

Environmental Group Recommends Changes to Protect Florida's Coast

Posted By: Cindy Krenek ■ 20 hrs ago

TALLAHASSEE, FL -- Environmentalists released a new set of recommendations to protect Florida's coast from the effects of climate change and global warming and they showed us why we need action.

Rising sea levels, shifting ecosystems, and increasing coastal erosion are all signs some environmentalists say show global warming demands attention.

Take for example the red mangrove tree.

"This tree, the red mangrove would not be here if our temperatures were not increasing," said Paul Johnson.

Johnson is President of Reef Relief and a major contributor to Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition. He's been studying climate change for years and he explained what some of those changes mean.

He pointed out how the red mangrove tree is not native to the panhandle's coast but that it's surviving because temperatures are rising.

"This species would not be here if we didn't have cooler winter temperatures because a hard freeze would take this plant out," said Johnson.

Ericka D'Avanzo is a surfer and conservationist who's witnessed the effects of coastal erosion and rising sea levels first hand.

"It's money that's just rolling right back out to the ocean?there was a project here and now you see there's no beach," said D'Avanzo.

Researchers predict the sea level will rise more than 2 feet over the next century.

Florida's Coastal and Ocean Coalition released a study Wednesday, highlighting climate change evidence. They also submitted recommendations to curb destruction to the Governor and Chief Financial Officer.

In that study, they suggest a "Survival Guide" of things such as governments?at all levels?purchase coastal property to avoid more high-risk development. They would also like to see offers for homeowners who may be willing to relocate inland in exchange for a tax break.

Some environmentalists say the cost of inaction is too high.

"Pay attention to the changes that are coming with a new climate change around the globe," said Johnson.

First Coast News

