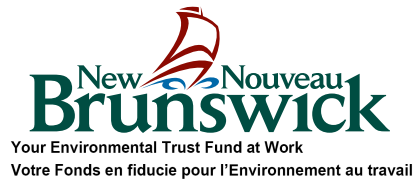


# **EOS Eco-Energy's Best Practices for Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation**

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Adaptation is an ongoing process. Community-based adaptation projects are the best way to ensure that adaptation will move ahead at the local level. Whether you are a non-profit organization, a municipality or a concerned citizen organizing adaptation initiatives, you will need participation from a wide variety of people, businesses, institutions and organizations for adaptation to begin to take place and to be sustained over time in your community. It takes coordination and lots of networking and partnerships. Below are some tips and tricks for successful community-based climate change adaptation based on what has worked for EOS Eco-Energy in the Tantramar region of New Brunswick.

## Part 1 – Research and Professional Development

### Do Some Background Research

If you are new to climate change and/or adaptation, it's best to begin with some background research. You will want to identify local climate impacts (changing precipitation patterns, sea level rise, storm surges, etc.), risks and other issues. Below is a list of websites that have a variety of helpful resources in New Brunswick.

Organization and Details	Website
<b>EOS Eco-Energy</b> – climate adaptation toolkit, various community-based adaptation projects, adaptation plans, rain garden how to guide, etc.	<a href="http://www.eosecoenergy.com">www.eosecoenergy.com</a>
<b>Atlantic Climate Adaptation Solutions Association (ACASA)</b> – a huge repository of climate data, adaptation approaches, Atlantic Canadian projects, publications, and a coastal community toolkit and decision tree	<a href="https://atlanticadaptation.ca">https://atlanticadaptation.ca</a>
<b>New Brunswick Climate Change Secretariat</b> – part of the Department of Environment, this site includes the province's new climate action plan; staff can help communities with additional resources and expertise	<a href="http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/elg.html">http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/elg.html</a>
<b>New Brunswick Environmental Network</b> – coordinates a provincial adaptation collaborative and brings environmental groups together	<a href="http://www.nben.ca">http://www.nben.ca</a>

### Attend Workshops and Networking Events

One of the best ways to get into the sphere of climate change adaptation is to learn from others and to find out what else is going on. In New Brunswick you can connect with the New Brunswick Environmental Network and attend one of their many annual workshops on topics such as climate change, environmental education, watersheds, energy issues, funding, etc. It's helpful to meet other groups with expertise, and learn about adaptation projects, etc.

## Part 2 – Get the Word Out and Seek Partners

Once you have an idea of your local climate impacts and what's at risk (low lying areas at risk of flooding, shoreline erosion, etc.), you can begin to get the word out.

### Offer Public Climate Change and Adaptation Information Sessions and Workshops

Partner with experts to offer information sessions and workshops on climate change issues and adaptation. Partner with universities, non-profit organizations, emergency measures organizations, your local service commission (planning commission), etc.

### **Find Community Champions and Partners**

From the above public workshops and sessions you will see who is interested in the issues and who might be willing to work on community-based adaptation projects. Municipal staff and councilors, local service commission, emergency measures officials, fire departments, researchers, provincial government representatives, etc. are all important partners on local and regional climate adaptation issues. Definitely make sure to contact your local municipal office and work together on climate adaptation.



### **Visit Local Schools**

It's important to involve the next generation in climate change adaptation. Ask the school principal, find supportive teachers, and tailor the information to the age group. Make the experience hands-on, interactive and fun. Talk about the risks but provide solutions and actions and explain that work is being done to address the risks. "We don't have to be scared, we just need to prepare." By talking about climate change adaptation we make it less scary for youth. Similar to fire prevention presentations that take place annually in schools across the country, severe weather preparation could also be taught. For example, use ICLEI Canada's Climate Resiliency Card Game to talk about how to prepare for and adapt to a variety of severe weather events (available at: <http://icleicanada.org/games>).

### **Presentations to Local Organizations**

Raise awareness by bringing information and presenting to local organization such as the Rotary club, Scouts, seniors clubs, other non-profits, churches, business associations, Lions Club, family resource centres, etc.

### **Media and Social Media**

Use both traditional and social media to raise awareness about climate change issues and adaptation. Write articles, tips, etc. for local newspapers and community newsletters. Local media outlets (print, radio and TV too) can be great allies to help get your messages out and to cover your events and projects.

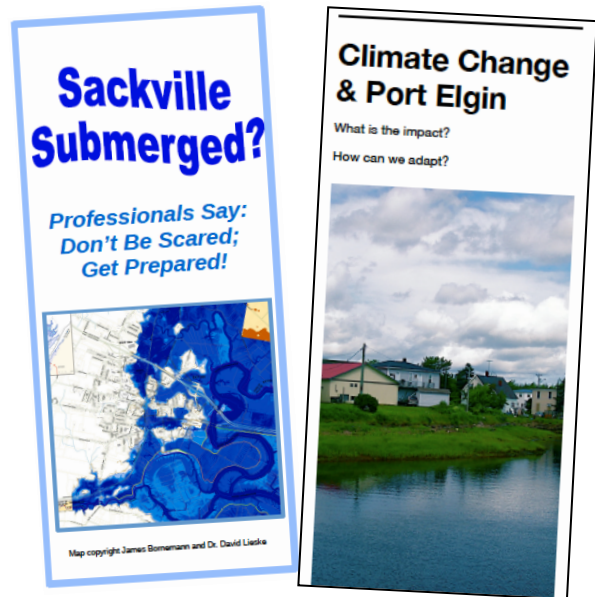
Create a Facebook page or group like "Storm Prep Tantramar" (operated by EOS and the Tantramar Climate Change Adaptation Collaborative), a Youtube channel (for videos of projects, workshops, etc.), and/or a Twitter feed with fun hash tags to spur discussion.

### Put Information in Front of People

Cover all the bases when raising awareness. Have public displays, murals, chalk lines downtown that represent flood levels, etc. Also have information booths at community events and where people already are (like farmers markets, banks, sports events, etc. but be sure to get permission first). Another option is to send brochures in the mail with information about what climate change is, how it is affecting your local area, future projections and what is being done locally to address the risks.

### Create or Join a Regional Adaptation Collaborative

Climate change adaptation is a huge undertaking, spanning many different sectors and needing a lot of different kinds of expertise. It is also too large and complicated for one group or one community to tackle alone. A regional adaptation collaborative is extremely helpful in advancing adaptation. The face-to-face networking that goes on in the Tantramar Climate Change Adaptation Collaborative has been invaluable and has allowed groups to collaborate to advance decision-making on a variety of issues due to everyone having the same knowledge and understanding. The Tantramar Climate Change Adaptation Collaborative was formed after an initial workshop that focused on the latest local research. Participants then worked to narrow down priority issues and an action plan was created around planning and policy, infrastructure and dykes, education and communication and funding. In later years emergency measures and research were added. A working group of about 20 people was also formed and it continues to meet regularly throughout the year to advance the action plan, network, and plan an annual workshop for the larger Collaborative.



## Part 3 – Coordinate a Community-Based Adaptation Plan

### Get the Go ahead from Municipal Council

Before proceeding, be sure to get approval from your local municipal council.

### Assemble a Planning Committee

The planning committee should consist of representative from municipal staff and council, emergency measures organization and/or fire department, local planning office, the business community, any important local organizations and a few residents at large.

### The Planning Process

Follow these steps to create a community-based adaptation plan:

1. **Review data** - review existing climate data, storm scenarios and maps; enlist the help of experts if need be.
2. **Decide on focus** - decide which storm scenarios and which climate change impacts your plan will address (eg. coastal storm surges, changing precipitation patterns, increasing erosion rates, droughts, increasing annual temperature, and/or more severe storms, etc.).
3. **Raise awareness** - put articles in local papers, posts on social media, and send mail-out brochures to residents in your area to inform them of the climate impacts, the adaptation planning process, and the need for public input.
4. **Risk and vulnerability assessment** - armed with coastal flood risk maps or other data, organize a risk and vulnerability public workshop(s) and map the areas of concern in your

community (low lying sewage lagoon, roads that flood, etc.) and include the location of vulnerable populations (eg. seniors homes, daycares). Gather more public input with additional workshops, information booths, community events, social media (do what works best for your community).

5. **Select priority issues** - Compile all information and have the committee prioritize the issues to address in the plan.
6. **Develop adaptation plan** - Develop adaptation actions for each priority issue. If you are a small coastal community, the ACASA Decision Tree (<https://atlanticadaptation.ca>) may be useful in determining options. The plan will also include information on the planning committee, climate impacts, storm scenarios, flood maps, vulnerability maps, etc.
7. **Plan review and approval** - Present the draft plan to the public in a workshop setting (partner with emergency measures officials to do a presentation on emergency preparedness at same time to help draw interest). Also promote the draft plan in the local media and on social media. Allow the chance for the public to provide input in various ways. After the public has had a chance to review the plan, the committee brings it to the local municipal council for approval/adoption/endorsement, etc.
8. **Implementation** - A plan is only as good as its implementation so be sure to include an implementation plan this can consist of a committee that will meet once or twice a year to advance the plan and to communicate progress to the public.

See examples of plans here: <http://eosecoenergy.com/en/projects/climate-change-adaptation/>

## Part 4 – Adaptation in Action

You do not have to have a community-based adaptation plan to implement the actions below but a formal plan can help to organize adaptation in your community, raise awareness, and bring together partners and supporters. The list below is only the beginning of what can be done at the local level to adapt to climate change.

### Bulk Purchase of 72 Hour Emergency Kits

Having an emergency kit on hand is one of the best things you can do to prepare for severe weather. You need to order 100 kits to get free shipping from the Canadian Red Cross and help people save a considerable amount of money (<https://products.redcross.ca>). You could even use the bulk purchase as a fundraiser and make a bit of money off each kit while still saving people money. Use some of the profits to purchase additional kits and donate to local charities like food banks or family resource centres. Give some away in draws at workshops or your annual Climate Change Week events.

Include a list of additional items for people to include in their kits like non-perishable foods, medication, toilet paper, prescriptions, insurance papers, identification, family flood plan, contact information, pet food, baby food, etc. Get the word out about the bulk deal via social media, local media, organization newsletters, and attend local events like Farmers Markets to take orders and pre-payments. It took EOS one month to gather 100 orders across the Tantramar area.



### **Plant Rain Gardens with Local Volunteers**

Rain gardens are simple depressions planted with native grasses and flowers that collect rainwater and let it absorb naturally into the ground. They are simple enough for the average homeowner and some friends to build in a day. Rain gardens absorb 40% more rainwater than your lawn! Promote rain gardens by planting some in your community. Choose publically visible locations (schools, commercial properties, municipal parks, etc.) and get permission first. Enlist the help of local volunteers to dig and plant the gardens making it a community project. Use EOS's easy how-to guide to plant your own:

<http://eosecoenergy.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Rain-Gardens-How-to-Handout-for-Tantramar.pdf>



### **Organize Climate Change Week Annually**

Join EOS and other non-profit organizations and organize Climate Change Week in your community. Each year in late January a variety of events, workshops, panel discussions, community meals, field trips, school activities, etc. take place to promote climate change issues and celebrate solutions at the local level. Find out how to host your own Climate Change Week from EOS's brochure: <http://eosecoenergy.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/How-to-guide-to-Climate-Change-Week.pdf>

## **Part 5 – Review, Evaluate, Recharge and Keep Moving Forward!**

Adaptation is an ongoing process. Take time each year to evaluate progress and what needs to be done next. Continue to offer public awareness and education. Review and update plans with project partners. Stay connected with those in the adaptation field and get updated on the latest climate science. Remember to take time out and let go (go camping, take a hiking trip, go dancing, visit with family, etc.) once in awhile to recharge so you have the energy to keep going and working on these important issues!

## **Part 6 – Get More Help and Support**

If you're a non-profit organization and still aren't sure where to get started or how to tackle a project, get in touch with EOS, we can help. If you are a municipality and looking for a non-profit to lead some of the above initiatives, EOS can help. We offer competitive consulting rates and reduced rates for non-profits. Get in touch with EOS to learn more.



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