

SEABROOK-HAMPTONS ESTUARY ALLIANCE

ESTABLISHED FOR THE PROTECTION OF COASTAL
AND AQUATIC RESOURCES, AND THE PRESERVATION
OF THE SEABROOK-HAMPTONS ESTUARINE
SYSTEM THROUGH EDUCATION, COMMUNITY
OUTREACH AND RESEARCH.

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2019

Annual Report



Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance

The Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance, a New Hampshire non-profit corporation, was formed in 2015. SHEA's mission is to protect the coastal and aquatic resources and preserve the Hampton-Seabrook estuarine system through education, community outreach and research.

Our goal is to preserve, restore, and advocate for the estuary to provide habitat for wildlife, improve water quality, protect against flooding, and provide for responsible recreational and commercial use.

www.shea4nh.org

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Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team



As Phase 2 of a 2018 grant from the Consensus Building Institute, SHEA and the NHDES Coastal Program worked with an independent municipal planning consultant, Liz Durfee (EF Design & Planning, LLC) to create the Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) to assess and recommend appropriate flooding adaptation strategies for Hampton. CHAT is comprised of members of most of the boards and departments in Hampton and Hampton Beach, the Deputy Director of the Public Works Department, the Town Planner, and two residents. SHEA and the Coastal Program also participate in CHAT. CHAT meetings have been held monthly since January, 2019.

To start off, the group drafted a mission statement along with meeting rules and procedures. Then with guidance from the independent planner, CHAT looked at the causes of flooding in Hampton; the natural defenses against flooding; flooding projections from various sources, including the Rockingham Planning Commission's 2015 "From Tides To Storms;" various maps to identify vulnerable areas/neighborhoods; and case studies from other coastal communities. CHAT has begun the process of identifying and assessing different flooding adaptation strategies, and exploring regulatory options in addition to structural or other "on the ground" options. We are bringing in guest speakers to share their expertise about specific related issues, and are starting to work toward more public outreach.

We have set a tentative goal for providing suggestions and recommended strategies to the Board of Selectmen in the summer of 2020. We are also anticipating this group will be playing an advisory role as Hampton begins to develop their Coastal Hazards Master Plan section.





Flood Smart Roundtable

SHEA hosted Flood Smart Roundtable public meetings in May, June, August and September. Each meeting focused on different aspects of flooding that is impacting local residents. Using an informal format, there was usually a presentation and lots of candid informal discussion. Topics of these meetings included elevating structures, how FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Works, and an introduction to and training for a citizen science project for mapping October's King Tide at Hampton Beach. Up to 50 people attended the Flood Smart Roundtable meetings. Because so many property owners at Hampton Beach are only there in the warmer weather, the Roundtables have been suspended until March 2020.

2019

Technical Assistance Grant

SHEA was awarded a Technical Assistance Grant in 2019. This funding is from NOAA's Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program. The grant period is from July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020. Projects covered by the grant include: Ongoing work by CHAT; coordination of the Flood Smart Roundtable citizen discussion group; identifying and informing local Conservation Commissions about open space conservation areas for flood storage and salt marsh migration; and additional educational, research, and outreach projects including, but not limited to an annual National Estuaries Week Photo Contest, and other similar projects.

NH Charitable Foundation

SHEA received a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation to begin laying the foundation for an Estuary Management Plan. The work under this grant includes a comparative analysis of the Master Plan sections and zoning ordinances in each of the three surrounding communities that relate to the Estuary. An independent municipal planner has been hired to prepare this analysis, and it is well under way. Once completed, it will be presented to the Planning Boards in Hampton, Hampton Falls, and Seabrook for their review and comments.

Public Outreach

SHEA hosted a series of public outreach events in 2019 as part of its mission to provide education and information about the Estuary to the public. These events included a program in May on the proper use of lawn fertilizers to have healthy lawns without excessive fertilizer runoff, and creating pollinator gardens to attract beneficial insects; a photo workshop in September focused on techniques for photography in the Estuary; a discussion and presentation of the video "Salt Marsh Haying On The New Hampshire Seacoast" at the Hampton Falls Historical Society in November.

Hampton, Hampton Falls, Seabrook

SHEA has a program to work with the conservation commissions of the three communities that surround the Estuary - Hampton, Hampton Falls, and Seabrook. Our goal is to identify and provide information about parcels adjacent to or near the Estuary that might be good candidates for acquisition or conservation easements to provide for salt marsh expansion as sea levels continue to rise. SHEA will do the research to identify the parcels and provide ownership and financial, and other information about each one. Then, each conservation commission can prioritize which parcel owners to approach in which order. Hampton and Hampton Falls have signed onto this program, and we will be meeting with the Seabrook Conservation Commission in 2020.

SHEA Website

The SHEA website was redesigned and updated in 2019, and is being updated, as appropriate, on an ongoing basis.

www.shea4nh.org

2019

National Estuaries Photo Contest

SHEA hosted its 4th annual National Estuaries Week Photo Contest in September. Some wonderful photos were submitted, and awards given to the winners and runners-up in Sunrise/Sunsets, Landscapes, Recreation, Weather, and Wildlife categories. The winning and runner-up photos have been posted on the SHEA website.

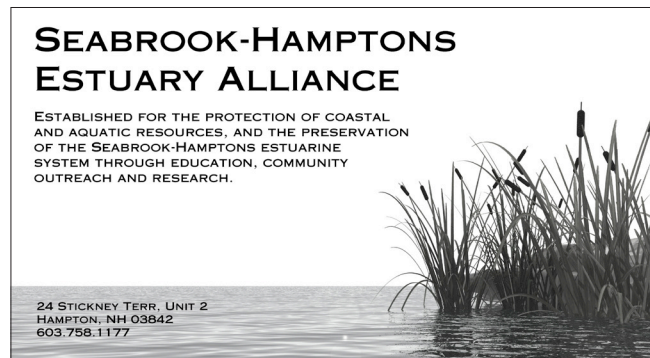




2019

was a very productive year for SHEA. We are very grateful to our partners, including the NHDES Coastal Program, the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup, the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, and New Hampshire Sea Grant for supporting us and working with us on a variety of programs and events.

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