

## Research across borders: Community-University Alliance

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Over the next five years the [Ocean Management Research Network](#) (OMRN) will be involved as a partner organization in a university and community research alliance (CURA) project entitled, “Coastal Communities Challenges in the Face of Climate Change”. The project will look at the challenges communities in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence currently face due to a rapidly changing climate.

This [Community-University Research Alliance](#) (CURA) will create new partnerships across the St. Lawrence. This alliance includes nine community partners (Coalition-SGSL, Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island, Comité ZIP des Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Conseil de bassin versant de la rivière Bonaventure, Stratégies Saint-Laurent, Regroupement des organismes de bassins versants, Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord, Réseau de recherche sur les océans du Canada, and l'Observatoire Global du Saint-Laurent) and 22 researchers from universities in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Québec, and Ontario.

The committee, involved in guiding the efforts of this alliance, includes: Steve Plante, Université du Québec à Rimouski; Irene Novaczek, Institute of Island Studies; Omer Chouinard, Université de Moncton; Liette Vasseur, Brock University; and Chantal Gagnon, Coalition-SGSL.

The goal of this CURA project is to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence through participatory action research and the co-construction and co-production of adaptive modes of governance. The process will reinforce regional research capacities and the sharing of knowledge and tools for resource management.

This CURA will focus on:

- 1) strengthening the resilience (ability to recover after an extreme event) of individuals and communities, as well as taking into account the long-term sustainability of communities operating in a critical but vulnerable ecosystem;
- 2) understanding the complexity and uncertainty surrounding social systems and environmental phenomena that force local individuals, involved in development, to consider knowledge from both so-called scientific/sociological "experts" and the local community; and
- 3) integrating these different types of knowledge to define community and ecosystem vulnerability levels in order to increase their resilience.

For the OMRN, this CURA is a learning, capacity building, and networking opportunity. It will contribute our constitutional goals and mandate, and bring meaningful coastal resilience research to community decision makers in the region. It will help further collaboration across jurisdictions and cultures to assist in creating resilient communities in the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence. Stay abreast of developments and bookmark, the Coastal Communities' Challenges – CURA team website at [www.coastalcommunitieschallenges.org](http://www.coastalcommunitieschallenges.org).

For more information please contact:

Steve Plante (UQAR)  
Co-director Coastal Communities' Challenges CURA  
Tél : (418) 723-1986 poste 1456  
Courriel : [Steve\\_Plante@UQAR.ca](mailto:Steve_Plante@UQAR.ca)  
<http://splante.uqar.qc.ca>

Chantal Gagnon (CVSGSL)  
Co-director Coastal Communities' Challenges CURA  
Tél: (506) 858-4495  
Courriel : [coord@coalition-sgsl.ca](mailto:coord@coalition-sgsl.ca)  
[www.coalition-sgsl.ca](http://www.coalition-sgsl.ca)