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# Mike Mullins: Coastal communities must plan to deal with sea level rise

MARCH 25, 2010

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The heated climate debate emphasizes threatening sea level rise. Captiva's Erosion Prevention District monitors topics which cannot be ignored by coastal communities.

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In their book "The Rising Sea," authors Orrin H. Pilkey and Rob Young write, "Despite strong evidence of global warming and attendant sea level rise, many communities, governments and developers continue to ignore the inevitability of a continued rise in sea level and the corresponding increase in shoreline erosion."

Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association considers such topics. In their February communique, Shoreline, FSBPA published: "Outside the Bubble on Sea Level Rise" by Todd L. Walton Jr. and Robert G. Dean.

Their manuscript remarks facetiously about Floridians heading to the mountains, but shares sobering facts of measurable sea level rise. Walton and Dean's analysis of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates global rise in sea level at 1 foot over this century. Dean and Walton said, "In the IPCC (2007) Fourth Assessment Report, there are six families of 'global' sea level rise scenarios," with ranges in value from 7 to 23 inches through 2100. Continuing with, "If one takes the average of these scenarios we find that the most likely sea level rise from 2000 to 2100 is about 34.3cm/century. ... Although the IPCC scenarios don't take into account some catastrophic scenarios incorporating substantial melting of the glacial ice sheets... , the above can still be considered as

## IF YOU GO

- What: Town hall meeting, Captiva Erosion Prevention District
- When: Wednesday, March 31, 10 a.m.
- Where: Tween Waters Inn, Wakefield Room, Captiva Island
- Topics: Erosion affecting our coastlines, concerns facing Captiva and coastal communities, the 2010 legislative session, state funding for beaches, oil and gas drilling in Florida waters.

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the... 'most likely' projections of hundreds of scientists." Read Walton/Dean in Shoreline: <http://tr.im/risingseas1>

Shoreline's March issue adds "We are now presenting another quite distinct perspective on sea level rise: 'Bursting the Bubble of Doom and

Adapting to Sea Level Rise' by Randall W. Parkinson, Ph.D., P.G. and Joseph F. Donoghue, Ph.D. They wrote that the IPCC report does not factor in important considerations, 'This (IPCC) estimate of sea level rise was immediately regarded as too low by many scientists because the models used ... ignored the rapid disintegration of Antarctic and Greenland ice - ... also failed to account for two other phenomena ... such as release of the potent greenhouse gas methane from thawing permafrost ... and [growing] greenhouse gas emissions from China and India ... satellite altimeter data that tracked rising sea level along the upper boundary of IPCC model predictions.'" More from Parkinson and Donoghue, FSBPA's Shoreline: <http://tr.im/risingseas2>

CEPD's (and FSBPA's) intent is to provide alternative opinions on sea level rise. The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors of both articles. However, in the opinion of this author, sea level rise of an inch every eight years or so may be optimistic on the low side. But while imperceptible to most, is still contributing to the factors affecting beach erosion. Captiva's concerns about sea level rise reach as far back as the 1970s and 1980s when rampant erosion plagued Captiva. Further research shows the disappearance of coastal islands in areas from the Florida Panhandle to the Outer Banks of North Carolina and Chesapeake Bay. Coastal property owners should become involved and motivated to increase understanding of the potential for future sea level rise. We should be thinking hard about it now, as planning for alternative solutions makes eminent sense. Those who attend CEPD meetings are familiar with my frequent mantra: "fail to plan; plan to fail."

-Mike Mullins is chairman of the Captiva Erosion Prevention District.

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