

Westport Island Stakeholder Survey for Causeway Adaptation to Sea Level Rise

The Town of Westport Island was awarded a grant to assess the current causeways over Squam Creek on West Shore Road and Post Office Road, and over Heal Pond on West Shore Road, in light of expected sea level rise and enhanced storm surges in the years ahead thru 2100. We saw first-hand the damage that could be done during the recent January 10th and 13th storm events this year! Resident safety and well-being is a top priority as we plan for the future.

It is expected that each of the causeways will need to be redesigned and rebuilt to adapt for the expected conditions and to increase resiliency to the changed environment over the next 75 years; the expected lifetime of the needed upgrades. These changed conditions include a 4' sea level rise and a 4.3' storm surge based on Maine DOT guidance.

Wright-Pierce Environmental Engineering has been contracted to provide the Town with design options that both accommodate these expected conditions and increase resiliency and natural water flow into and out of the wetland ponds. Increasing water flow capability reduces the water pressure loads on the causeway structure and improves the health of the entrapped wetlands. Determining how much flow to accommodate and the degree of wetland restoration to be provided, are key considerations in the study.

As is any study, there are tradeoffs to consider, and those tradeoffs benefit from community inputs as well as economic considerations. Community considerations of recreation uses today, and added recreation options in the future, will be assessed, as will the ecological and resiliency enhancement benefits of wetland restoration. From an economic perspective, expected redesign and reconstruction costs are expected to approach \$5M. Much of that cost may be funded thru State and Federal grants. The degree of such funding will be governed, in part, by the degree of wetland restoration that results. Wetland restoration is a high priority for State and Federal grantors.

Wright-Pierce has developed a survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/832GDM5>) of stakeholders who are most affected by, and benefit from, the adaptations under study. Simply click on the link above to open and submit the survey on-line. It should take you no more than 10-15 minutes to complete and the data will be important for Wright-Pierce to ensure their pre-design recommendations meet the objectives of the community. Please complete your survey by April 26th if possible. This survey will also be soon available on the Town's newsletter for all residents. Paper copies will be available in the Town Office.

You may also access the survey by clicking on the QR code below.

