

Old Saybrook Conservation Circular

Vol. 2 / Winter 2015

European Approaches to Sea Level Rise

Dutch experts on flood-control are consulted worldwide because of millenia of experience in the Netherlands with dikes, floodgates, etc.

Visit :
<http://yale.us1.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=b70b711355cbb09eb9f5e5702&id=c4a7605437&e=bc8117c5c4>

for a look at how the Dutch port of Rotterdam and the German port of Hamburg are embracing new "building with nature" strategies to meet heightened challenges in this era of climate change.

Eye of the Storm

Several years ago, two tropical storms in consecutive years (Irene in 2012 and Sandy in 2013) precipitated all along the east coast an increased awareness of the approaching impact of sea level rise (SLR) as a result of warming oceans and melting glaciers. These storms were major factors that led to the formation of the Sea Level Rise and Climate Adaptation Committee (SLRCAC), a sub-committee of Old Saybrook's Conservation Commission.



Bliss Street at high tide

The mission of the SLRCAC was to develop policy recommendations and an action plan for Old Saybrook, both to mitigate and to adapt to the effects of SLR and climate change in the near future, about twenty years. The committee also made recommendations for the protection of the town's natural resources and public health. The charge

included the mandate for the SLRCAC to educate the people of Old Saybrook about its findings.

Where are we? Where are we going? How do we get there? These were the questions addressed by the SLRCAC.

Where are we? You have probably noticed more frequent nuisance flooding of our streets, properties, and marshes -- more intense downpours (such as the rainfall in Islip NY in August 2015 that dropped 14 inches in 24 hours) -- flood-insurance premiums rising by 400-500% -- constantly higher tides. We are already experiencing the impact of climate change and SLR on our built and natural environment.

Where are we going? **Sea level is projected to rise between one and four feet over the next 50 years**, and national projections are constantly being revised to reflect even greater urgency. Over the past eight months the SLRCAC invited experts in many areas to report on critical issues and approaches so as to educate itself about the immediacy and the complexity of the problems we face now and in the near future. The SLRCAC presented its findings and recommendations at a combined meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance on September 15th. It has also held a series of public forums to educate the community and to invite feedback.

continued...

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Tip

Now that the leaves have fallen, it is time to strengthen our lawns and gardens for the winter. Leaves make a great mulch around your tender perennials and help keep the roots from drying out in the cold dry winter air. Try using the mulching function on your lawn mower to mulch the leaves as food for next year's lawn growth. Roses will be happy when you mulch them with the spent pine branches and pine needles from your holiday celebrations.

A happier look at our relationship with the sea

You might enjoy reading *Blue Mind*, by Wallace J. Nichols. Its subtitle conveys the content well: "The surprising science that shows how being near, in, on, or under water can make you happier, healthier, more connected, and better at what you do."

Conservation Commission Members

Walter Smith, Chair
Richard Esty, Vice-Chair
Nina Garrett, Secretary
Jerry Brophy
Bob Fish
Emily Grochowski
Kacey Constable

Eye of the Storm continued...

What's at risk? More than 35% of Old Saybrook residences (some 3,000 homes) and almost 32 miles of our roads (25%) are in the FEMA 100-year flood zone. Nuisance flooding during monthly high tides will increase in depth, frequency, and area. The SLRCAC has undertaken to highlight these concerns and to offer recommendations to minimize costs and wasted effort.



Chalkerbeach Storm Sandy



Sea Lane house being elevated above FEMA Flood Elevation

How do we get there? We hope that more Old Saybrook citizens will learn the facts and get involved. While the tenure of the SLRCAC ends in December, we hope that the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance will authorize further study and will adopt some of the committee's recommendations for implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures. A copy of the committee's Report of Findings will be available on the Town's website.

Michael Momparler,
SLRCAC, Secretary

For more information on the Old Saybrook Sea Level Rise and Climate Adaptation Committee, visit:
http://www.oldsaybrookct.org/Pages/OldSaybrookCT_CC/slrcac

Useful Information

Guilford has created a Community Coastal Resilience Plan and an 11-minute video explaining it: see: <https://videopress.com/v/q94ebMba?src=e.gp.local>

And WTNH recently published a special report on the vulnerability of Connecticut's shoreline towns: <http://wtnh.com/8-investigators/connecticuts-shoreline-threat-how-vulnerable-areas-are-responding-to-a-rising-ocean/?src=e.gp.local>. Dec 2015. Connecticut

The website of the CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (the Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse) has a newsletter called Sound Outlook, an electronic newsletter published three times each year. Check it out at <http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2705&q=323818&deepNav_GID=1635>; you can sign up to receive it directly. The current issue, at <<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/150d30e35b9edf37>>, is the 50th since the newsletter began in 1999, and includes a reflection on the progress of these past 16 years.

It also includes subjects that weren't even anticipated in the first issue, including the ongoing Climate Change Update column, which connects up with the main topic of this issue of the Conservation Circular. The DEEP site also includes useful information about living on the shore and what is and is not advisable (or legal) in protecting our properties.

The Nature Conservancy website has an article called "Post-Sandy Storm Protection: Innovative Projects to Protect the Coast" looking at projects along the east coast: <<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/after-hurricane-sandy-natural-flood-defense.xml?src=e.gp>>

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