>-SCWI, CP, EBMS</p>	<p>New York's Sea Grant Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program</p>	Town Board facilitates awareness of diversity assessment and economic benefits of unique local environment with constituents.	TNC or NYS Natural Heritage Program (NYS NHP), Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County	Rich diversity in plant and animal life exists on the lakeshore and in stream headwaters, a unique natural heritage that underpins the economic benefits of tourism and recreation.	- Town Board invites a TNC/NYSNHP representative for an information-sharing presentation to a regular board meeting, timed with recruitment or formation of CAC, see Recommendation 1.

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Acronyms used for organizations, agencies and programs:

B&L	Barton & Loguidice
CAC	Conservation Advisory Council
COE	Code Enforcement Officer
CNYRPDB	Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board
ELODC	Eastern Lake Ontario Dune Coalition
GIGP	Green Innovation Grant Program
LWRP	Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
NFWF	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
NYRWA	New York Rural Water Association
NYSACC	New York State Association of Conservation Commissions
NYS DEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYS DOS	New York State Department of State
NYS EFC	New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation
NYSFSMA	New York State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association
NYSG	New York Sea Grant
NYS NHP	New York State Natural Heritage Program
OCPCD	Oswego County Planning & Community Development
OCSWCD	Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District
RIBS	Rotating Integrated Basin Studies
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USDA FS	United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service
WQIP	Water Quality Improvement Program

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Appendix A. Agency/Organization Contacts

Acronym	Agency or Organization	Contact Person	Phone	Email	Website
CNYRPDB	Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board	Jean Gleisner, Program Manager, Community Development and Comprehensive Planning	315-422-8276 x1212	jgleisner@cnyrpdb.org	http://www.cnyrpdb.org/
ELODC	Eastern Lake Ontario Dune Coalition	Patricia Shulenberg, Co-Chair	585-303-5750	pshulenburg@gmail.com	www.nysgdunes.org
NYRWA	New York Rural Water Association	Steven Winkley, P.G.	(518) 828-3155, extension 170	winkley@nyruralwater.org	https://www.nyruralwater.org/technical-assistance/source-water-protection
NYSACC	New York State Association of Conservation Commissions	Simon Skolnik, President	(914) 306-0394	nysaccpresident@gmail.com	https://nysacc.org/
NYS DEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	Alexander Smith, Chief, Stream Monitoring & Assessment Section, Division of Water	518-402-8179	DOWinformation@dec.ny.gov	https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/30951.html
NYS DOS	New York State Department of State	Office of Planning and Development	(518) 474-6000	opd@dos.ny.gov	https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/lwrp.html
NYSFSMA	New York State Floodplain and Stormwater Managers Association	Bill Nechamen, Membership Coordinator	518-707-6516	billnechamen@gmail.com	https://nyfloods.org
NY SG	New York Sea Grant	Mary E. Austerman, Great Lakes Coastal Community Specialist	315-331-8415 ext. 121	mp357@cornell.edu	https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/coastal-community-development-program-home
NYS NHP	New York State Natural Heritage Program	DJ Evans, Director	02-8948	dxevas@esf.edu	https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/29338.html

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Acronym	Agency or Organization	Contact Person	Phone	Email	Website
OCEMO	Oswego County Emergency Management Office	Cathleen Palmitesso, Director	315-591-9150	EMOInfo@oswegocounty.com	https://www.oswegocounty.com/departments/public_safety/emergency_management/index.php
OCPCD	Oswego County Planning & Community Development	David R. Turner, Director	315-349-8292	David.Turner@OswegoCounty.com	https://www.oswegocounty.com/departments/planning_comm_dev/index.php
OCSWCD	Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District	Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager	315-592-9663	joe.chairvolotti@oswegosoilandwater.com	http://www.oswegosoilandwater.com/index.html
TNC	The Nature Conservancy	David Klein, Senior Field Representative	585-802-0553	dklein@tnc.org	https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/new-york/
THC	Tug Hill Commission	Katie Malinowski, Executive Director	315-785-2380	katie@tughill.org	https://tughill.org/projects/tug_hill_aquifer/

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Appendix B. Resiliency Resources – Guidelines Available Online

Conservation Advisory Councils and Boards: A Guide to the Organization and Operation of Local Environmental Advisory Councils

<https://clctrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CAC-Guide.pdf>

Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs in the Coastal Area: Guidance Manual for Preparing Local Programs

<https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/pdfs/LWRPPreparationGuidanceMarch2019.pdf>

Model Local Laws to Increase Resilience

https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/resilience/Model_Local_Laws_to_Increase_Resilience.pdf

Designation of the Northern Tug Hill Aquifer as a Sole Source Aquifer

<https://www.tughill.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Designation-of-Sole-Source-Aquifer-July-2019-With-Cover.pdf>

Additional Resources:

The New York's Great Lakes Coastal Resilience Index: A Community Self-Assessment

<https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/coastalcomm/pdfs/CCD-CoastalResiliencyIndex.pdf>

Watershed Plans Guidebook: Protecting and Restoring Water Quality

<https://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/sser/pdf/WatershedPlansGuidebook.pdf>

DECinfo Locator – online mapping tool to access data about environmental quality of specific sites in New York State

<https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/dil/>

Funding Source Guide: Resiliency Funding Sources for New York State Watersheds and Water Infrastructure

<https://efc.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Funding-Matrix-online-1.pdf>

Planning for Infrastructure Resilience

<https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9192800/>

Subdivision Design and Flood Hazard Areas

<https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9112664/>