



Isla Vista during the King Tide of February 9, 2014

Photo ©Bill Dewey

These photographs, all taken during the February, 2014, King Tide along the Santa Barbara coastline by photographer/pilot Bill Dewey, shows the potential future of Santa Barbara. HTO has made detailed presentations to local agencies about the need to start now instead of “wait and see” in regards to more frequent (and higher) coastal flooding.

In particular, Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) need special attention. All WWTPs are built next to water for, guess what?... ease of disposal, whether ocean, creek, river or wetlands. Hurricane Sandy gave us a preview of the threat that climate change poses to our wastewater infrastructure: 13 billion gallons of untreated and partially treated sewage was released from wastewater treatment plants in the wake of intense rain from the hurricane.

Heal the Ocean has been working to focus attention on this issue, and the need for wastewater treatment plants to plan for adaptation to rising sea levels and more intense storms. We provided input to the City of Santa Barbara on its Climate Action Plan, recommending that they treat this issue with the urgency that it requires, and we are also making input to the State’s Safeguarding California Plan to ensure that it adequately covers wastewater vulnerability.

These facilities need to be waterproofed, and better yet, orient themselves landward, to turn their effluent flow around and aim it inland for recycling and reuse on parched earth. See pages 4-5 of this newsletter to read about HTO’s work on the issue of recycled water. We wonder...could it be possible that coastal erosion, together with drought, might work together to move wastewater treatment away from the concept of ocean (and river) disposal?



Sandyland and Sand Point at King Tide, with Carpinteria Marsh pushing from behind

Photo ©Bill Dewey

Knowing that the seas are coming in and that groundwater will rise with it, the following list is just a part of what a responsible community should start doing:

- **Waterproof, raise or relocate vulnerable wastewater treatment plants, which will otherwise flood;**
- **Disallow building in flood zones (including airports);**
- **Clean up toxic pollution in groundwater, which is expected to rise along with sea levels;**
- **Halt septic system installation in flood zones;**
- **Changing permitting requirements in the coastal zone (require setbacks, etc.);**

And more....

Heal the Ocean is campaigning for these, and other, preventive measures, to prepare for things to come.

A scene of things to come – high tide for Sandyland & Sand Point, where septic systems had been removed just in time. As part of the South Coast Beach Communities Septic-to-Sewer project, these communities were already septic-system-free at the time of this King Tide on February 9, 2014. What a relief!

The ferocious storm that rolled on a high tide into the Santa Barbara coastline on February 28 – March 1, 2014 did a lot of damage as well as bring in water to our marshes, Santa Barbara Harbor parking lot, and half way up one driveway of a Montecito beachfront home, where a permanent “Tsunami Zone” sign was installed at the foot of a public trail next to the driveway. The Goleta Slough backed up to the point where it had to be opened by backhoe so that it wouldn’t flood the Santa Barbara Airport.

