A CLIMATE RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES IN NORTH CAROLINA

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Sea level rise is one aspect of climate change that will have an impact on most coastal areas of North Carolina.

Statewide, coastal erosion will probably increase because of sea level rise at rates higher than those noted over the past century.

Shoreline erosion due to the processes of wave action, rising sea level, and human activity is already destroying valuable cultural resources (i.e., archaeological and state historic sites).
OSA SEA LEVEL RISE PROJECT: BASIC GOALS

1. **Compile information on the archaeological resources within the coastal area of North Carolina.**
   
The OSA maintains the largest archaeological site file in North Carolina. Information is available on nearly 46,000 archaeological sites across the State. The project has collected data on nearly 5,800 sites presently at or below 30 feet above mean sea level.

2. **Assess the potential risk to archaeological sites and other coastal cultural resources from sea level rise.**
   
The potential impacts to the State’s cultural resources will be determined by an assessment of site vulnerability. It will be important to determine those resources definitely at risk, those potentially at risk, and (equally important) those not at risk.

3. **Develop adaptive strategies for those resources not at serious risk and mitigation plans for those at definite risk.**
   
These strategies and plans will require a collaborative effort by scientists, governmental officials, amateur societies and private landowners.
Archaeological Sites with Elevations < OR = 30 ft.

Sites
N = 5746
Sites Unassessed for National Register Eligibility

- Sites
- n = 2682

Elevation in Feet - LiDAR

-10 - 0  |  30 - 35
0 - 6   |  35 - 45
6 - 15  |  45 - 50
15 - 25 |  50 - 65
25 - 30 |  65 - 85
85 - 100|  100 - 115
115 - 130|  115 - 130
130 - 146|  130 - 146
146 - 170|  146 - 170
170 - 220|  170 - 220
220 - 275|  220 - 275
Impact on NRHP Sites
3 ft Rise in Sea Level

- Sites
n = 203

50 Miles
100 KM