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UNH Research Finds Sea-Level Rise Will Impact Coastal N.H.'s Cultural Heritage

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2018/04/10/unh-research-finds-sea-level-rise-will-impact-coastal-nhs-cultural-heritage)

DURHAM, N.H. – Coastal New Hampshire will lose 14 percent of its known prehistoric and historic cultural sites to sea-level rise in less than 100 years, according to new research (https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/climate-change-sea-level-nh-coast) out of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. The state's two coastal counties account for more than a third of the state's meal and room tax revenue.

“Given the significance of the prehistoric and historic cultural heritage sites in coastal New Hampshire and the disproportionate contributions they make to the state’s revenue, continued analyses, discussions and policy development will be important for addressing the vulnerability of the region’s cultural heritage,” said Meghan Howey, associate professor of anthropology and affiliate associate professor in the Earth Systems Research Center.

Twelve sites on the National Register of Historic Places will be affected, including Strawberry Banke, the Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion. Also at risk are Portsmouth’s historic district, Bow Street and Odiorne State Park.

In addition, more than 80 known historic cemeteries are at risk of damage or complete destruction by predicted sea-level rise. Howey noted that does not include undocumented sites and cemeteries.

“These findings highlight the need for more systematic research focused on finding these undocumented sites and cemeteries and on learning as much as possible from known sites before they are damaged or destroyed,” she said.

The Carsey School of Public Policy conducts research, leadership development, and engaged scholarship relevant to public policy. They address pressing challenges, striving for innovative, responsive, and equitable solutions at all levels of government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

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