

Implications of Redefining

Florida's Coastal High Hazard Area

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Personnel

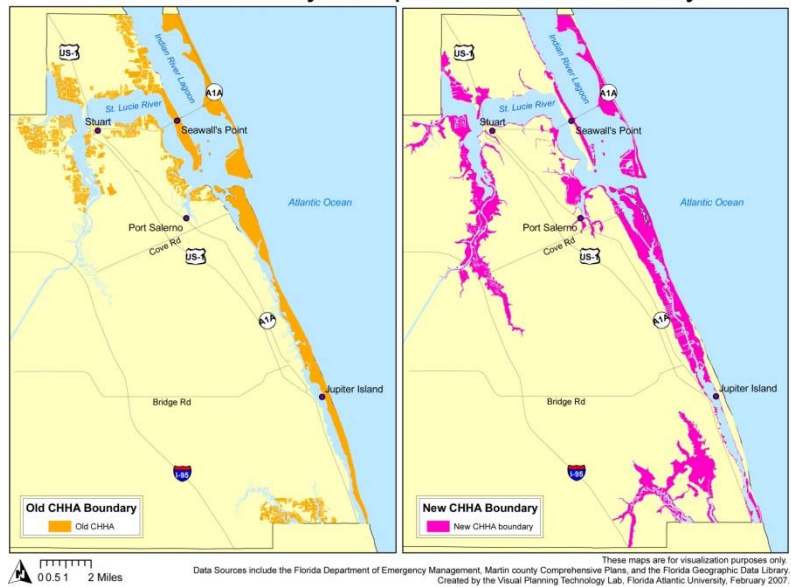
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Project Description

In Florida, coastal planning and hazard mitigation policies are legislated in a broad framework of directives known as Florida Statute (FS) 163.178 and administrative laws known as 9J-5. Among them is the requirement that localities designate a Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA)—an area that requires special planning consideration because of the risk of damage from wind and water during a tropical storm event. In 2006, the definition of Florida's CHHA was changed for the third time since its establishment in 1985 without a thorough spatial impact assessment of the proposed changes.

Working with the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, the VPT Lab used GIS to map, quantify and compare the differences in the geographic extent, value, land use characteristics and inventory age of parcels in the New CHHA and Old CHHA. The study area comprised of three counties (Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties) on Florida's Treasure Coast. Our GIS analyses showed for example that the latest definition change picks up low-lying inland riverine areas in Martin County (see image above).

CHHA Boundary Comparison: Martin County



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Publications

- Puszkin-Chevlin, A. and A-M Esnard. 2009. Evaluating Spatial Impacts of Change to Coastal Hazard Policy Language. *URISA Journal* 21(1):41-51.
- Puszkin-Chevlin, A. and A-M Esnard. 2009. Incremental Evolution and Devolution of Florida's Coastal High Hazard Area Policy. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 52(3): 1-17.