

## Coastal flooding to increase on Jersey Shore, report says

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Coastal flooding is a way of life in some Jersey Shore neighborhoods, just ask residents of Port Monmouth or Manahawkin who sometimes have to coordinate their drive times to the high tide to avoid impassable roads.

But a new study suggests that if global warming and sea level rise are allowed to continue unchecked this kind of localized flooding could turn into community-wide inundation.

By 2030, coastal flooding could become problematic in as many as 26 New Jersey communities, including Shore towns such as Beach Haven, Ship Bottom, Long Beach Township, Bay Head, Manasquan, Monmouth Beach, Sea Bright and Highlands, according to "When Rising Seas Hit Home," a study authored by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Under the worst-case scenario, most waterfront towns or boroughs in Monmouth and Ocean counties would be chronically flooded by 2100. The barrier islands would be 85 to 93 percent covered by water.

"In New Jersey, over a dozen communities clustered along the Jersey Shore that today rarely feel the effects of tidal flooding—including Beach Haven and Ocean City—will be some of the first to be impacted by 2035 under the intermediate sea level rise scenario," the UCS said in a statement accompanying the release of the report this morning.

The peer-reviewed study's authors defined the flooding as unmanageable if it exceeded 10 percent of a community's land at least once every other week.

Here's are the communities at risk in Monmouth County ...

The UCS advocates for the application of science to benefit environmental and social causes. The organization has been a frequent critic of the Trump administration, including the president's decision to exit the Paris Agreement, calling it "a shameful act."

Trump announced on June 1 that the U.S. intended to exit the deal, saying that the agreement would cost millions of American jobs and trillions of dollars in lost production. Those claims are disputed by supporters of the plan.

What's the practical difference between 1.5 and 2 degrees?

The climate change accord was a historic agreement between 196 countries that sought to reduce the increase in global temperature to under 2 degrees Celsius by 2100.

That might not sound like a significant reduction — 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit — but it could have worldwide consequences.

The European Geosciences Union found that failing to tamp the global temperature rise by just ½ degree Celsius could mean longer heat waves, more intense severe storms as well as reductions in crop yields and plunging fresh water supplies.

Residents of Mallard Island grapple with tidal flooding, a challenge experts say will become more common as sea levels rise.

On sea level rise, limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius could save up to 73 communities in New Jersey from regular coastal flooding, according to the UCS report.

Predicting the future

While the reality of climate change has near universal scientific agreement — as does mankind's role in its formation — there is continued debate within the scientific community on the how immediate the threat is and what can be done about it.

The year 2100 is so far away and our understanding of climate change so lacking that it's impossible to be sure of the right path forward, said Ryan Maue, a climate scientist, during a June 6 interview with the conservative Cato Institute, where he is an adjunct scholar.

Maue said it's hard to substantiate claims that "all hell is going to break loose" if the 2-degree threshold described in the Paris Agreement is crossed in 83 years.

"That argument is made on the backs of many climate models .... (information) from these models hasn't necessarily held up to verification or the scrutiny of climate skeptics," he said.