

Flying into a flood zone

Groton-New London Airport is vulnerable to rising sea levels

Editor's note: This story was reported by students in the University of Connecticut's environmental journalism class, led by Professor Christine Woodside, an environmental writer and former Day reporter/editor. Students who contributed to this story are Sara Bedigian, Robbie Hetzer, Ketel Nkuili, Sandra Maina, Paris Phillips, Blessing Reynolds, Alicia Rodriguez-Monge, Kirk Ross, Dan Stark, and Anna Zimmermann.

To get a sense of how rising seas and more intense rainstorms could change life on the coast, consider how Hurricane Sandy landed on the tiny waterfront Groton-New London Airport in late October 2012.

The runways flooded, and the airport could not operate for two days. Instrument flights — with only the assistance of instruments in poor visibility — and night flights halted for many more days because the runway lights had to dry out.

Weather and climate records, and the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change, are documenting that heavy storms and a steadily rising sea level are inundating roads with more frequency than a few decades ago.

Groton-New London Airport is situated just 5 to 6 feet above sea level, nestled at the edge of Baker Cove and the Poquonnock River mouth, hosting about 50,000 private and government planes each year.

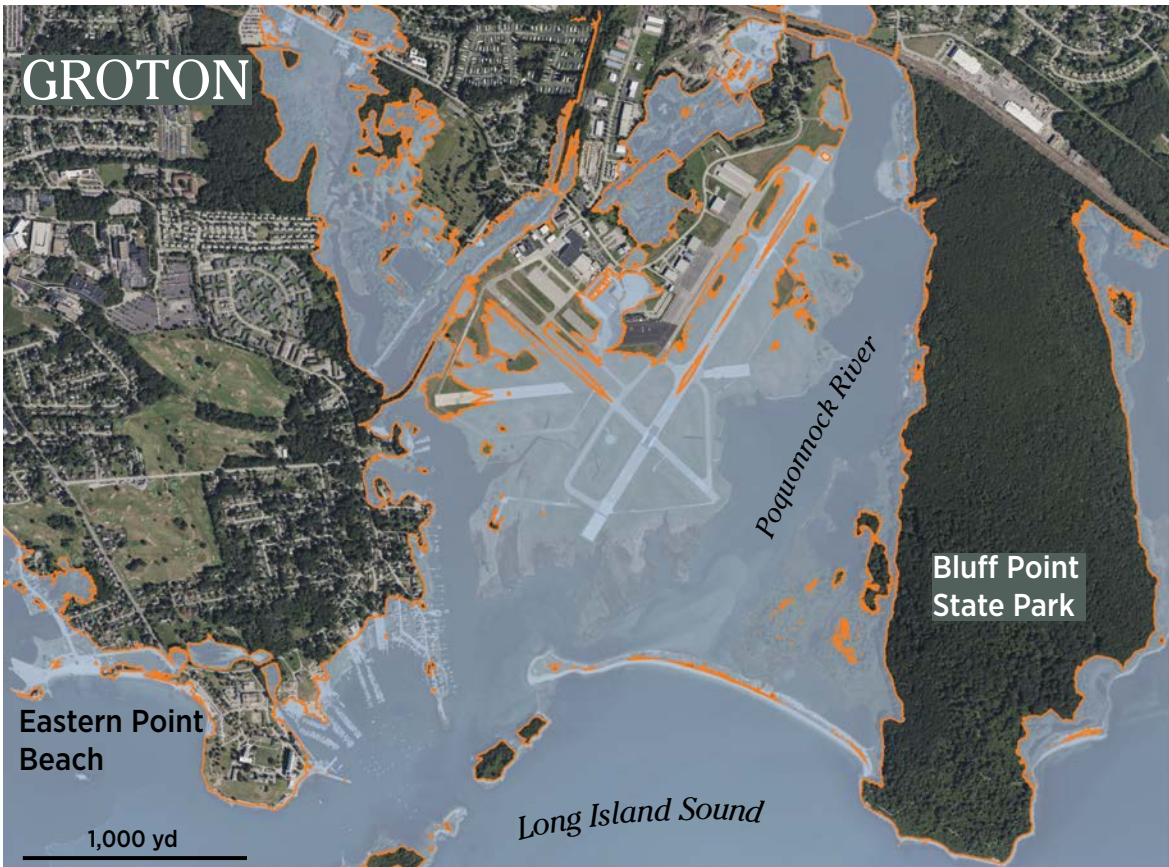
About a mile away, South Road, one of the two roads leading to the airport, flooded on Jan. 13 after heavy rains fell overnight.

Two days before that rainstorm, first lady Jill Biden landed here in a 737 to visit the crew of the submarine USS Delaware (SSN-791).

Airport officials have confirmed that they will include a study of flood risks when they begin work on updating a report that looks at all airport operations in Connecticut every several years.

"We're going to try to get it into plan this year," said Bob Bruno, the director of planning, engineering, and environmental services for the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA),

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MAPS: SCOTT RITTER/THE DAY | DATA: UCONN DEPARTMENT OF MARINE SCIENCES AND THE CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE FOR RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION | SATELLITE IMAGE: BING

Researchers at the University of Connecticut say coastal communities should plan for a 20-inch rise in sea level by 2050. They've also done modeling to project how storm surge would affect the Connecticut shoreline after 2050. The top map is a 2022 satellite image of the Groton-New London Airport. The map above shows a 10-year flood event on top of a 20-inch sea level rise.



NRA backs Trump in bid for WH

Former president vows to protect gun rights at meeting

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON
Associated Press

Dallas — Former President Donald Trump urged gun owners to vote in the 2024 election as he addressed thousands of members of the National Rifle Association, which officially endorsed him just before Trump took the stage at their annual meeting in Texas on Saturday.

"We've got to get gun owners to vote," Trump said. "I think you're a rebellious bunch. But let's be rebellious and vote this time."

Trump, in his speech, said the Second Amendment "is very much on the ballot" in November, alleging that, if Democratic President Joe Biden "gets four more years they are coming for your guns, 100% certain. Crooked Joe has a 40-year-record of trying to rip firearms out of the hands of law-abiding citizens."

The Biden administration has taken a number of steps to try to combat gun violence, including a new rule that aims to close a loophole that has allowed tens of thousands of guns

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Member of Israel's War Cabinet says he'll quit unless there's a new plan

Associated Press

Deir-al-Balah, Gaza Strip — Benny Gantz, a popular centrist member of Israel's three-member War Cabinet, threatened Saturday to resign from the government if it doesn't adopt a new plan in three weeks' time for the war in Gaza, a decision that would leave Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu more reliant on far-right allies.

The announcement deepens a divide in Israel's leadership more than seven months into a war in which Israel has yet to accomplish its goals of dismantling Hamas and returning scores of hostages abducted in the militant group's Oct. 7 attack.

Gantz spelled out a six-point plan that includes the return of hostages, ending Hamas' rule, demilitarizing the Gaza Strip and establishing an international administration of civilian affairs with American, European,

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Connecticut flood insurance rates among highest in U.S.

Editor's note: Dan Stark, a student in University of Connecticut Professor Christine Woodside's environmental journalism class, reported and wrote this story during the spring semester.

By DAN STARK
Special to The Day

As the sea level rises and climate-related natural disasters become more frequent and powerful in Connecticut and nationwide, the cost of flood insurance rates have increased.

This has resulted in Connecticut having one of the highest average annual rates for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Plan (NFIP) at \$1,590, which is well above the

national average of \$888.

According to several insurance-rate resources, Connecticut usually falls in the top five highest-rate states or U.S. territories. The other most expensive are Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and the territory of Guam.

"The incidents of loss and flooding are getting more frequent and more severe, meaning risks have increased," said Peter Kochenburger, former executive director at the Insurance Law Center at the University of Connecticut School of Law. "It's gotten very expensive in some jurisdictions because more people have to buy flood insurance than ever before, and those rates are going way up."

Homeowners in at-risk areas with mortgages are required to purchase flood insurance in Connecticut. This particularly affects homeowners living in what the Federal Emergency Management Agency designates as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). It creates a new expense for homeowners who previously didn't have to worry about their flood risk under old flood maps, but now have to pay over \$1,000, on average.

It is not mandatory for all Connecticut homeowners to purchase flood insurance. To learn which properties are in flood hazard areas, search FEMA's Flood Map Service Center at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>. Enter an address and the map result will show if the property

lies in one of the zones.

Historical ocean data shows that the sea level around the world has been rising steadily since 1900. The total so far is more than 8 inches, and projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, based on greenhouse gas emissions and ocean warming, predict various scenarios of sea-level rise from 13 to 20 inches.

Kochenburger added that as sea levels continue to rise, FEMA will continually update the country's flood zone maps, which calculate the risk of floods. FEMA requires that these maps be updated every five years, though the agency states that these maps could be revised

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Giuliani served more than cake at 80th b-day party

Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani was served a patriotic-themed birthday cake during his 80th birthday party in Palm Springs, Calif., Friday night — then served with a notice of indictment related to an alleged scheme to overturn the 2020 election results in Arizona.

Giuliani was indicted last month alongside 18 other allies of former President Donald Trump in connection with their unsuccessful bid to award the state's 11 presidential electoral votes to Trump instead of Joe Biden, who went on to win the election. All of the defendants had been legally served aside from Giuliani, but that changed Friday evening, Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes confirmed.

"The final defendant was served moments ago," she wrote on X around 11:20 p.m. "@RudyGiuliani No one is above the law."



AP FILE PHOTO

Ex- Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani speaks at a news conference in Washington in 2023.

Mayes social media post came shortly after Giuliani himself took to social media, where he shared a since-deleted message taunting officials in Arizona.

— New York Daily News

Just telling the truth



GEORGE WALKER IV/AP PHOTO

A decorative pig is seen at the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest on Saturday in Memphis, Tenn. Hundreds of dedicated pitmasters compete to be crowned "best in pork."

WEATHER

Today, morning clouds, some afternoon sun. High 64. Monday, partly sunny and mild. High 66. B6

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