

Re • sil • ience

def.: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness

Maine's sea level is rising

According to researchers at SeaLevelRise.org, in the last decade “the speed at which Maine’s sea level is rising has increased, and is now rising by as much as one



Drift Inn Beach Road

inch in every six years. Scientists now forecast that in the next 16 years, the sea will rise by another 6 inches. Because the rate of global ice melt has been increasing significantly since 1992, and changes in ocean circulation are causing coastal storms to increase in frequency and intensity, Maine is particularly vulnerable to flooding.

Flooding in St. George is already a problem

St. George town officials and community members completed the Maine Flood Resilience Checklist in February 2020 to help determine which areas in the town are most vulnerable to flooding. Using data from the Maine Geological Survey and other sources they identified areas as either currently flooding during storms/king tides or vulnerable to future flooding using projections of between 1.5’ and 4.0’ of sea level rise. In particular, members of the Town’s Conservation Commission have been monitoring spots on Rt. 131 at the Martinsville Bridge, Rt. 131 just north of Tenants Harbor near the new Sea Farms building (old Wildcat location), Drift Inn Beach Rd., Harrington Cove Rd., Rackliff Island Causeway, Turkey Cove Rd., Horsepoint Rd., Factory Rd., Clark Island Causeway, Marshall Point Rd. Without addressing these vulnerabilities, large

areas of St. George will be cut off not only from each other but also from Rockland and other local communities. Emergency services and livelihoods will be at risk. The town website has interactive maps that show these vulnerable areas — found under Sea Level Rise Viewer on the Conservation Commission page at stgeorgemaine.com.

Planning a response

More information is needed to guide efforts to address the flooding vulnerabilities the town faces. The Gulf of Maine Research Institute and U.S. Harbors have chosen St. George, along with East Boothbay and Portland, to be places where they will use state-of-the-art tide-gauge technologies to help them develop improved tide predictions for more finely-tuned information about impacts on infrastructure like roads and working waterfronts.

There are also other proposals being developed for possible funding by the state. One involves a pilot project to produce 3D digital models of vulnerable infrastructure to aid in designing actions that would ensure that all town roads are passable at all times in 2050. The future of our working waterfronts is also a concern.



Late October in Tenants Harbor

What is resilience?

“Resilience” describes the weather-eyed prudence and optimism that for generations the citizens of St. George have displayed when facing up to challenges. Indeed, these are the qualities we have to thank for the fact that our town can today boast a top-flight fire-and-rescue service, a forward-looking municipal school district, town-wide broad-band access, solar panels that provide electricity for municipal offices, a concrete agenda for conserving our natural resources and a technologically advanced, community-minded public library. Mitigating and adapting to emerging challenges is what the people of St. George do

***Re-sil-ience** is an occasional newsletter published by the St. George Resilience Working Group aimed at keeping St. George citizens aware of its work and of opportunities to be involved in specific projects as they arise. The working group has a loose organizational structure that includes representatives of town committees and commissions and other interested persons. For more information contact Richard Bates, Select Board Chair (r.bates@stgeorgemaine.org). Future topics include studies of salt water intrusion into the aquifer, energy-efficiency in municipal offices, details on how the town’s solar array is performing, resiliency in terms of local housing.*