

# Climate Change Adaptation in North Kingstown, RI



**ON THE RISE:** One of the impacts of storms and climate change is higher water levels – and this can be a problem for people, property and public infrastructure. These 2012 photos show how high water caused by tides and storms have affected coastal areas in the municipality of North Kingstown. PHOTOS: MELISSA DEVINE

Rhode Island is working to adapt to climate change impacts, such as sea level rise and increased storminess. According to conservative estimates and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's policy, sea level is expected to rise between three (3) to five (5) feet by 2100. Since 2011, the town of North Kingstown has been the focus of a collaborative effort to understand potential impacts of sea level rise, develop an action plan for maintaining critical infrastructure in town, and establish practical policies that protect North Kingstown while serving as a model for communities statewide.

The North Kingstown climate change adaptation project is a partnership between the municipality and the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center/Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program (URI CRC/Sea Grant) through a Challenge Grant awarded by the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program. Together, the partners are helping North Kingstown learn about climate change, identify public assets –including properties, roadways, and wetland/salt marsh systems – that could be modified, damaged, or destroyed by storm impacts and sea level rise, and plan for the long-term protection of North Kingstown's neighborhoods and businesses.

### PROJECT **TIMELINE** (JANUARY 2013 – SEPTEMBER 2013)

#### **PHASE I: PRIORITIZE ASSETS FOR PROTECTION (JANUARY 2013 – MARCH 2013)**

The goal of this phase is to use the wealth of mapping information gathered in 2011 to develop a ranking process to enable the town to prioritize public, residential and business assets that are most susceptible to the impacts of sea level rise and storms.

#### **PHASE II: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN ADAPTATION PLANNING (APRIL 2013 – JUNE 2013)**

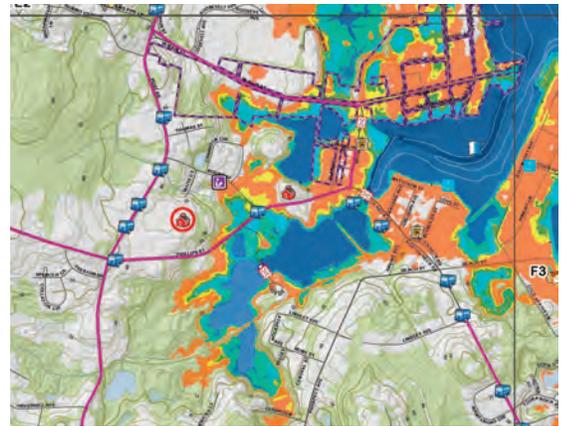
The goal of this phase is to provide a public process for the government, community and private sector so they may collaborate on developing policies and practices to protect the vulnerable assets identified in Phase I. Additionally, the Community Comprehensive Plan will be evaluated to include goals and proposed policies addressing natural hazards, sea level rise impacts and climate change adaptation.

#### **PHASE III: PROMOTE BEHAVIOR CHANGE FOR ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE (JULY 2013 – SEPTEMBER 2013)**

The goal of this phase is to work with stakeholders to finalize the policies for the town's Community Comprehensive Plan, and to engage in dialogue with stakeholder audiences to encourage them to test the policies and practices for future land use and transportation planning.



**WATER IN WICKFORD:** The Brown Street Bridge is almost submerged by a high tide in June 2012. PHOTO: JEFF MICHAELSON



**AT RISK:** This project map depicts public infrastructure threatened by storm surge and sea level rise.

### GET **INVOLVED**

**JOIN** the ListSERV at [RI\\_CLIMATE\\_CHANGE@LISTSERV.URI.EDU](mailto:RI_CLIMATE_CHANGE@LISTSERV.URI.EDU) to learn about project events and receive information updates

**ATTEND** public events to learn about research findings and ask questions

**PARTICIPATE** in workshops to assist in prioritizing vulnerable areas and assets

**VISIT** the web site at [http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/climate/nk\\_phase2.html](http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/climate/nk_phase2.html) for more information details on project and review background information on the project, as well as a calendar for meetings and other public events.

### **CONTACT**

Teresa Crean, AICP, Project Manager, URI  
 CRC/RI Sea Grant, 401.874.6626, Fax 401.874.6920, [tcrean@crc.uri.edu](mailto:tcrean@crc.uri.edu)