The past, present, and future of Greater Portland’s historic coastal communities

August 12, 2020, 1:00 PM-8:00 PM
Maine Girls Academy, 631 Stevens Avenue, Portland, Maine

Rising seas and increased coastal flooding due to climate change are some of the biggest threats facing our state’s buildings, homes, and heritage sites. A report on sea level rise prepared by the Maine State Planning Office and US EPA projected that, based on a predicted three-foot rise, 200 existing homes in Falmouth, Freeport, and on Casco Bay islands could be lost by 2100 – and if we do not curb global emissions, we could see far more than three feet of sea level rise in the next 100 years.

In August, Greater Portland Landmarks will mark Maine’s bicentennial with a day-long symposium about the unprecedented challenges to Maine’s cultural and natural heritage due to our changing climate. Bringing together organizations and community leaders, Staying Above Water will highlight the impact climate change is already having on historic buildings and discuss strategies for future adaptation.

Walking tours of neighborhoods already impacted by rising seas will supplement the panel discussions in the symposium. Landmarks will also publish a booklet of case studies that explore the impacts of a changing climate on a variety of local building types and suggest mitigation strategies for property owners. This research will be available for free at the symposium and online.

“Sea-level rise is one of the central facts of our time, as real as gravity. It will reshape our world in ways most of us can only dimly imagine.”
Jeff Goodell

Noted journalist Jeff Goodell will close our symposium with a thought-provoking keynote lecture. Goodell has written about climate change for many years, and his 2017 book The Water Will Come investigates the inevitable future of sea level rise on cities across the world and the need for adaptation.
DRAFT SCHEDULE

STAYING ABOVE WATER: The Past, Present & Future of Greater Portland’s Historic Coastal Communities

August 12, 2020, 1:00 PM-8:00 PM
Maine Girls Academy, 631 Stevens Avenue, Portland, Maine

Walking Tour
Walking Tour: Ferry Village Neighborhood (optional) 10:00 AM

Symposium
Registration Opens 12:15 PM
Symposium Opens (overview) 1:00 PM

PAST 1:30 PM-2:30 PM
How has the past shaped our present and impacted our vulnerability to rising sea levels?
Panelists: Greater Portland Landmarks, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Osher Map Library/Smith Center for Cartographic Education

PRESENT 2:45 PM-3:45 PM
How can we work together now to build awareness of the current and future risk to our coastal communities?
Panelists: Greater Portland Landmarks, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, One Climate Future (Portland & South Portland)

FUTURE 4:00 PM-5:00 PM
How can communities adapt to ensure our communities have met the challenge of sea level rise in 2120?
Panelists: Greater Portland Landmarks, GEI Consultants, Maine Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future

Reception & Keynote
Reception (refreshments served) 5:00 PM-5:30 PM
Keynote: Jeff Goodell 5:30 PM
Jeff Goodell Book Signing 6:30 PM

Thank you to our current sponsors:

Supported in part by a Maine200 Bicentennial Project Grant.