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Climate adaptation: \$100 million in storm-surge readiness available now

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Although Mass. was spared the city-leveling brunt Hurricane Sandy delivered in N.J. and N.Y., Sandy's impacts here were enough to include Mass. as one of 12 coastal states, plus the District of Columbia, declared natural disaster areas in the aftermath of this super-storm. Sandy certainly caught the attention of lawmakers at the national, state and local levels. For example, Boston, a city built on filled wetlands and running right to the harbor's edge, got the message and is planning to implement climate change resiliency at multiple levels.

Climate change adaptation and resiliency is a theme I expect to see behind a significant number of state and federally funded programs in the coming years. One such program that is accepting applications until January 31, 2014 is not only inspired by Hurricane Sandy, but is named for it, the "Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program." This program is implemented by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with \$100 million in grants for projects that help communities prepare and mitigate the impacts of future storms and naturally occurring events on fish and wildlife species and habitats. Ranging from \$250,000 to \$5 million these grants require a 25% match and are available to 501(c) organizations, local governments, counties, townships, boroughs, conservation districts, planning districts, state government agencies, and academic institutions. Eligible projects include assessment and mapping to determine coastal resilience, planning, design and implementation as well as projects that restore coastal wetlands to prepare for the effects of climate change and to manage storm-surges. The focus on protecting fish and wildlife species and their habitats is consistent with the NFWF mission and, lucky for us, has the added benefit of protecting our habitats as well. These are grants well worth the application.

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