



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Published and Ready for Public Access: Coastal Resilience Guide for Illinois North Shore Communities

Practical roadmap offers strategies, funding resources, and nature-based solutions to strengthen shoreline resilience.

CHICAGO, IL – November 17, 2025 – The Illinois Coastal Management Program, in partnership with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, today announced the release of the *Coastal Resilience Guide for Illinois North Shore Communities*. Developed with technical expertise from Stantec and Baird, the guide equips local governments and residents with resources to better understand, plan for, and address the unique hazards facing the Illinois North Shore.

Illinois North Shore communities experience distinctive risks along the Lake Michigan coast, including flooding, erosion, and other environmental hazards. The guide was designed to help local leaders and residents navigate these challenges by outlining the most pressing threats, identifying strategies to mitigate flooding and erosion, and highlighting how solutions, including nature-based approaches, can reduce long-term risks. It also provides a technical overview of coastal hazards specific to Illinois' Lake Michigan shoreline, offers step-by-step project planning guidance, and identifies funding strategies to help communities move from planning to implementation.

In addition to its guidance, the publication showcases several successful coastal resilience projects that have already been designed and constructed around the Great Lakes, offering practical examples that North Shore communities can learn from and replicate. As part of the broader effort, the project also introduces I-SHORE, a coastal planning data analysis interface, developed to help communities map hazards, assess risks, and identify priority resilience projects tailored to their local needs and the Resilient Projects Tool, an Excel-based resource designed to help communities assess local needs, evaluate design solutions and plan projects with funding opportunities in mind.

“The resilience guide helps address the challenges of Illinois' North Shore and the demand for bold yet thoughtful strategies. This tool combines science, innovation, and local insight to help communities with potential vulnerabilities,” said Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Natalie Phelps Finnie. “Together, we can safeguard lives, infrastructure, protect natural resources, and chart a resilient future for Illinois' shoreline communities.”

“Waukegan's shoreline is one of our greatest assets, and we are committed to its enhancement and protection. This guide gives our community the practical tools we need to understand local hazards, prioritize smart investments, and move forward with projects that reduce flooding and erosion while improving access, habitat, and quality of life,” said Mayor Sam Cunningham of Waukegan, Illinois.



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The public can now access the *Coastal Resilience Guide for Illinois North Shore Communities* ([download the guide](#)), I-SHORE ([access the data analysis interface](#)) and the Resilient Projects Tool ([download the tool](#)) online.

Funding for the guide was provided through the Illinois Coastal Management Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's National Coastal Resilience Fund, with support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

About the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a multinational coalition of municipal and Indigenous government executives representing communities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Region who are working to promote economic prosperity in our communities and protect our fresh water for the benefit of current and future generations. With more than 350 communities represented, the Cities Initiative is leading the way in advancing the environmental, economic, and social health of the region by addressing issues impacting its residents.

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