

Rising Sea Levels: State provides coastal communities new planning resources

November 14, 2022



Climate change is causing sea levels around the world to rise, which is impacting Oregon's coastlines and coastal communities, according to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (ODLC).

As demonstrated by king tides, sea level rise will make existing erosion and flooding patterns worse in coastal regions and put pressure on already stressed ecosystems and freshwater resources. The Oregon Coastal Management Program (OCMP) has created tools to assist communities in planning for these impacts and continues to lead a community science effort documenting Oregon's king tides.

The sea level rise adaptation planning toolkit is a set of three resources for local governments and communities to assess and address the impacts of sea level rise:

Sea Level Rise Impact Explorer is an interactive, online planning tool that covers all of Oregon's coast zone areas. The tool illustrates coastal areas that are likely to be impacted by sea level rise over the next 30-50 years. Inclusion of an area in the SLR planning area could mean permanent inundation or that the area will be impacted periodically by high tide flooding, storm surge, or erosion events.

Sea Level Rise Impact Assessment Tool is a digital workbook designed to help users inventory what activities take place within areas affected by sea level rise, assess vulnerability to harm, and prioritize further investigation into remedial and adaptive actions. Completing the workbook serves as a jurisdiction's or organization's vulnerability assessment.

Sea Level Rise Planning Guide for Coastal Oregon is a document that provides a suggested approach to evaluating the assets at risk from the impacts of sea level rise. It offers potential adaptation strategies to adapt

to those impacts within Oregon's regulatory framework. The guide provides authoritative information about sea level rise projections and impacts. It is intended to guide local planning, capital improvements, and development decisions on the Oregon Coast that support community resilience and ensure effective coastal management.

To help document the highest tides of the year, and contribute to the library of images that helps us envision a future with sea level rise, volunteers from every part of the Oregon coast are needed to take photos of this winter's king tide events.

From Nov. 24 - 26, 2022; Dec. 22 - 24, 2022; and January 20 - 22, 2023, these high tide events will give communities a preview of the impacts of sea level rise along the Oregon coast. The thirteen years of data and photos gathered through the King Tides project have helped the OCMP create the sea level rise adaptation resources now available.

The Oregon King Tides program will host several events throughout the winter season about how to participate in this community science effort and about current climate change research. The king tides website has information about how to become involved and submit photos.

Sea-level rise rates are slower in Oregon than other parts of the country, but Oregon's coast, particularly the central coast, is experiencing sea level rise every year. The coming years will bring higher tides, and more inundation of coastal communities. OCMP staff are available to help interested communities apply the planning resources and create a plan for an adapted future.

Be Safe

Whenever you are on the Oregon Coast it is imperative that you keep an eye on the ocean at all times. Never put yourself in danger. Be very cautious of rising water, eroding shorelines, flooded roadways, and high winds during any extreme high tide events.

Resources

All three sea level rise adaptation resources are found on the Oregon Coastal Atlas website: www.coastalatlantlas.net/sealevelrise. This is an active area of continued research, and the OCMP will continue to update these resources as new data and information becomes available.

To find out more about the Oregon King Tides Project and to submit photos to the long-term photo library, visit the Oregon King Tides Project website: www.oregonkingtides.net or the project's Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/orkingtide/albums>.

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About The Oregon Coastal Management Program

Oregon is one of 34 states to have a nationally recognized Coastal Management Program established by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. The Oregon Coastal Management Program (OCMP) aims to protect coastal and ocean resources, and ensure livable, resilient communities on the Oregon Coast.

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development is the lead agency in the coastal program network, which also includes 11 state agencies and 42 city and county governments.