

Stinson Beach Long-Range Planning

Committee Meeting

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Stinson Water

BOLINAS COMMUNITY PUBLIC UTILITIES DISTRICT

Why we're here today...

About existing homes, NOT growth

This study looks at the septic systems and sewer that serve our communities today.

No decisions have been made

No wastewater project is being proposed at this time.

The start of a community conversation

Your local knowledge, priorities and concerns will shape what we study next.



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What's this study all about?



Assessing how vulnerable existing septic systems are over the long term

Measuring their effects on local creeks, the lagoon and groundwater

Evaluating public wastewater infrastructure in a changing climate, including sea level rise

Identifying opportunities for environmental restoration and recycled water

$1.5M
State grant from the California OPC

2 Agencies, 1 Team
Stinson Water and BCPUD, working together with West Yost engineers

2025–2028
A planning study. The grant does not fund design or construction

What does Bolinas look like?

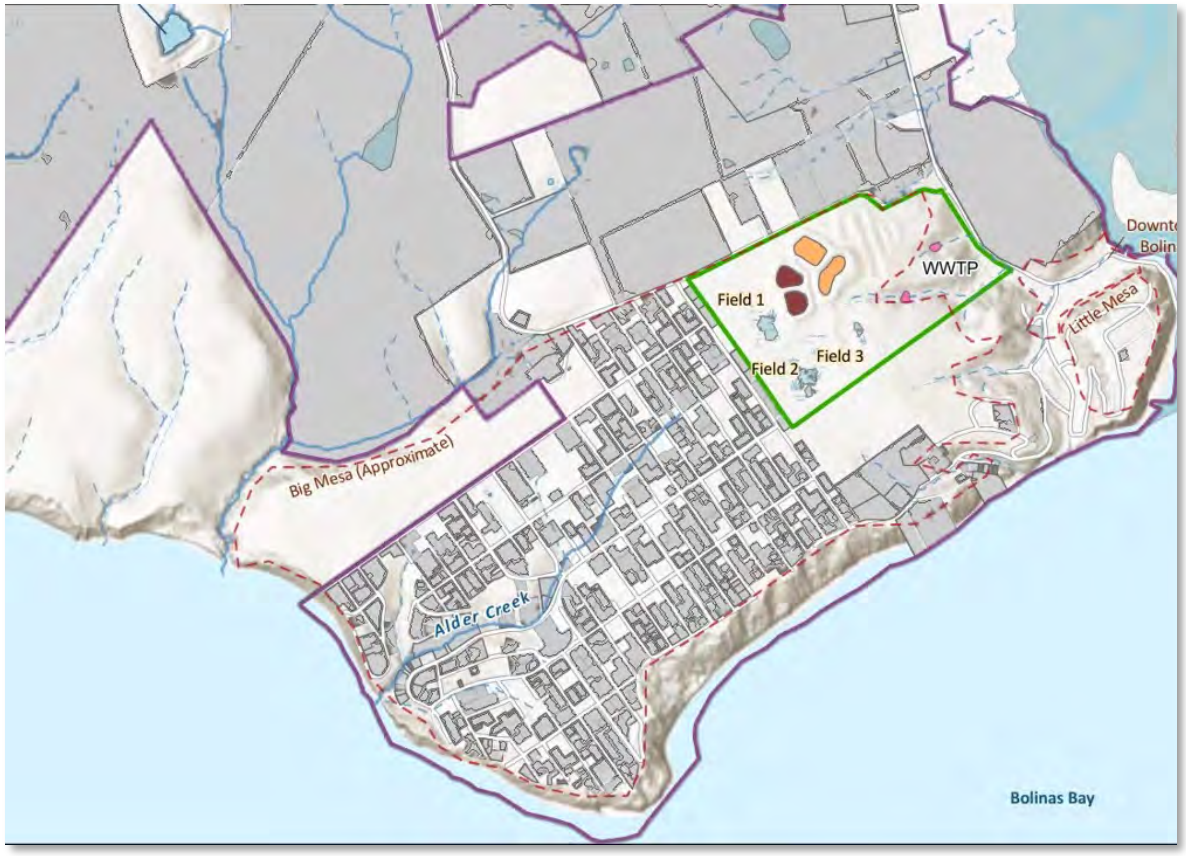
~160 homes and businesses on the BCPUD sewer, built in 1974

~470 properties on septic: 260 permitted, 214 either unpermitted or unknown

2 agencies: BCPUD runs the sewer; Marin County oversees septic systems

Why now?

The RWQCB has ordered BCPUD to plan for wetter storms and climate impacts, and to look at options for existing homes now on septic.



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Bolinas: What we found...



Sewer and treatment plant

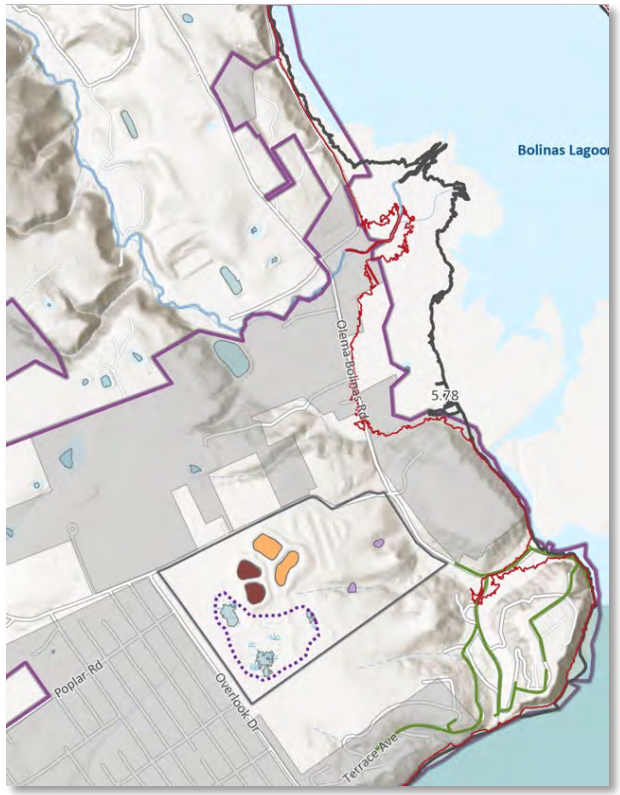
- Sewer is in good shape, sized for today's flows
- Limiting factor is water storage during wet weather, not treatment
- Rain and groundwater infiltration uses up capacity in sewer
- The Wharf Road lift station is aging

Water quality

- Local septic impacts found, but studies date to the 1980s
- Shallow groundwater under the treatment site; nitrate is low
- No impacts found in deeper drinking-water wells

Bottom line: The system works today but needs upgrades to handle wet weather and future conditions.

Bolinas: What else we found...



Sea level rise, 2100 (intermediate-high)

Projected 2100 shoreline / bluff edge

Sewer lines

Higher tides

High tide could be ~5 ft higher, bringing more frequent flooding near the lagoon and downtown



Bluff erosion, 2100 (high scenario)

Bluff erosion

Bluffs could retreat up to ~320 ft, threatening some sewer lines

Treatment plant

Not directly threatened by flooding or bluff erosion

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What does Stinson Beach look like?

100% of Stinson Beach is on individual septic--there is no public sewer

731 properties with a permitted septic system

1 agency--Stinson Water oversees and regulates all septic systems



Why it matters:

Easkoot Creek and Bolinas Lagoon
Most systems either sit on sandy soil over shallow groundwater near them or are on land tributary to them.

Stinson Beach: What we found...



Nitrogen: Elevated in shallow groundwater where septic systems are close together

Coliform Bacteria: Found in lower Easkoot Creek and along the edges of Bolinas Lagoon

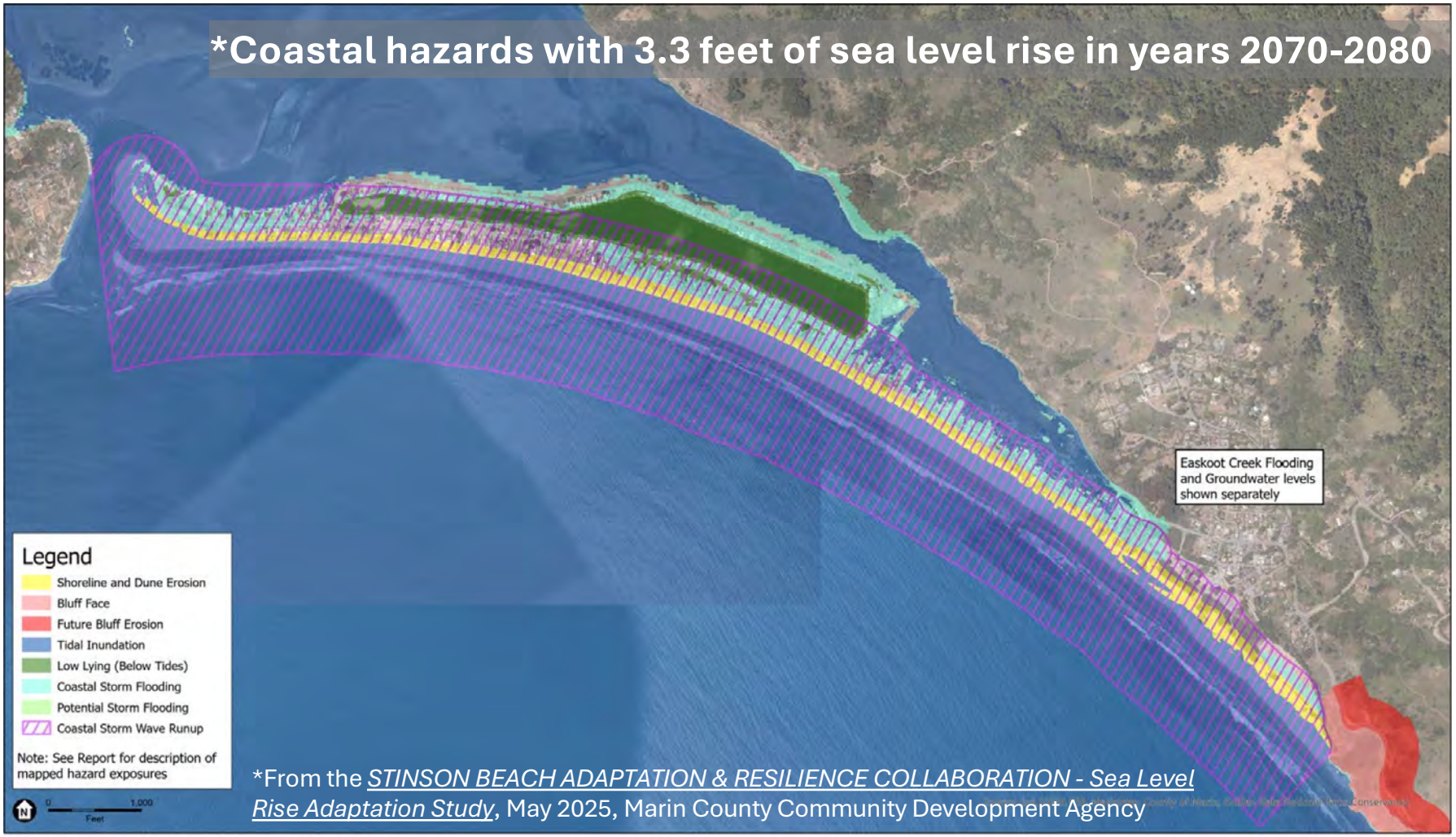
How it travels: Shallow groundwater, sandy soil, creek flow, tides and flooding all move these pollutants

Bottom line:

‼ Groundwater and surface water quality are adversely impacted by existing septic

- Drinking water sources are not impacted *(either upstream or outside influence of septic)*

Stinson Beach: ...and then there's sea level rise



So, here's what we've learned so far...

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- Sewer is pretty good; wet-weather storage limit exists @ plant
- Potential bluff erosion issues with sewer lines
- Decades old septic WQ data

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- Septic impacts water quality in groundwater, Easkoot Creek and Bolinas lagoon
- Rising seas will flood existing septic systems causing failure



- Water quality risk extends **beyond just sea level rise**
- System age, shallow groundwater and flooding, as well as nearness to bluffs, creeks and the lagoon all matter
- This is about **protecting water quality and reliable service** for the homes we already have, it's **NOT ABOUT GROWTH**

...and now we're starting to evaluate these options.

Individual systems

Improve or upgrade septic systems property by property

Community systems

Separate wastewater system for each community

Regional system

Shared Bolinas-Stinson wastewater system

...or a combination--each will be compared by cost, feasibility and environmental effects

No approach has been selected

We'll explore these options with you at upcoming workshops!

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When is all this happening?

THE FEASIBILITY STUDY (2025 – 2028)

We are here

Fall 2025 – Fall 2026

Understand existing conditions
Data, mapping, water quality, sea level rise

Fall 2026 – 2027

Evaluate options
Compare approaches with community input

2027

Conceptual design & funding
Preliminary (10%) design, governance and funding paths

Early 2028

Final adaptation plan
Study completed by March 2028

IF A PROJECT MOVES FORWARD *(illustrative; depends on community support, funding and approvals)*

2028 – 2032
Environmental review, funding and governance

2033 – 2036
Detailed final design and permits

Late 2030s+
Earliest construction, likely in phases

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How YOU can be involved

What: One volunteer from each community needed, in addition to one Board member each from Stinson Water and BCPUD, to serve on a Community Steering Committee

Who: Any resident and/or property owner from Stinson Beach and Bolinas

Why: Review findings, share local knowledge and help shape the options

When: Meet regularly between community meetings throughout the study



Interested?

Sign up tonight, or contact either Kent or Georgia:
knelson@stinsonwater.org
gwoods@bcpud.org

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We want to hear from you!



What have you seen?

e.g. flooding, ponding, septic problems, changes over the years?



What matters most?

e.g. cost, water quality, the lagoon, reliability?



What should we look at?

Questions you want this study to answer.