

## Maryland's Smith Island, Home to a Vanishing Dialect and Rising Sea Levels

**Rob Kunzig**

Atlas Obscura

June 8, 2017

<http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/smith-island>



Coastal threats threaten Smith Island, but residents reject the idea of relocation.

Photo by: Lee Cannon

The people of Smith Island, MD have a unique culture and dialectic as well as a traditional place-based way of life. However, deteriorating economic conditions, coastal erosion, and sea level rise all threaten the community.

After Hurricane Sandy, the town rejected a \$1 million buyout offer and instead worked with planners to create a proposed protection and revitalization plan. However, though most locals reject the notion that the sea is rising, increasing flood events and erosion will force the community to make difficult decisions in the future.

## There Are Climate Change Refugees in the U.S. Right Now

Jan Lee

Triple Pundit

June 9, 2017

<http://www.triplepundit.com/2017/06/us-climate-change-refugees-growing/>



The villagers of Kivalina, AK wants to move inland before they lose their town but lack the financial resources to relocate.  
Photo by: Jim, Flickr

This article describes the 400 villagers of Kivalina, AK as U.S. climate refugees. While residents want to move inland, they do not have the financial resources to make the move and also cannot secure federal funds. Each year of delay increases the cost of the move, with some estimating that the relocation effort will cost between \$100-400 million (up to \$1 million per villager).

The piece notes that other tribal villages in Alaska and across the country, including Shishmaref and Isle de Jean Charles, LA, face similar coastal threats and also want to relocate. The author notes that federal protective efforts, such as building seawalls, will only extend the life of the villages by a decade or so and urges the federal government to create institutions, laws, and funding sources directed at managing community relocation.

## Mainland Miami ponders returning neighborhoods to nature in order to survive rising seas

David Smiley

Miami Herald

June 9, 2017

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article155213369.html>



Some of Miami's neighborhoods are now flooding on a regular basis. There are several different options on the table.  
Photo by: Ben Grantham

This article reviews the impact of increased flooding and sea level rise in Miami, particularly on the Shorecrest neighborhood which now floods for days at a time during the King Tide. The local government is considering ways of redesigning, rather than simply reinforcing, the area. To this end, a cross-sectoral group developed a hypothetical plan that includes relocation of the most vulnerable houses, development of marshes and parks in these vacated areas, elevated seawalls and roads, and upzoning of nearby flood resistant areas.

The article notes that communities in Florida are exploring a variety of methods to protect themselves against sea level rise and flooding including pumps, elevation, and relocation but emphasizes the controversy of relocation in areas reliant on property taxes generated by expensive coastal properties. At the same time, there are problems with existing protection measures, such as increased contamination around pump outlet areas.

Studies have found that, while people don't realize the full extent and nature of the problem, they mostly agree on the need for action to protect against flooding. Miami is now starting to take concrete steps to protect its residents.

## **An island is disappearing, but residents don't see it**

**Scott Waldman**

E&E News

June 15, 2017

<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060056074>



Residents of Deal Island face dual threats from the sea level rise and the erosion of their island. Relocation is not in the cards.  
Photo by: Chesapeake Bay Program

Deal Island, MD – near Smith and Tangier Islands in the Chesapeake Bay – is threatened by both erosion of the island and rising sea levels. Despite the threats, most residents reject the idea of climate change and are determined to preserve the unique lifestyle afforded to them by life on the island.

However, progress is underway. “Climate skeptics, anthropologists, crabbers, pastors and scientists have spent the last five years trying to figure out where they can find common ground. Led by social scientists from the University of Maryland, and partially funded by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration sea grant, which is targeted for elimination in the president's budget proposal, they are talking about mitigation, restoring shorelines, building better drainage ditches and constructing bulkheads to hold back the damaging effect of waves.”

The mayor of nearby Salisbury, MD, believes it is possible to address the negative impacts on the islands in a nonpolitical manner. Given that the Chesapeake Bay has already lost thirteen islands and residents can see the threat in front of them, they are willing to act regardless of the cause of the root cause of the problem. As locals care more about jobs than climate change, Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.) argues, “The solution to addressing climate change is to develop an energy policy, one centered on lowering carbon emissions and increasing renewable energy and green jobs.”

## Not Your Mother's Jersey Shore

Jill Capuzzo

The New York Times

June 16, 2017

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/16/realestate/hurricane-sandy-rebuilding-jersey-shore-towns.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=mini-moth&region=top-stories-below&WT.nav=top-stories-below&hp&r=0&mtref=undefined>



The Jersey Shore is undergoing revitalizing post-Sandy, but a new group of wealthier residents stand to reap most of the benefits.  
Photo by: Mark Olsen

This article overviews the change to the Jersey Shore, NJ post Hurricane Sandy. The storm cleared many existing lots and forced out their residents, opening space for extensive redevelopment. Reinvestment and new infrastructure in these coastal communities has led to a revival, but many wealthy residents from New York City are replacing the former blue collar occupants and building larger, much more expensive second homes. In Mantoloking, the average home size has increased from 4,000 to 6,000 square feet since Hurricane Sandy.

New regulations strongly encourage raising houses on piling to protect residents from flooding and from the financial burden of flood insurance, which is substantially less expense for raised homes. However, raising a home can cost a minimum of \$100,000, which is prohibitively expensive for many.

## What Happens to Island Nations That Are Lost to Rising Sea Levels?

Jacqueline Ronson

Inverse Science

June 22, 2017

<https://www.inverse.com/article/32940-sea-level-rise-islands-climate-change-refugees>



Many island nations will lose their land to sea level rise. What will then happen to their residents and economic resources?

Photo by: Mark Colbridge

This piece explores the future of low lying islands. Under current sea level rise predictions, the ocean will reclaim most of the islands' land even if global warming is kept to 2 degrees Celsius. While some island nations, like Kiribati, have purchased land on larger islands for future relocation, the article cites a report by Andrew Holland and Esther Babson that argues most islanders will be forced to leave in unplanned moments of crisis, and it is unclear where they will be able to relocate.

In addition, there is no international legal framework that specifies what happens to a country's exclusive economic zone once the land no longer exists. Some speculate that China may be increasing its aid to island countries to have more future control over these zones.