

Planning for our place amid rising seas

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Ongoing sea-level rise is contributing to more frequent extreme coastal flooding events, causing shifts in housing markets and investments, and presenting new challenges for public health. Though different communities are experimenting with a range of solutions, ranging from sea walls or natural barriers to buy-out programs promoting coastal retreat, communities with the least resources are being hit the hardest. The profound impact that rising seas and retreating coastlines will have on global coastal populations demands that we bring all of our scientific understanding to the front lines of communities that are already living on the edge and partner with local expertise in a way that is mindful of the inequities that many sea-level rise solutions further exacerbate. Yet, it is readily apparent from several analyses that the provision of information about the reality and future of sea-level rise (and global warming) is not enough and that we must think more creatively about how we communicate, how we partner with stakeholders, and how we develop solutions that will be effective and sustainable. I will discuss a range of strategies and solutions based on my observations and personal experience as a scientist and communicator in this sphere with an eye towards how we as scientists can best engage and contribute to this process.