

Appendix G: Strategy and Additional Considerations for Implementing the COHORT

Washington Coast Resilience Action Demonstration Project

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The Resilience Action Demonstration Project (RAD) was a 24-month (2019–2021) pilot program that enhanced local capacity to address coastal hazards issues across Washington’s Pacific Coast. The RAD team tested the logistics of the proposed inter-agency Coastal Hazards Organizational Resilience Team (COHORT) and gathered lessons learned for the implementation of a long-term COHORT initiative. In doing so, the RAD team advanced community-driven hazards resilience projects by connecting communities with scientific and technical expertise, coordinated agency support, and funding. Through research, outreach, and targeted support for locally driven projects, the RAD team identified strategies for improving and better coordinating state hazards assistance to Washington’s coastal communities, in service of long-term pre-disaster risk reduction and resilient communities.

The RAD was conducted as a partnership between Washington’s Coastal Zone Management Program, housed at the Washington State Department of Ecology, and Washington Sea Grant. Many partners and collaborators were instrumental in the success of the RAD. They are listed in the acknowledgments section of the final report.

A Coastal Zone Management Project of Special Merit grant from the NOAA Office for Coastal Management (grant #NA19NOS4190144) provided primary funding for the RAD.

Additional information about the report and its appendices can be found on the [RAD webpage](https://wacoastalnetwork.com/resilience-action-demonstration-project/),¹ which is hosted by the Washington Coastal Hazards Resilience Network.

Appendix G cover image credit: Jackson Blalock / Washington Sea Grant, 2020

¹ <https://wacoastalnetwork.com/resilience-action-demonstration-project/>

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Introduction

Purpose of this appendix

This appendix describes considerations for inter-agency support to coastal communities for coastal hazards resilience projects and proposes a strategy for launching the Coastal Hazards Organizational Resilience Team (COHORT). This appendix provides additional considerations to supplement Appendix F: Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT, and focuses on specific functional and logistical details that should be considered upon implementation of inter-agency collaborations such as the COHORT. The insights contained in this appendix are based upon experiences from the Resilience Demonstration Project (RAD), which piloted COHORT concept.

While this appendix describes insights for coordinated inter-agency support following the conclusion of the RAD, other RAD appendices describe additional ways that agencies can support local coastal hazards resilience efforts:

- The Outreach Analysis (Appendix B) describes RAD’s initial 2019–2020 outreach and identifies ways that agencies can support project scoping, collaboration and partnerships, and funding.
- The Project Inventory Analysis (Appendix C) describes project locations, projects proponents, themes, and other characteristics from RAD’s hazards project inventory, which can inform agencies as they seek to strategically support local efforts informed by a coast-wide context.
- The Resilience Principles for Coastal Hazards Projects (Appendix D) describes guiding principles to help coastal hazards risk reduction projects support resilience and identifies ways for agencies to be involved in this work.
- Support for Hazards Resilience Projects: Case Studies and Project Participant Feedback (Appendix E) describes how the RAD team (composed of staff from the Washington State Department of Ecology and Washington Sea Grant) provided inter-agency support for local projects, often in collaboration with other agencies.
- The WCMAC Coastal Resilience Report and Recommendations (Appendix H) describes overall recommendations from the RAD, which involve agencies in various ways.

The considerations and strategy found in this appendix informed the next steps and final deliverables of the RAD by highlighting future opportunities for inter-agency coordination. If a sustained COHORT is established, the RAD team anticipates this appendix to be particularly useful to the work of COHORT member in developing work plans and logistical arrangements upon its launch.

Methods

Throughout the process of carrying out the RAD, the RAD team gathered insights regarding how state and federal agencies can support local coastal hazards resilience and risk reduction. This appendix compiles additional considerations to supplement those in Appendix F: Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT. Based on the considerations described here and in Appendix F, the final section of this appendix proposes a strategy for launching the COHORT.

Piloting inter-agency coordination

The RAD piloted coordinated inter-agency support for locally led hazards resilience projects through a partnership between Washington Sea Grant (WSG) and the Washington State Department of Ecology's Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program (Ecology). This partnership was based on the COHORT model, as conceptualized in the William D. Ruckelshaus Center's 2017 [Washington State Coast Resilience Assessment](https://mrsc.org/getmedia/0498ef44-89e8-46c7-b834-469b992196c6/Washington-Coast-Resilience-Assessment-Report.aspx).² The Ruckelshaus Center originally recommended that the COHORT operate as partnership between Ecology, WSG, Washington State University Extension, and Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD).

The RAD team was composed of two staff positions through the life of the project: one staff position at WSG and one at Ecology. Both staff positions were overseen by senior staff within their organizations who provided additional capacity to the RAD. The WSG staff position was filled by a permanent full-time employee who served as a liaison to Ecology through the duration of the RAD. The Ecology staff position was filled by two consecutive Washington Sea Grant Hershman Fellows, each employed by Ecology for one year.

The RAD team documented internal considerations that arose from the WSG-Ecology collaboration as they conducted outreach, research, direct project support, and other tasks throughout the project's 2019–2021 duration. These are described below. Additional lessons learned from RAD's direct project support are described in Appendix E and summarized below for the COHORT's use.

Additional outreach with agency staff

Along with piloting coordinated inter-agency support, the RAD team also conducted interviews and outreach with state and federal agency staff to understand other opportunities and insights relating to inter-agency coordination. Results from the following outreach activities are synthesized and presented thematically in this appendix:

- The RAD team conducted initial outreach with coastal communities, Tribes, agencies, and other stakeholders between November 2019 and March 2020 (Appendix B). As part of this process, state agencies were interviewed in January and February 2020. While

² <https://mrsc.org/getmedia/0498ef44-89e8-46c7-b834-469b992196c6/Washington-Coast-Resilience-Assessment-Report.aspx>

these interviews focused on inventorying locally led projects and understanding related opportunities or hurdles, they also highlighted insights regarding inter-agency collaboration.

- Throughout the remainder of the project, the RAD team presented regular project updates to the Washington State Hazards Mitigation Working Group (HMWG), led by EMD. Discussion within the HMWG and additional follow-up conversations with individual members produced various insights regarding inter-agency collaboration.
- From February through April 2021, the RAD team conducted semi-structured interviews with state and federal agency staff involved in hazards risk reduction projects and resilience efforts (Figure G-1). The purpose of these interviews was to understand how agencies currently coordinate with each other to provide technical assistance to communities as well as what opportunities may exist for improving this coordination.
- Over the course of the RAD, the RAD team worked with the Washington Coastal Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) to develop coastal hazards resilience recommendations for the Governor's Office (Appendix H). The RAD team hosted a workshop in April 2021 to review draft coastal hazards resilience recommendations with staff from state and federal agencies and Washington State educational institutions and organizations. This workshop helped refine the draft recommendations and produced additional relevant insights.

<p>1. RAD intro, purpose of discussion, + clarifying questions</p> <p>2. The current state of play:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. How do communities currently request assistance?b. How are agencies currently supporting them (responding to requests)?c. To what extent are agencies coordinating with one another to do so?d. What lessons learned do you have from these activities? (such as strengths, weaknesses, needs and/or opportunities uncovered through current processes) <p>3. Potential strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. How could communities <u>request</u> coordinated multi-agency response and assistance for developing resilience projects?b. How could agencies <u>provide</u> coordinated response when communities request assistance? <p>4. Who else should be involved in these conversations?</p>

Figure G-1. Conversation guide used by the RAD team during semi-structured interviews with state and federal agencies between February and April 2021.

The following agencies and organizations directly contributed toward the COHORT strategy and considerations outlined in this appendix:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region X
- Resilience Collaborative Northwest

- United States Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District
- University of Washington Climate Impacts Group
- University of Washington Institute for Hazard Mitigation Planning and Research
- Washington Sea Grant
- Washington State Department of Commerce
- Washington State Department of Ecology Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program
- Washington State Department of Ecology Southwest Regional Office
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Emergency Management Division
- Washington State Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Washington State University Extension
- William D. Ruckelshaus Center

Lessons Learned from the RAD's Pilot of COHORT

The following considerations and insights are based upon experiences during the RAD team's inter-agency partnership between WSG and Ecology, as well as lessons learned that emerged from the team's support for local hazards resilience projects over the course of the pilot program. Additional details on the RAD team's support for locally driven projects is described in Appendix E: Support for Hazards Resilience Projects.

Inter-agency logistical coordination

The RAD team documented the following internal coordination considerations from the WSG-Ecology partnership. Appendix F: Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT also contains relevant logistical and administrative considerations.

Technical considerations

- Internet at agency offices may not be accessible to non-agency staff. Attention should be given to using compatible technology or meeting in spaces that do not have this limitation.
- Use common platforms for file-sharing, calendars, and other services.
- Develop a central digital database and file management system for all COHORT work. Ensure that file management practices are clearly communicated and useful for the team. Update team members about changes to the file management system unless they are collectively initiated. Update team members when changes occur to shared files or directories.

Communications considerations

- There is a need to ensure a shared vision is held across project leads at the beginning of the project. This should be clearly communicated to project staff.
- Clarify staff roles, responsibilities, expectations, and allotted work time for various tasks. Different agencies may have different policies regarding these topics, which could create inequities or tensions across the team.
- Develop a commonly accessible document for reviewing the status and details of project elements.
- Maintain strong communication through regular meetings and note-taking: err on the side of over-communication. This involves a shared awareness of team members' activities and including team members on invitations to meetings and other events as necessary. The team must strike a balance between conducting collaborative work and working independently.
- Schedule regular meetings, check-ins, and working sessions for collaborators and minimize side-channel conversations or decisions that do not engage the larger group.
- Utilize regular standing meetings to ensure group participation. Meetings, check-ins, and working sessions can be difficult to schedule with team members from multiple

agencies. Plan meetings well in advance to ensure that participation in collaborative sessions is feasible and prioritized.

- Timely feedback from team members and supervisors is necessary (such as when requesting feedback on reports or when requesting group input on strategic decisions).
- Differing viewpoints among staff (from different agencies, particularly) can produce creative and strong outcomes. This requires listening skills, patience, willingness to compromise, and creating a safe space where different perspectives can be shared freely.

Project development considerations

- Successful workflows involved the RAD team meeting to outline and discuss next steps, breaking apart to work to a logical stopping point, and then reconvening for discussion, troubleshooting and outlining next steps. This would continue until the task was complete, allowing for iteration and collaborative project development.
- Leverage team members' abilities: allow team members to review materials but do not get bogged down in unnecessary editing or critique at the expense of more productive activities.
- Ensure ample flexible time is allocated to scope potential projects and explore opportunities. This initial work may not have a funding stream directly connected to specific work, but may be necessary to develop projects that support resilience.
- The COHORT could support multiple projects applying for the same funds. There is a need to clarify how to manage differential treatment across projects applying for the same funding or that are otherwise in competition, while remaining neutral and not irresponsibly sharing competing parties' strategies.
- It is helpful for a single team member to be the primary point of contact with specific communities or projects. However, this requires strong communication between this team member and the rest of the team, and other team members may be able to develop their own relationships with these communities or projects that serve different functions.

Actions to support coastal hazards resilience

Based upon the RAD team's success in supporting locally led projects, the COHORT would be effective in supporting coastal hazards resilience through the following actions:

- Helping local project proponents to 1) become aware of funding programs, 2) connect with grant sponsors and prepare to meet with them, 3) understand technical language, 4) outline scopes of work for proposals, 5) provide necessary information and maps, 6) review proposal drafts, and 7) fill roles necessary to complete these efforts. These activities can directly address limited local capacity to produce competitive applications.
- Providing information and resources to support the consideration of alternative and potentially more resilient approaches, informed by the RAD Resilience Principles for Coastal Hazards Projects (Appendix D). Local jurisdiction staff found RAD's resilience

principles helpful for understanding how to think through and scope a more resilient project that would also score well in a competitive funding program. There may be a tendency for some project developers to take more traditional “tried-and-true” approaches to hazard mitigation as opposed to less conventional nature-based or large-scale³ approaches. There appears to be value in sharing these principles and iteratively revising them through continued local use and feedback.

- Directly supporting the following resilience principles within coastal hazards projects. These are the principles that the COHORT may be best equipped to help address (see Appendix D: Resilience Principles for Coastal Hazards Projects for the full list of principles).
 - Principle 2a: Address immediate concerns, aligned with a long-term vision.
 - Principle 2b: Incorporate place- and process-based design, considering past, present and future conditions; engaging with adjacent areas; and implementing nature-based solutions that enhance ecological systems.
 - Principle 3d: Span multiple jurisdictions, management regimes, and land uses, with an emphasis on collaboration among Tribes, counties, cities, and private landowners.
- Developing strategies to support the following principles. These principles were more difficult to fulfill through the RAD’s project support. To address these principles, the COHORT may need to provide focused attention, inclusive and intentional engagement, connection to additional perspectives or resources, or other strategies to further innovation.
 - Principle 2c: Support additional community benefits, such as economic development, food sovereignty, or access to housing.
 - Principle 3a: Explore creative or new options for funding and coordinating investments in community resilience (including matching funds), such as local improvement districts, public–private partnerships, and grant support beyond existing resilience-focused programs.
 - Principle 3c: Support or build local capacity.⁴
- Bringing local perspectives and project proponents into conversations with hard-to-reach content experts at state agencies to develop funding proposals that are detailed, actionable, forward-thinking, and in service of local priorities.
- Bringing together agencies, local jurisdictions, Tribes, and other organizations to 1) support discussion about hazards resilience in the region, 2) strengthen relationships, and 3) assist the identification and exchange of new data, models, and information.

³ For example, addressing hazards issues in a synergistic manner across an entire shoreline rather than addressing hazards affecting individual properties.

⁴ This principle refers to a project that supports or builds local capacity through its lifetime. This does not account for the RAD or COHORT’s ability to address local capacity limitations through direct support.

- Assisting project proponents to secure letters of support and write grant proposal content related to hazards mitigation, technical information, resilience, and connections between immediate hazards impacts and broader issues in the area—in addition to scoping support prior to grant writing.
- Aiding limited local capacity by submitting outreach, planning, or assessment proposals to further resilience efforts informed by local visions. To ensure that these projects are locally driven, the project methodology must focus on substantial and meaningful collaboration with local entities to ensure their perspectives and needs inform the purpose of the work in all aspects.

Collaboration with project proponents

The following process insights apply to the early stages of collaborations between local project proponents and the COHORT:

- Impromptu informal check-ins can support relationships and launch discussions that lead to collaboration. For example, emails congratulating a local organization on recent accomplishments indirectly related to the COHORT may lead to awareness of new locally led project concepts and opportunities for early support and scoping.
- Extreme events and corresponding emergency repairs provide a valuable opportunity for state and regional organizations to support the local community to better understand issues at hand and develop a long-term strategy for the area being impacted.
- If possible, a local project proponent, or “local champion” who is directly connected to the project, may be best suited to lead and convene project scoping and proposal submission processes, but the COHORT can provide valuable input and legwork to move these processes forward.
- Early and continued conversations between the project proponents and grant sponsors are essential for developing competitive and complete funding proposals.

The following process insights apply to sustaining collaborations and resilience work:

- Hazards resilience efforts may be successfully driven by local volunteers and community activists, with support from local, state, federal, and Tribal staff. However, it is extremely difficult to sustain inclusive and effective collaborations without facilitation and coordination of the group beyond the duration of most grant timelines. Securing funding for long-term facilitation and coordination services remains a challenge.
- Even though some proposals were not selected for funding, they still produced extremely useful outcomes. These include formation of new working relationships, setting the stage for future state support and collaboration, and outlining scopes of work for use with future funding opportunities.

Insights from Interviews with Agency Staff

The following considerations and insights are based on the RAD team’s conversations and collaboration with staff from other state and federal agencies throughout the RAD, as well as semi-structured interviews conducted by the RAD team with agency staff between February and April 2021. These key takeaways are likely to be useful to ensure successful COHORT formation and implementation. They are intended to supplement, emphasize, and provide further detail on the information found within the Ruckelshaus Center’s Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT (Appendix F).

Inter-agency coordination necessary to implement the COHORT

There is a need for intentional funding, learning, and operations agreements among agencies for COHORT collaboration to be successful.

- Each COHORT agency should fund a dedicated FTE for this work, who would coordinate with additional staff within their respective agency on an as-needed basis. The COHORT should function through secured funding—not competitive grants—and employ sustained staff. This will avoid the need to regularly hire and train new staff and allow the COHORT staff to build relationships, understanding, and trust with communities.
- Dedicated commitment is necessary for some agencies to collaborate with other agencies and put their own reputation or relationships on the line. Increased resilience doesn’t always require formal partnerships, but it can require flexibility or time to focus on this work, which may be beyond agency-specific staff duties.
- The COHORT will require learning on the part of each participating agency and staff. Staff will have to gain an understanding of the full life cycle of projects and make connections with other agency staff who can provide support and expertise. Similarly, training in resilience concepts will assist COHORT activities, strategy, and common understandings (see the section on “Potential COHORT-led actions to support coastal hazards resilience,” below).
- COHORT staff should work out of a location(s) in coastal communities, following the university extension model. It is desirable for COHORT staff to live in these communities.
- Acknowledge and incorporate agency buzzwords, programs, detailed needs, and missions when planning COHORT structure and activities to ensure coordination moving forward.
- Define operational boundaries for the work that the COHORT provides to ensure that work aligns with a core mission and support is equitably distributed across the Washington Coast. Boundaries should be flexible guidelines that are adaptable to best meet emerging coast-wide resilience needs.

The COHORT's mission would be more readily accomplished if, in addition to the four core agencies initially proposed (Ecology, WSG, WSU Extension, and Emergency Management Division), the following agencies and organizations were also involved in the COHORT's work:

- The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) could liaise with the COHORT, as coastal hazards mitigation projects often overlap USACE jurisdiction. USACE staff expressed significant interest in identifying an individual for this role.
- University of Washington Climate Impacts Group was regularly mentioned throughout RAD outreach as a trusted source of data and information and may be able to contribute toward climate resilience and sea level rise planning-related work.
- Washington State Department of Commerce needs to be involved to achieve bigger, long-term, and more resilient solutions. This was originally suggested in 2019's Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT (Appendix F).
- Washington State Department of Health involvement would support long-term planning, particularly related to foundational community resilience issues (for example, public health and adaptive capacity) and to climate change (for example, understanding and responding to erosion impacts on water quality). Coordination with Washington State Department of Health's and Department of Social and Health Service's community clinics, local public health plans and performance measures, and Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) can help address additional local needs.
- The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) maintains essential infrastructure and has an abundance of potential projects (such as those catalogued by the Chronic Environmental Deficiencies program). However, WSDOT is primarily focused on emergencies and maintenance issues. Though WSDOT's Washington Transportation Plan establishes a 20-year vision for the development of the statewide transportation system, individual projects' planning horizons do not extend beyond a 10-year plan. Additionally, there are few WSDOT staff focused on erosion. To engage WSDOT in COHORT activities, a potential pilot project could be created that involves the COHORT, the Chronic Environmental Deficiencies program, and local and regional offices within WSDOT's southwest Washington and Olympic regions.

Potential COHORT-led actions to support coastal hazards resilience

The COHORT should develop a shared understanding of resilience and how projects can further resilience, with a recognition that resilience will take different forms for different communities. Existing COHORT-related resources provide a background on resilience concepts with specific application to the Pacific Coast of Washington.⁵ This is the first hurdle before the COHORT can identify gaps in existing projects that seek to further resilience. Suggested steps include:

- Developing clearly communicated and actionable understandings of resilience, and how to apply and incorporate this in the work of the COHORT as well as the work of coastal communities.
- Distinguishing among emergency response, mitigation, and longer-term resilience efforts, and understand how to further resilience through emergency response and mitigation efforts.
- Recognizing that mitigation planning is not necessarily resilience planning, and build toward the latter. This involves asking, “What makes different coastal communities more or less resilient, and how can the COHORT contribute to this resilience over time?”
- Being careful not to limit the COHORT’s focus solely to “hazards” resilience. Social cohesion and the enabling environment (such as the strength of the local economy and other factors) are critical factors in resilience and will determine whether regional approaches to address hazards are sustainable: resilience to hazards may be improved by actions that do not directly mitigate hazards. Additionally, a focus limited to hazards resilience might exclude the interests of other agencies and organizations that have important resources and capabilities.
- Basing COHORT work on communities’ perspectives and insights (“meeting communities where they are at”), acknowledging which activities are not translating into desired outcomes, and working to address the root causes which limit local and regional capabilities. This is a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down planning approach, which encourages action by starting with near-term activities. This should, in turn, create better plans that identify specific actions and alternatives.
- Developing an evaluation tool for understanding the resilience impacts of projects.
- Additional approaches to further resilience include:
 - Emphasizing outreach, relationship-building, storytelling, and coastal advocacy as social cohesion is a key component of resilience.
 - Implementing assets- and values-based approaches.

⁵ See Appendix D. Resilience Principles for Coastal Hazards Projects, Appendix F. Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT (with particular attention to “Guiding Principles for the Consideration of Options”), and the Ruckelshaus Center’s Washington State Coast Resilience Assessment: <https://mrsc.org/getmedia/0498ef44-89e8-46c7-b834-469b992196c6/Washington-Coast-Resilience-Assessment-Report.aspx> .

- Focusing on regional coordination, systems-thinking approaches, ecological dynamics and climate change, and addressing multiple planning horizons through work: near-term, medium-term, and long-term.
- Acknowledging that a project-first approach is useful and may be most actionable, and that long-range planning is necessary to avoid future projects. Both can happen simultaneously.

With the above considerations in mind, the COHORT could undertake the following programs and other specific actions:

- Supporting communication and coordination across jurisdictions and Tribes in furtherance of projects, plans, and resilience efforts.
 - Regional action-oriented working groups (“action groups”) focused on local priorities (such as erosion or ecological education) could be coordinated through local and regional organizations (such as Marine Resources Committees) or agencies. Agencies may be able to be involved through their existing roles, but local organizations may need focused funding and personnel support to participate effectively.
 - Coordinating regular conversations with multiple agencies and local partners to share the status of current projects, near-term plans, and long-term visions. This would also support neighboring jurisdictions’ engagement with each other during development of plans.
- Developing a central web-based access point⁶ where communities can request resilience-focused project coordination, connect to other communities and practitioners, and become oriented to coastal hazards and resilience. This will increase accessibility to the COHORT beyond existing personal relationships.
 - This could take the form of a regular coast-wide working group, a website (such as the [Washington Coastal Hazards Resilience Network](http://www.wacoastalnetwork.com)),⁷ or a Joint Hazards Resilience Assistance Request (similar to the Washington State JARPA or Grays Harbor Conservation District’s [Technical Assistance Request Form](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f8189beae9d74ef49df2244bdb395eba))⁸
 - Include a central access point where communities can apply for permits (such as a potential Joint Hazards Permit) with minimal effort.
 - Conduct focused and sustained outreach to multiple audiences to publicize and ensure the efficacy of this tool. This could involve a series of locally focused “research open house” events and networking events.
 - Resources on this website could include datasets and plans produced by agencies (such as WSDOT’s unstable slope portfolio) and contact points for support on hazards and resilience issues for use by communities and agencies.

⁶ See the Washington Coastal Hazards Resilience Network and the in-development hazards web portal by the Washington State Office of the Chief Information Officer.

⁷ www.wacoastalnetwork.com

⁸ <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f8189beae9d74ef49df2244bdb395eba>

- Details about in-progress and completed projects across the coast including lessons learned (by project and in aggregate), contact information for project proponents and agency participants, and how partnerships were formed.
- Undertaking specific actions to support locally driven coastal hazards resilience efforts.
 - Building sustained partnerships, filling technical advisory roles, identifying alternative sources of funding outside of grant programs, and providing capacity support to local organizations' projects.⁹
 - Supporting development of local and regional plans (such as Hazard Mitigation Plans, or Comprehensive Flood Management Plans) with more robust technical and community-sourced information.¹⁰ These plans would identify potential projects or other actions in order to be more competitive for grant funds.
 - Link Hazard Mitigation Plans, Comprehensive Plans, and Capital Facilities Plans in order to focus all on resilience through one activity.¹¹ This increases the likelihood of creating Capital Facilities Plans where they do not currently exist.
 - Assisting communities to develop resilience-focused strategies during or after emergency events and maintenance activities. Funds for resilience development could be directly tied to emergency events¹², which could be used to support resiliently scoped projects, plans, research, or local capacity/staffing that addresses both near-term and long-term support. Forward-thinking emergency management can initiate sustainable long-term activities.
 - Developing handbooks with steps to take for hazards (see Emergency Management Division's Manual for Vertical Evacuation Towers) and for scoping resilience projects (see Appendix D. Resilience Principles for Coastal Hazards Projects). Audiences could include local jurisdictions, Tribes, private parcel-owners and coastal businesses. This approach has shown success in many places but should not replace in-person collaboration.

⁹ This may involve being written into funding for these projects or providing support to projects without being written into project funding.

¹⁰ Ecology's Flood Control Assistance Account Program may be able to support these planning efforts if legislative funds are increased beyond 2019–2021 levels.

¹¹ FEMA, Washington State Emergency Management Division, and Washington State Department of Commerce are currently surveying planners to understand how to support the alignment of multiple plans.

¹² This is a similar approach to FEMA's Advance Assistance funds, which are made available after a disaster declaration. However, the proposed funding program would have an explicit focus on resilience and be administered by Washington State.

Potential COHORT-led actions to increase local capacity

Ideas for increasing local capacity through increased staffing and personnel include:

- Funding additional staff from local jurisdictions and Tribes to focus on resilience. Resilience-focused local staff could communicate and coordinate similar to the COHORT model. Funding for these positions could be sourced directly from Washington State or employ a variety of strategies for supplementing limited local funds, such as matching taxpayer dollars in order to increase organizational capacity. Local staff could be housed within public works and planning departments, county special districts, and integrated economic development councils, or otherwise.
- Funding county Hazard Mitigation Coordinators within County Emergency Management offices.
- Increasing capacity within Marine Resources Committees through increased funding, new staffed positions, collaborative goal-setting, and/or restructuring.
- Assisting county special districts to access increased funding and assisting the creation of and funding for new county special districts when they don't exist.
- Connecting local project champions with resources.

Ideas for increasing local capacity through programming and specific activities include:

- Encouraging inclusive participation and being deliberate when engaging with paid and unpaid audiences.
- Working with existing organizations to develop a sequence of programs across age groups that further local resilience activities and industries¹³. This would include school curricula and programs, community programs, job training, support for emerging project proponents, and locally based fellowships or hires into jurisdictions and Tribes to support initiatives.
- Incentivizing “going above and beyond” through projects, planning, or outreach that employ resilience principles.
- Providing funds and support¹⁴ for county-scale collaborative forums with specific goals and resilience approaches.
- Setting aside funds to engage specific audiences in order to support inclusive multi-benefit resilience efforts.
- Trainings and outreach to develop stronger local advocacy to legislators in order to get projects prioritized and funded.
- Supporting local data management capacity, including GIS, long-term datasets, websites, and documentation of past, present, and potential projects. This could also involve new local staff positions.

¹³ This is based in WSU Wahkiakum County Extension's “grow your own scientists” approach and applied to a resilience context.

¹⁴ Ecology's Flood Control Assistance Program may be able to fund this for flood-related issues.

- Engaging local and regional colleges and other educational institutions in resilience work.
- Promoting Marine Resources Committee meetings and other events as venues for collaborative project development. Additional funds, technical support, or other assistance may be needed to enable the volunteer-based Marine Resources Committees to take on new roles.

Challenges to providing assistance through the COHORT

Hurdles to effective agency engagement with communities include:

- Many partnerships between agencies and local communities are based on personal relationships, which can lead to agency resources going to the “loudest voices in the room” or communities with the capacity to seek out and sustain these relationships. This may not result in inclusive or equitable outcomes across the coast.
- “Squeaky wheel” agencies may draw other agencies into local conversations, which can aid efforts and grow opportunities for resilience, but is not a reliable strategy for building partnerships.
- There is often a lack of local capacity to scope, plan, fund, lead, sustain, and maintain hazards risk reduction or resilience projects. This in turn limits agencies’ ability to assist local needs.
- Agencies connect with local jurisdictions and Tribes in a variety of ways; however, there is no single organization that is dedicated to supporting communities’ coastal hazards resilience or broader community resilience and to connecting communities to relevant resources.
- Many agencies only interact through permitting processes or on an as-needed basis. Similarly, some agencies get requests for support concerning topics outside of their realm of expertise, but do not know which individuals or agencies would be best suited to respond.

Hurdles to connecting coastal hazards resilience efforts with resources include:

- Limited financial resources on the coast result in many projects that are reliant on grant funds. However, grant funds are limited, and these same financial resource limitations often result in limited local staffing capacity to successfully apply for and manage grants. “Lack of local capacity is a KEY issue.”
- Projects seeking federal funds for resilience on the rural Pacific Coast may be overshadowed by proposals from higher-population coastlines, which have greater capacity to develop strong project proposals and advocacy¹⁵.

¹⁵ The RAD team found that it can be hard for the US Army Corps of Engineers to justify allocating funds for some of Washington Coast’s coastal storm risk management projects. Washington Coast projects are less competitive, as the proposal review process is more geared toward projects on the Atlantic Coast that affect areas with higher population densities.

- Proposals for funding and support often have to fit within agency-defined criteria, which may miss community priorities and opportunities for resilience. Additionally, community-identified or agency-identified projects and priorities may miss opportunities for resilience.
- The Benefit–Cost Analysis for federal funding programs can favor traditional approaches, which may not represent current best practices, local nuances, or multi-benefit resilience (such as bulkhead repairs done in perpetuity, or installation rip rap along shorelines).
- Many consultants and contractors are not local, a source of “economic leakage” and a missed opportunity for supporting local economic resilience.

Strategy for Launching the COHORT

This section proposes a series of actionable first steps to implement upon launch of the COHORT, based on the considerations described previously in this appendix and in Appendix F: Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT. It does not summarize all considerations from these two appendices, but selects and sequences considerations applicable to the initial steps of the COHORT. The actions listed below are applicable to each of the three “Establishment” considerations as outlined on page 12 of Appendix F.

When identifying funds, staff, and inter-agency coordination for the COHORT launch, COHORT agencies should:

- Fund a dedicated permanent FTE from each agency.
- Ensure that COHORT staff work in coastal communities and co-locate these positions.
- Designate a half or full-time operations coordinator to handle logistics, basic communications, office finances, technical support and website maintenance, and essential administrative duties. This could also be achieved through an existing position or through fellowships.
- Develop formal inter-agency agreements or MOUs/MOAs between all participating agencies. The agreement would bind all agencies to the partnership; define the roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies and their staff; set out principles for coordination, collaboration, and communication; identify fiscal responsibilities; and set up internal management structures (see actions described below for additional detail on these items).
- Identify an administrative lead agency that would be responsible for managing the core administrative functions of the office. See Appendix F for additional details.
- Assign a designated unit manager or supervisor in each agency to each COHORT member to support the COHORT member operationally; assign an intra-agency lead, who is a higher-level manager, to provide leadership, conflict resolution, integration, and communication within the agency to support the COHORT politically; and develop an inter-agency leadership team, composed of the intra-agency leads to support the COHORT partnership objectives, resolve conflicts, and provide guidance. See Appendix F for additional details.
- Develop an overall community advisory structure for oversight of the COHORT, with guidance from Tribes and WCMAC, as described in Appendix F.

In order to develop a common vision for the COHORT’s activities, the COHORT should:

- Create a productive working environment by designating time for COHORT staff to get to know each other’s skills and approaches to work, the goals and needs of their respective agencies, their existing connections to communities of the Pacific Coast, and their perspectives on furthering resilience. Incorporate these learnings into the COHORT’s work plan, with a focus on both assets to leverage and gaps to fill.

- Develop a charter to guide the work of the COHORT and to establish its intent with the member agencies. The charter would lay out the COHORT’s purpose, mission, and roles and responsibilities. The charter would incorporate the “Guiding Principles” stated in the Washington State Coast Resilience Assessment.
- Develop a shared evaluation tool for tracking progress and understanding the resilience impacts of projects.
- Develop a clearly communicated and actionable understanding of resilience¹⁶ for external communications, COHORT project evaluation, and other applications.

When planning inter-agency working logistics for the COHORT launch, the COHORT should:

- Agree upon a data-sharing platform that works for all COHORT agencies to share information on common projects.
- Based on this data-sharing platform, create a file management system for active projects; a database of local priorities, potential projects, opportunities, assets, and hurdles (see RAD’s project inventory); a database for relationship tracking; a database for documenting lessons learned and additional insights; and documentation of how COHORT activities further resilience on a case-by-case and integrated basis.
- Schedule frequent (for example, every other week) standing internal meetings for the COHORT to provide updates, gather group feedback, and discuss strategy. Continuous project-specific communications will be necessary in addition to regular group check-ins.
- Develop a central working website for communities to learn about and connect with the COHORT, to be built out over time. Designate how updates will occur and how the COHORT will communicate website needs with the operations coordinator or other individuals providing technical support.
- Consider additional communications needs identified in Appendix F.

When determining projects to provide initial assistance to,¹⁷ the COHORT should:

- Use the COHORT’s database of potential projects to identify projects that can contribute to resilience and are ready to move forward, as well as projects that will require additional relationship-building, capacity support, scoping, or other needs. Identify these additional needs, how they can be addressed, and the people and organizations to involve.

¹⁶ See Appendix D: Resilience Principles for Coastal Hazards Projects and “Guiding Principles” described in both Appendix F: Options and Considerations for Implementing the COHORT and the Ruckelshaus Center’s Washington State Coast Resilience Assessment: <https://mrsc.org/getmedia/0498ef44-89e8-46c7-b834-469b992196c6/Washington-Coast-Resilience-Assessment-Report.aspx>

¹⁷ Coastal hazards resilience projects may involve planning and capacity building activities, education and outreach, permitting and design, physical construction, or other activities and initiatives.

- Identify opportunities to build trust with communities, with attention to supporting limited local capacity.¹⁸
- Ensure that the COHORT balances assistance across a diverse range of project types, physical scales, timelines, and communities while maintaining a focus on the net impact of the COHORT's work and mutually reinforcing activities, through regular discussion about and assessment of emerging activities. When common themes arise across multiple projects (such as the need to involve a specific non-COHORT participant), document these learnings and adapt the COHORT's activities and strategy accordingly in order to better support resilience.

¹⁸ Capacity limitations will be context-specific. For coast-wide issues, opportunities, and other capacity-related themes, see Appendix D, Appendix G, Appendix H, and the *Washington State Coast Resilience Assessment*.