MARINE ADVISORY

NEW YORK

Read All About It! Addressing Local Coastal Erosion Concerns

■ That sea level will continue to rise in the next century is expected. How fast it will rise, though, is a question of broad speculation among experts in the field. Officials need to know how the different estimates may affect their coastal communities if they are to develop sound plans for dealing with this potential problem, emphasizes Jay Tanski, New York Sea Grant coastal processes and facilities specialist.

Tanski's expertise was showcased in the April 4 "Environment and Energy" installment of *Newsday*'s yearlong look at the 21st Century, "Long Island: Our Future." *Newsday*, the nation's largest suburban newspaper, looked at the impacts of rising sea level on Long Island's fragile coastline, along with other environmental concerns such as global warming and invasive species.

As a contributor to the coastal erosion piece, Tanski created a series of coastline maps printed along with the feature. These maps show two effects: how the position of the shoreline might change over the next 50 and 100 years in response to changes in sea level, and how the extent of flooding from a "50-year" storm—expected to occur on average only twice a century—could increase as a result of this change.

Detailed in *Newsday*'s "Our Future" web pages and linked from NYSG's recently updated web site, Tanski's mapping efforts are part of an ongoing project to use Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to provide decision-makers with information about coastal conditions and processes at a scale they can use. Computer-based GIS systems, says Tanski, allow the user to analyze and manipulate large, complex data sets fairly rapidly and present the results in a more accessible visual format that is especially effective for constantly changing information, such as revised sea level projections.

Below: Evidence of coastal erosion along Long Island's North Shore. *Photo courtesy of New York Sea Grant.*

A Sound Crossing

How salty is the ocean? What kind of jellyfish are you likely to swim into on Long Island Sound? An opportunity to learn such "sound facts" arose when Barbara Branca, NYSG communicator, accompanied a group of middle schoolers from New York across Long Island Sound to visit Connecticut's Mystic Seaport and Aquarium. During the ferry crossing, Branca introduced the sixth graders to "Sound Facts," a Connecticut Sea Grant publication coauthored by Peg Van Patten, Connecticut Sea Grant communicator. On shore, Branca and Van Patten met at the Mystic Aquarium to share information about Long Island Sound's living resources with the students and teachers from Shoreham, New York, who were culminating a unit on coastal ecology and maritime history. *Photo by Peg Van Patten, Connecticut Sea Grant.*