Lower Eel River Estuary Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment

PROJECT FACT SHEET

Humboldt County RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Understanding Coastal Flooding Risks in the Eel River Estuary

The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District is working with landowners, Tribes, and partner agencies to understand how sea level rise and coastal flooding may affect the Eel River Estuary. This effort identifies areas at risk and supports future planning to protect working lands, infrastructure, and natural resources.

What This Project Includes

Community Visioning Report: Gather input from community members about what they value in the estuary and their concerns about flooding and sea level rise.

Vulnerability Assessment: Identify areas at risk from rising tides and coastal flooding, including levees, roads, infrastructure, and groundwater. This work will produce detailed inundation maps that reflect local conditions.

Important Clarification: This phase of the project focuses on understanding current and future risks. It does not include construction or on-the-ground implementation. Results from the Community Visioning Report and Vulnerability Assessment will help guide future efforts as funding and support become available.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where does funding come from?
A: *This project is funded through California's Sea Level Rise Adaptive Program, administered by the Ocean Protection Council, to support local planning efforts. The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District applied for and was awarded funding to complete initial planning steps which includes a Community Visioning Report and Vulnerability Assessment.*

Q: Will this project develop solutions or construction plans?
A: No. *This phase focuses on identifying risks and vulnerable areas. It will inform future planning and potential projects but does not include implementation.*

Q: Why is sea level rise happening?
A: *Melting ice sheets and glaciers are adding more water to the ocean. As seawater warms, it expands, increasing ocean volume.*

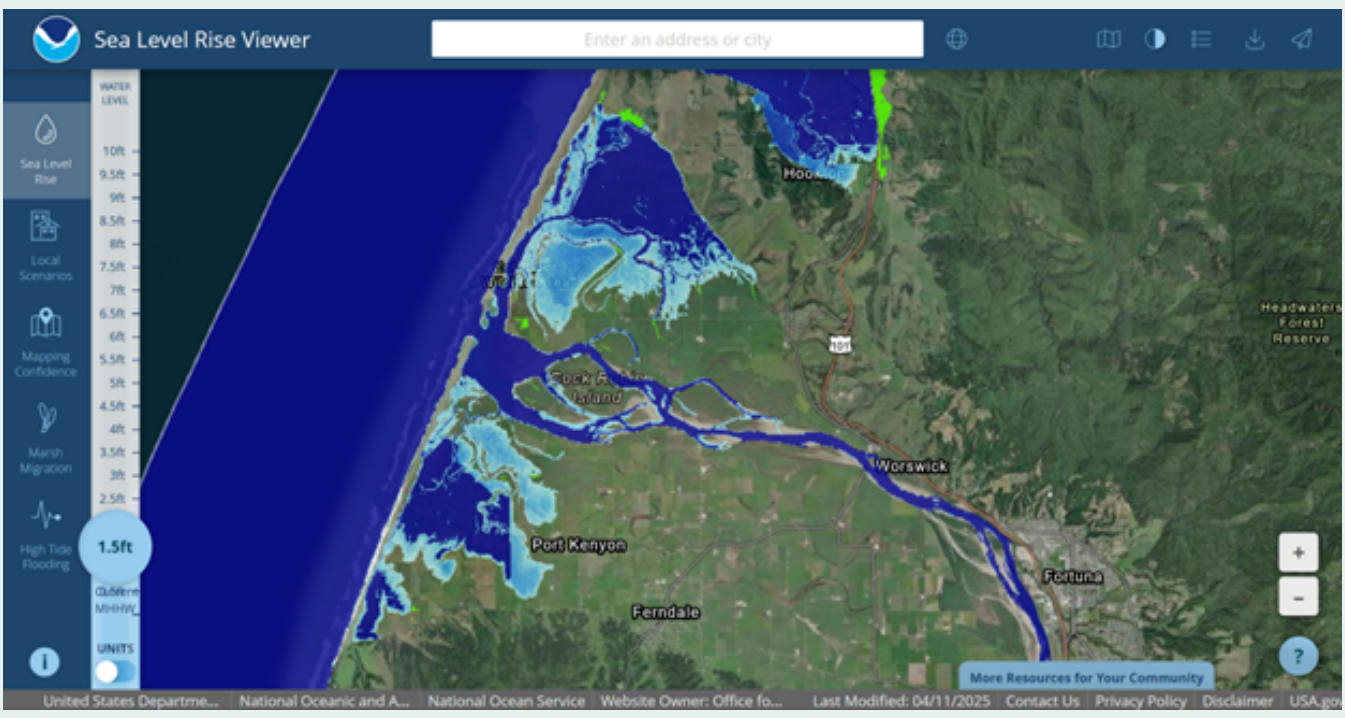
Q: What are the sea level rise estimates?
A: *Year 2050: 0.5 to 1.5 feet*
Year 2060: 1.5 to 3 feet
Year 2100: 3.9 to 6.6 feet

Q: What are the potential impacts to our Coastline?
A: *Increased coastal flooding, erosion of dunes and beaches, infrastructure damage (roads, harbors, utilities), saltwater intrusion into groundwater, reduced access to beaches and estuary areas, and increased overtopping of levees during storms and high tides.*

Q: Will cultural and Tribal resources be considered?
A: *Yes. The assessment will include Tribal input and consider potential impacts to cultural resources.*

Q: What happens after this project is complete?
A: *Following completion of the Vulnerability Assessment, additional funding may be pursued to further evaluate impacts and develop potential strategies to address sea level rise.*

NOAA Sea Level Rise Mapping Tool



NOAA's Sea Level Rise Viewer provides a general estimate of potential flooding but does not account for local features such as levees. This project will produce more detailed and locally accurate maps. To explore this tool use the following link: NOAA Sea Level Rise Interactive Map