

Resilience Exchange Brings Together East Coast Defense Communities

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Image: Participants from OLDCC Installation and Community Resilience Exchange. (Throwe Environmental)

By **KYLE GRAY/Throwe Environmental**

NEWPORT, R.I. — After two days in the historic City of Newport, [Throwe Environmental](#) concluded a peer-to-peer workshop that engaged federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private sector participants from military bases and defense communities from Maine to Florida to discuss off-base climate resilience.

The Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) Installation and Community Resilience Exchange was held in Newport, RI on September 26th and 27th as part of an ongoing Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) for St. Mary's County, MD. Funded by the [US Department of Defense's OLDCC](#), MIRR projects examine how to enhance the resilience of military bases and their host communities.

In partnership with the Low Impact Development Center (LID Center), [Throwe is working with St. Mary's County and Naval Air Station Patuxent River \(NAS PAX\) to perform an MIRR](#). A core deliverable of Throwe's work on the project was a peer-to-peer exchange with other defense communities that have completed or will soon conduct MIRRs.

Exchange participants joined from across the East Coast, and included Anne Arundel (MD) County Executive Steuart Pittman and staff; City of Annapolis (MD) Mayor Gavin Buckley and staff; City of Newport (RI) Mayor Xaykham Rexford Khamsyvovong; representatives from the Offices of US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI) and Congressman Seth Magaziner (RI-02); OLDCC program staff; Community Planning Liaison Officers from three military installations (Naval Station Newport/Naval War College, Naval Submarine Base New London, Naval Support Activity Annapolis/US Naval Academy); the Maryland Department of Commerce; the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank's Aquidneck Island Regional Resilience Coordinator; St. Mary's County, MD; Charles County, MD; the Town of Groton, CT; the Town of Kittery, ME; the [Town of Portsmouth, RI](#); the University of Rhode Island; the [Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County](#); the LID Center; and Jacobs Engineering, which has been engaged in OLDCC projects in several Florida military communities, including those around the South Florida Ocean Measurement Facility, USAG-Miami/US SOUTHCOM, Homestead Air Reserve Base, NAS Key West, Eglin AFB, Hurlburt Field, NAS Pensacola, NAS Whiting, Tyndall AFB, NSA Panama City.

Throwe also engaged several additional stakeholders prior to the Exchange, including staff from the Offices of US Senators Jack Reed (RI); State Representative Lauren Carson (RI-75); NAS PAX; the [Town of Bourne, MA](#); and the [Town of Middletown, RI](#).

The first day of the Exchange was hosted at [Innovate Newport](#), a collaborative initiative between the City, Newport County Development Council, and the Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island. The workshop included discussions about the current St. Mary's County/NAS PAX MIRR; best practices for a successful OLDCC project; collaboration and communication between installation and defense community stakeholders and emergency management teams; and creating Defense Community Wealth Funds to better leverage local assets, generate sustainable revenue streams, and advance priority resilience efforts. Topics covered included equity, alternative

energy, water quality and quantity, housing accessibility and affordability, transportation and evacuation, natural resources and habitat protection, broadband and fiber optics, and emergency communications.

Following the workshop, the [Newport Restoration Foundation](#), which holds one of the nation's largest portfolios of historic architecture owned by a single organization, hosted participants for site visits of some of its cultural assets most at-risk to sea-level rise and flooding.

The second day of the Exchange was hosted at Middletown's [Norman Bird Sanctuary](#), which stewards the largest contiguous open space on Aquidneck Island. The session introduced participants to an emergency planning "tabletop exercise" where they worked through four scenarios, exploring how their community might collaborate with military installations to address a range of resilience challenges.

The unique Exchange connected military communities across the Eastern Seaboard with each other to discuss common challenges and opportunities. The event also connected OLDCC program staff with grantees, creating a direct line of communication between funders and recipients.

The Exchange engaged nearly 40 individuals over the span of two days.

[St. Mary's County](#) was founded in 1637 in Southern Maryland. St. Mary's County is the host jurisdiction to Naval Air Station Patuxent River (NAS PAX), which was commissioned in 1943.



[Throwe Environmental, LLC](#) assists federal, state, and local governments; institutions of higher learning; businesses; and nonprofit organizations in finding innovative and effective solutions to a broad array of environmental challenges. Throwe is committed to developing climate resilience, environmental finance, and policy and governance solutions for its public, private, and nonprofit clients. Throwe Environmental is based in Bristol, RI and helps communities nationwide address their climate challenges.



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