

Jamaica Bay Community Flood Watch Project

Coastal communities surrounding Jamaica Bay/ New York City experience frequent flooding; in addition to storm days, flooding events may occur on days when weather conditions are blue skies and sunny. As forecasters and projections predict that flooding will become more frequent, there is a need to understand the state of flooding locally, to develop flood mitigation plans, and to equip communities with science-based information, tools and resources.

An obstacle for Jamaica Bay communities is that there is no record or documentation of when and where flooding occurs and is most severe. To address this need, New York Sea Grant in collaboration with the Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay coordinates the Jamaica Bay Community Flood Watch Project, a community-citizen science effort that engages, empowers, and trains residents to document and report flooding and its impacts.

In one year, the project has collected more than 290 reports of flooding, covering 20 events, including sunny day tidal flooding, storm-related flooding, and heavy rainfall. These data, collected by the Jamaica Bay community, have revealed when and where flooding is most severe, the sources of flooding, and other valuable information.

The Jamaica Bay Community Flood Watch Project has also raised awareness of the severity of localized flooding to public agencies, researchers, and other communities.

Community-based knowledge helps to address flooding in frequently-flooded coastal neighborhoods while equipping those neighborhoods with tools and resources that inform decision-making and empower them. This, in turn, creates and supports a strong tie between the needs of the community and the public policy developed to address those needs.



Sunny day tidal flooding in the Jamaica Bay coastal community. Photo: Helen Cheng, NYSG & Science & Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay

Jamaica Bay Community Flood Watch Project Resources:

www.nyseagrant.org/jamaicabay > Flood Watch
and
www.srijb.org/jbfloodwatch

Project Partners:

Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay
Stevens Institute of Technology
New York City Emergency Management
New York City Mayor's Office of Resiliency

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Resilient New York Communities and Economies.

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.
Contact: New York Sea Grant Extension, 112 Rice Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; www.nyseagrant.org.
Project summary was written by Coastal Resilience Specialist Helen Cheng, 718-951-5415, helen.cheng@cornell.edu.