

Coastal “Sunny Day” Flooding As Seen Through the Eyes of New York City Residents

For years, residents of New York City (NYC) have been noticing and raising awareness of high tide floods that are becoming deeper and more frequent. In low-lying neighborhoods, coastal flooding is regularly inundating local streets and properties. However, scientists, city officials and leaders lack comprehensive information on the impacts of flooding on daily lives in NYC.

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) worked with partnerships established through the Community Flood Watch Project to develop **a first-of-its-kind pilot project to help neighborhood residents in NYC** better understand the impacts of living with semi-regular flooding, how residents share information and take action on flooding, and what adaptation strategies the City and community can use to limit these impacts. The research team designed an interview process for use with residents in Hamilton/Howard Beach and Eastern Rockaway. These communities are often afflicted by “sunny day” high tide flooding (tidal vs. storm-based flooding).



*Street-level flooding in Jamaica Bay.
Photo: New York Sea Grant*

Based on the results of interviews with residents' the research team compiled a roster of social impacts from tidal flooding. The most common impacts were “emotional distress, frustration” and “miss or late for work, school, appointment”, followed by “property damage” and 10 more distinct impacts. Researchers noted that residents possess fine-tuned local knowledge of flooding and a connectedness to fellow community members. A **Flood Watch Social Impacts Research Brief** (www.nyseagrant.org/floodwatchsocialimpacts) with the results was created and broadly disseminated to community stakeholders, city agencies, and other stakeholders. As this is a pilot study, the findings are considered baseline data that can be used to track current conditions and measure future changes due to sea-level rise.

By interviewing residents to capture first-hand stories of local flooding, researchers created the first assessment of social impacts and adaptations to flooding around Jamaica Bay, New York City. As sea levels rise, this information will provide valuable insights on the social, economic and quality-of-life impacts of living with and adapting to flooding. Learn more about the Community Flood Watch Project at www.srijb.org/jbfloodwatch.

Project Partners:

- NYC Mayor's Office of Resiliency
- Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay
- USDA Forest Service

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

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