

# Smart Sea Level Sensors in Chatham County



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Earth & Atmospheric Sciences  
Director, Global Change Program



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Senior Research Scientist, Computer Science

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Assistant Director, Chatham County Emergency  
Management Agency



*Photo: Sean Compton, FOX5 Atlanta*



# Sunny Day Flooding

***Saturday Morning***



***Sunday Morning***





# Project Overview

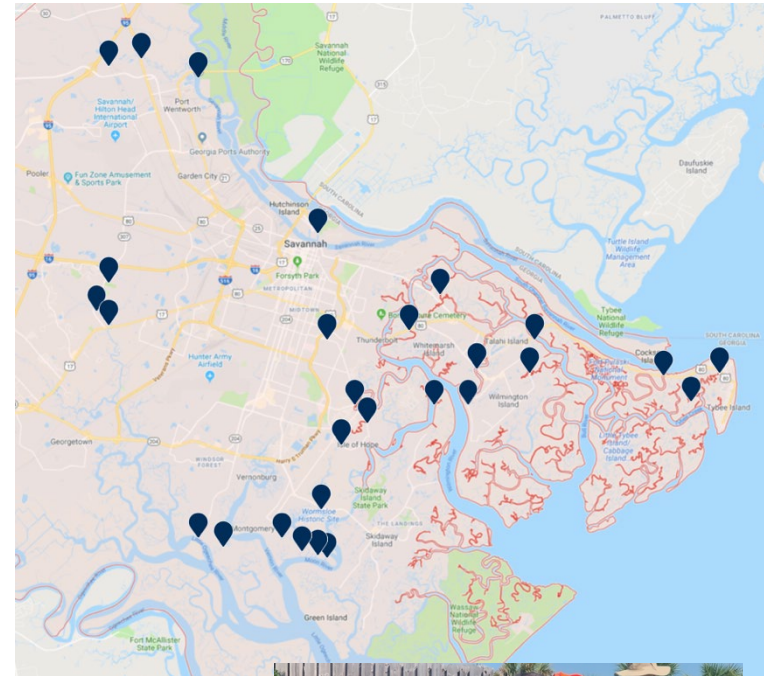


*A high-density deployment of smart sea level sensors to provide hyper-local, real-time water level data across the community.*

## Goals:

- **emergency planning & response**  
real-time data portal & toolkits
- **short- and long-term risk assessment and resilience planning**
- **develop & test educational resources**  
middle & high school curricula
- **communication and awareness**  
public events, installations, website

See more details at <http://sealevelsensors.org>





Skidaway Institute  
of Oceanography  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



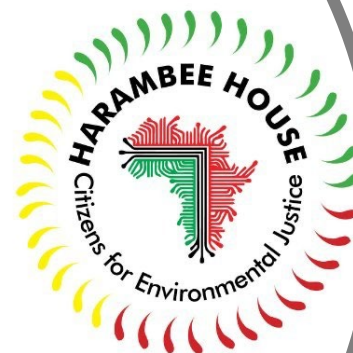
SAVANNAH  
savannahga.gov



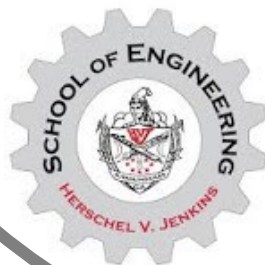
Georgia  
Tech



SAGIS  
Savannah Area Geographic  
Information System



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII  
MĀNOA



SECOORA  
Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing  
Regional Association



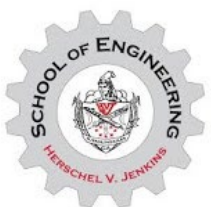
GEORGIA SMART  
COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE





## ultrasonic sensor:

- \$300 in parts
- powered by D-cell batteries or small solar cell
- LoRaWAN communications
- installed on bridges, docks
- low installation and maintenance costs







## **gateway device:**

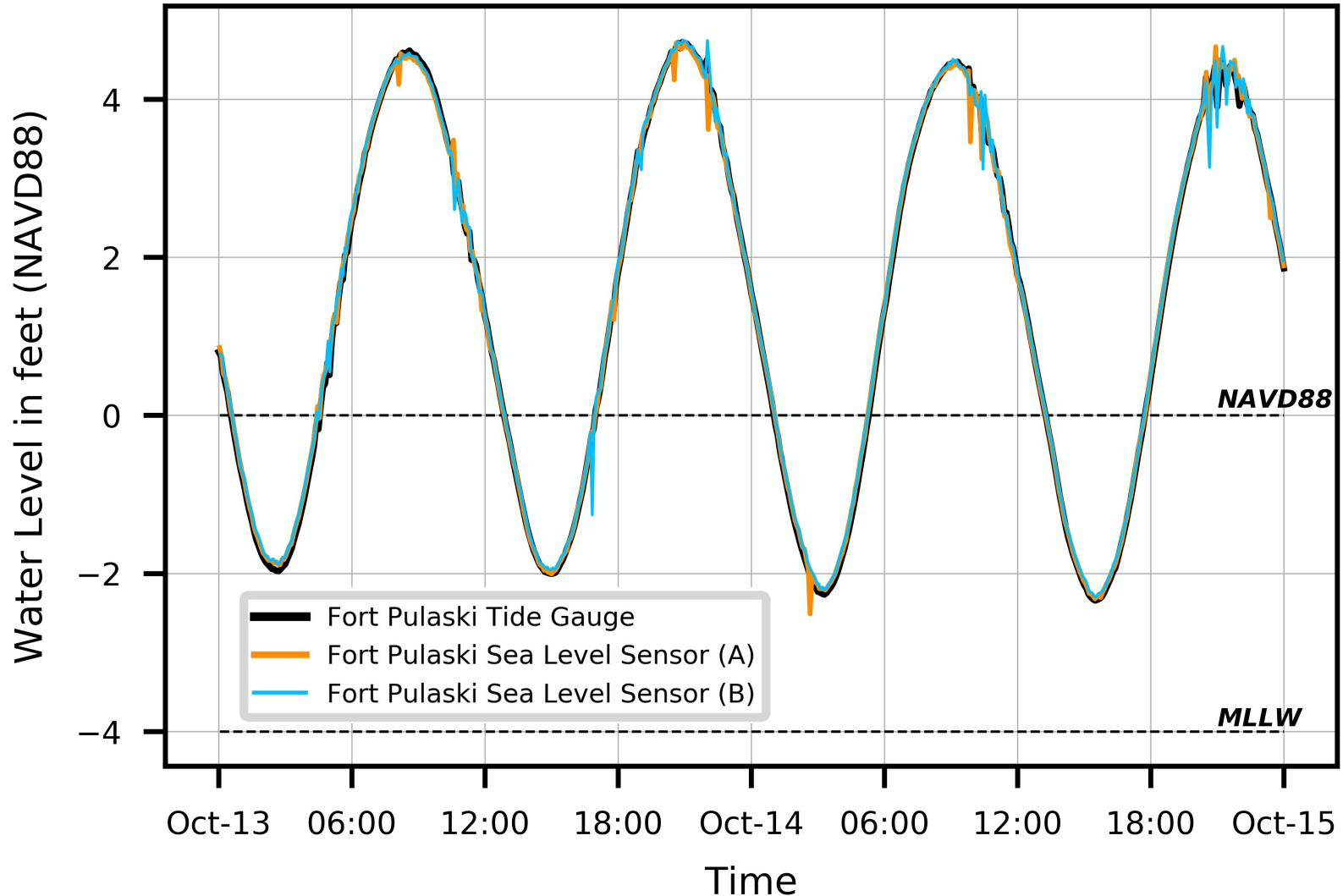
- roughly \$1,500
- 1 to 4 mile range
- can serve hundreds of sensors
- needs internet, power

## **goal:**

provide backbone for diverse IoT applications (temp, humidity, air quality)



# Comparing two GT sensors with Ft. Pulaski NOAA gauge



average residuals between GT sensors and Ft. Pulaski = less than 1", maximum 6"



# Decision Support Tools



public data portal ([dashboard.sealevelsensors.org](https://dashboard.sealevelsensors.org))

- browse sensor data past and present
- slider for visualizing flooding from past flood events, future flood events

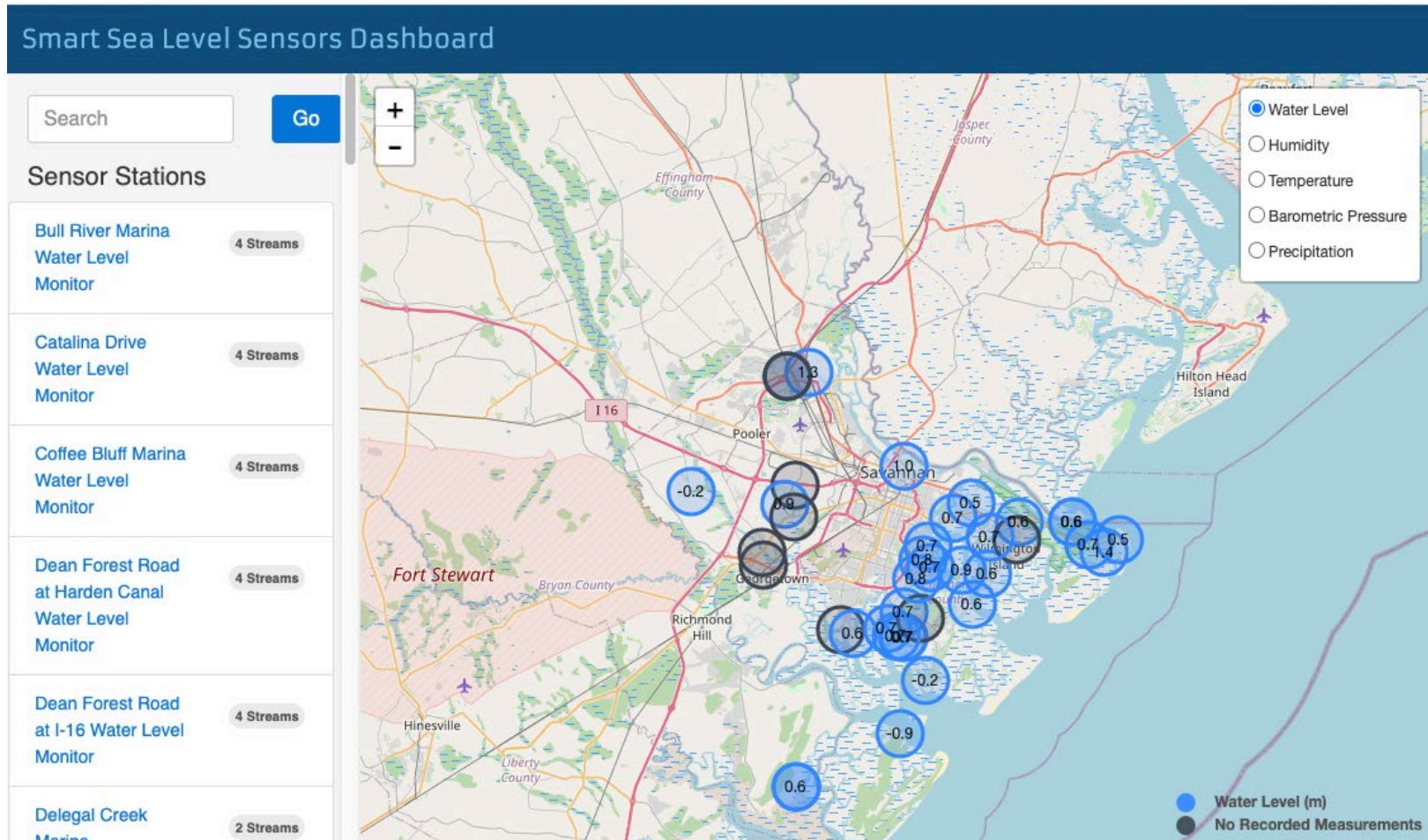
emergency planning portal

- access real-time water level data, flag bridges, critical infrastructure for flood risk

3-day flood forecasts (in development)

- validation with sensor data streams underway

# Dashboard



<https://dashboard.sealevelsensors.org>

# Dashboard

## Turner Creek Boat Ramp Water Level Monitor

[API Link](#)

**SensorThings ID:** 55

**Device ID:**

**Location Description:** Boat ramp near Johnny Mercer Blvd overpass

**Sensor NAVD 88 Elevation:** 2.492

**Sensor Coordinates:** (-80.991889, 32.020471)

**Sensor Notes:** Installed 5/6/19 on South side of pedestrian dock next to boat ramp. Initially had issues with interference from the dock. 7/8/19: firmware 1.4, adjust mounting to remove obstructions, alkaline batteries 7/25/20: firmware 1.5, pressure vent, alkaline batteries.



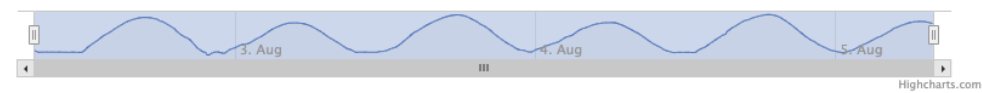
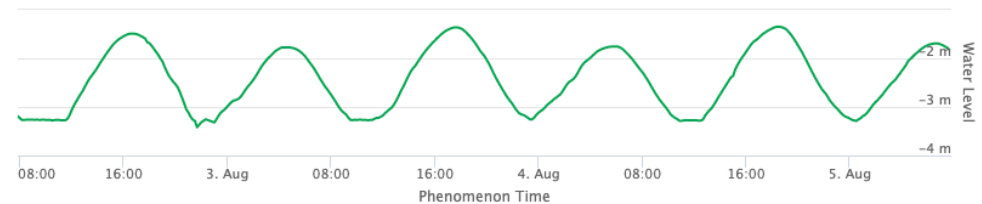
### Sensor Images:



## Datastream of water level measurements relative to fixed position of the sensor

840 Observations

Zoom **1d** 1w 1m 1y All



Highcharts.com

[Details](#)[Download CSV](#)

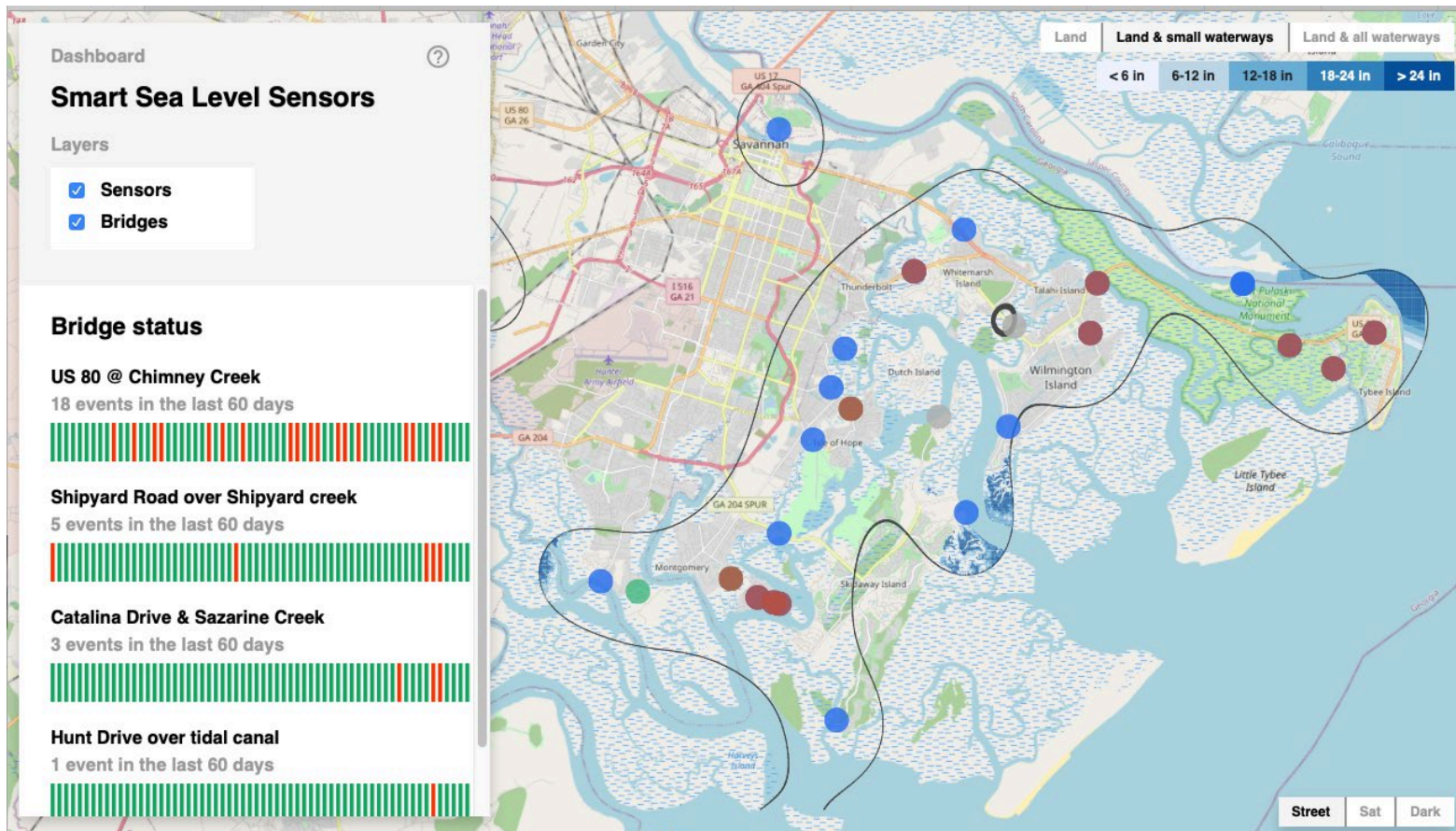
<https://dashboard.sealevelsensors.org>



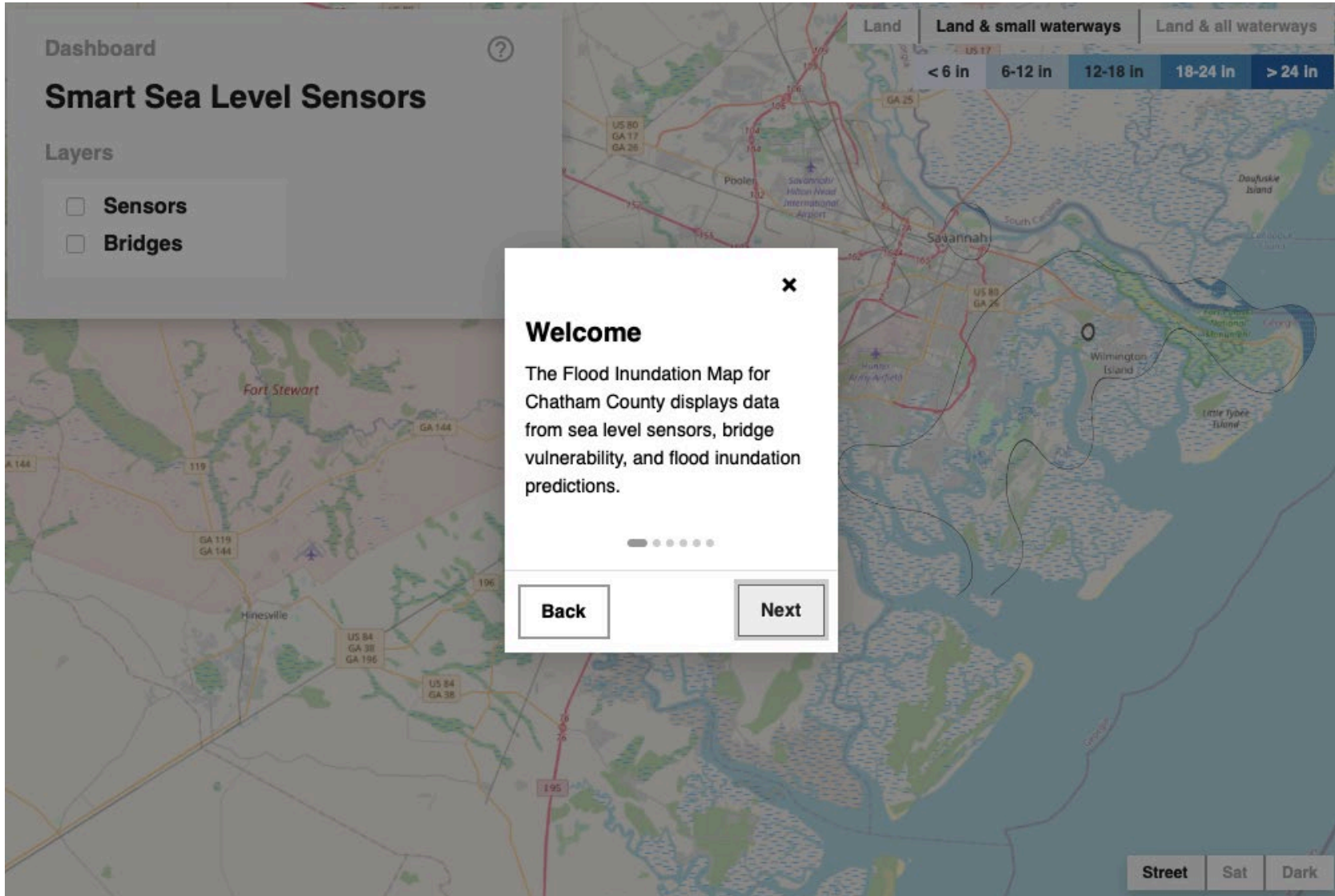
# Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) Portal



Developing tools for emergency management users

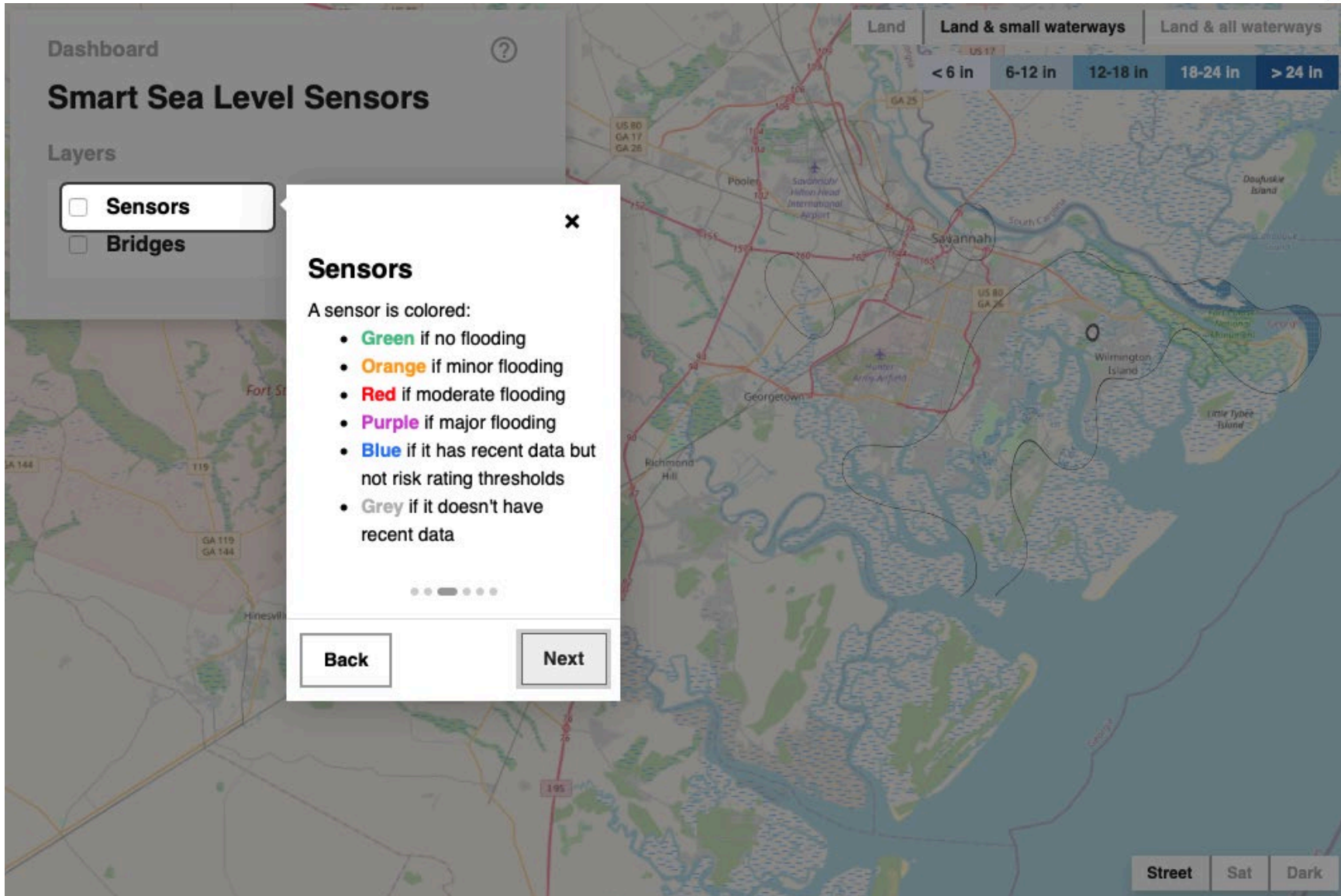


# Portal Overview



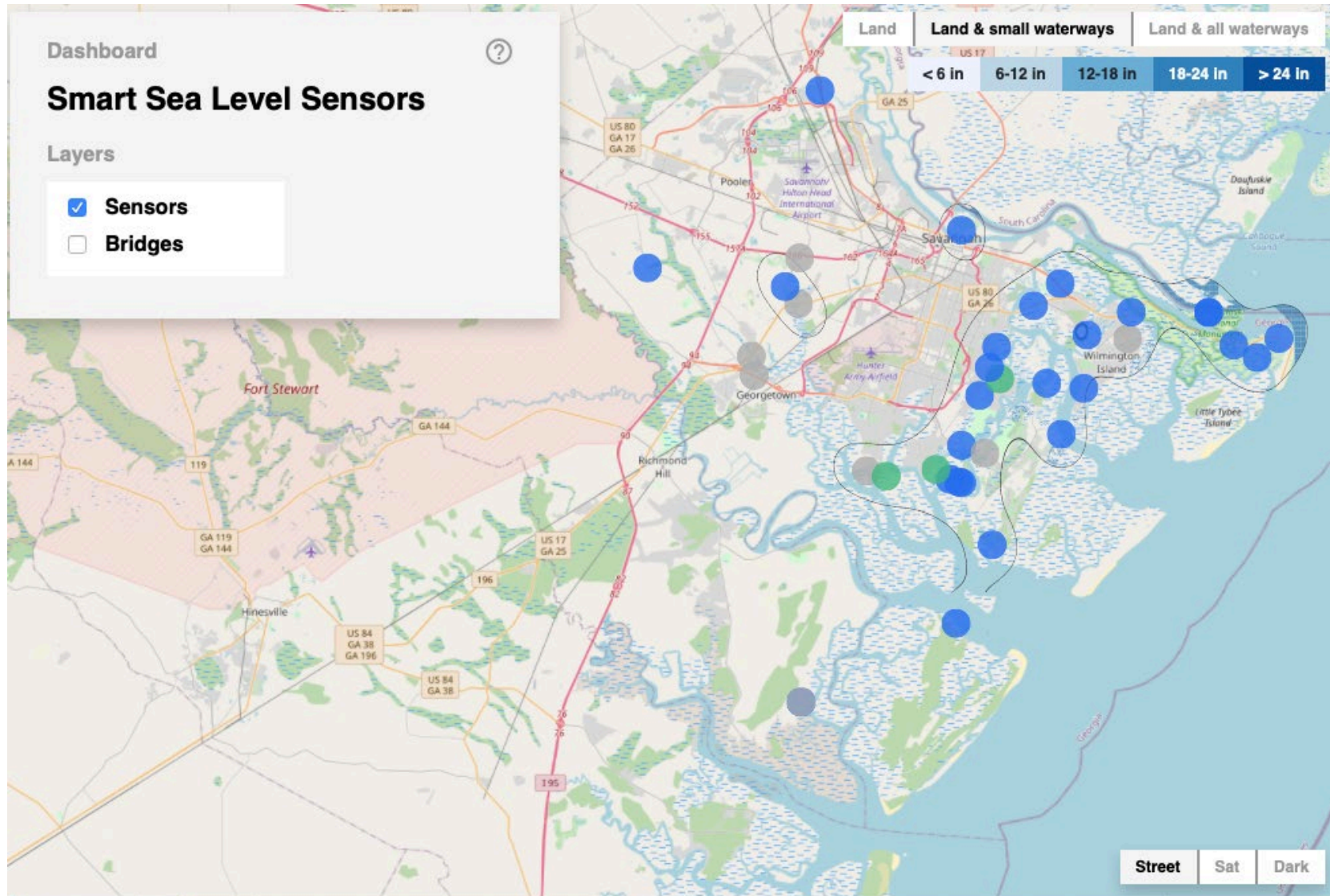


# Sensor Layer

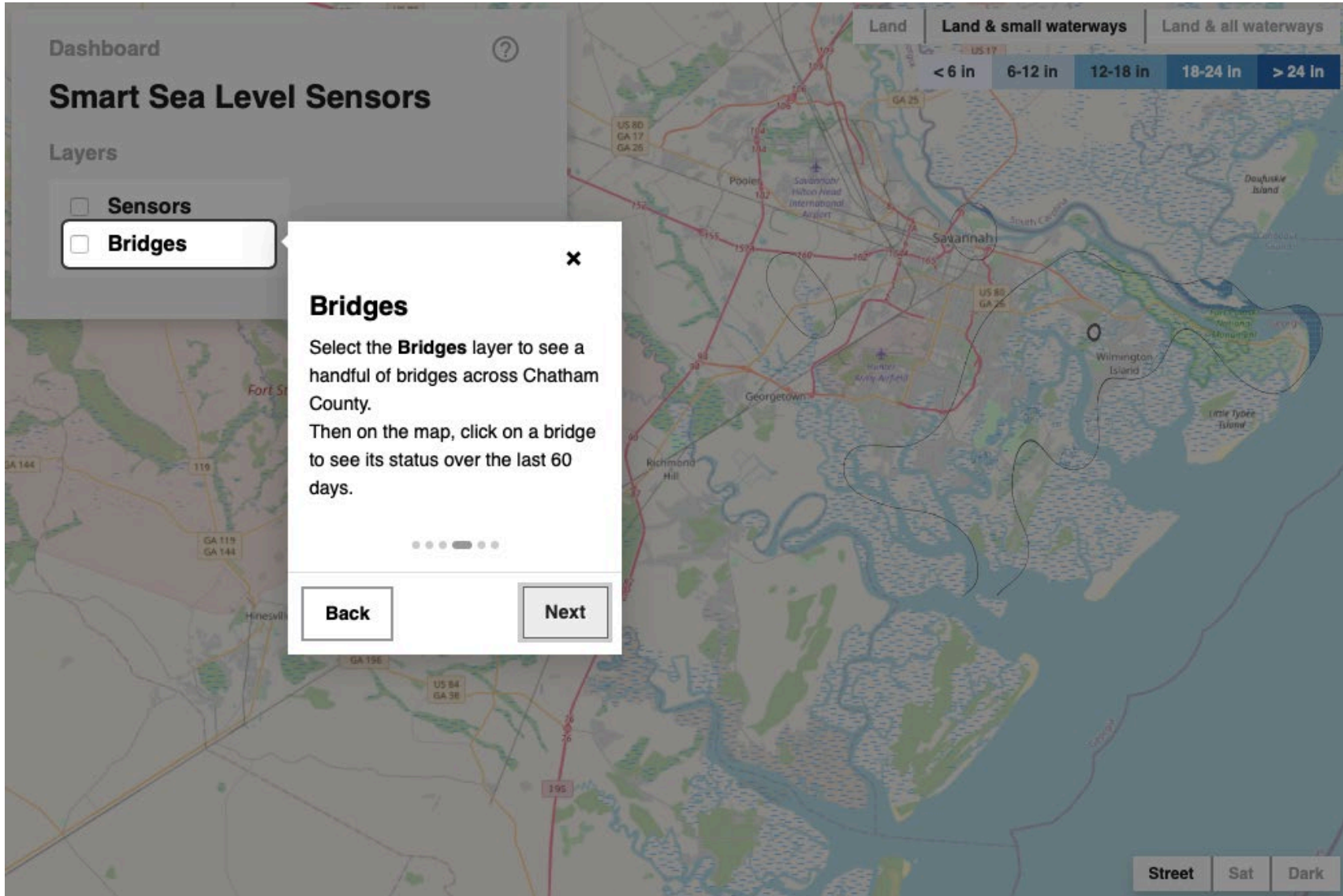




# Sensor Layer



# Bridge Layer





# Bridge Layer

Dashboard



## Smart Sea Level Sensors

Layers

- ☐ Sensors
- ☒ Bridges

### Bridge status

#### US 80 @ Chimney Creek

10 events in the last 60 days



#### Hunt Drive over tidal canal

8 events in the last 60 days



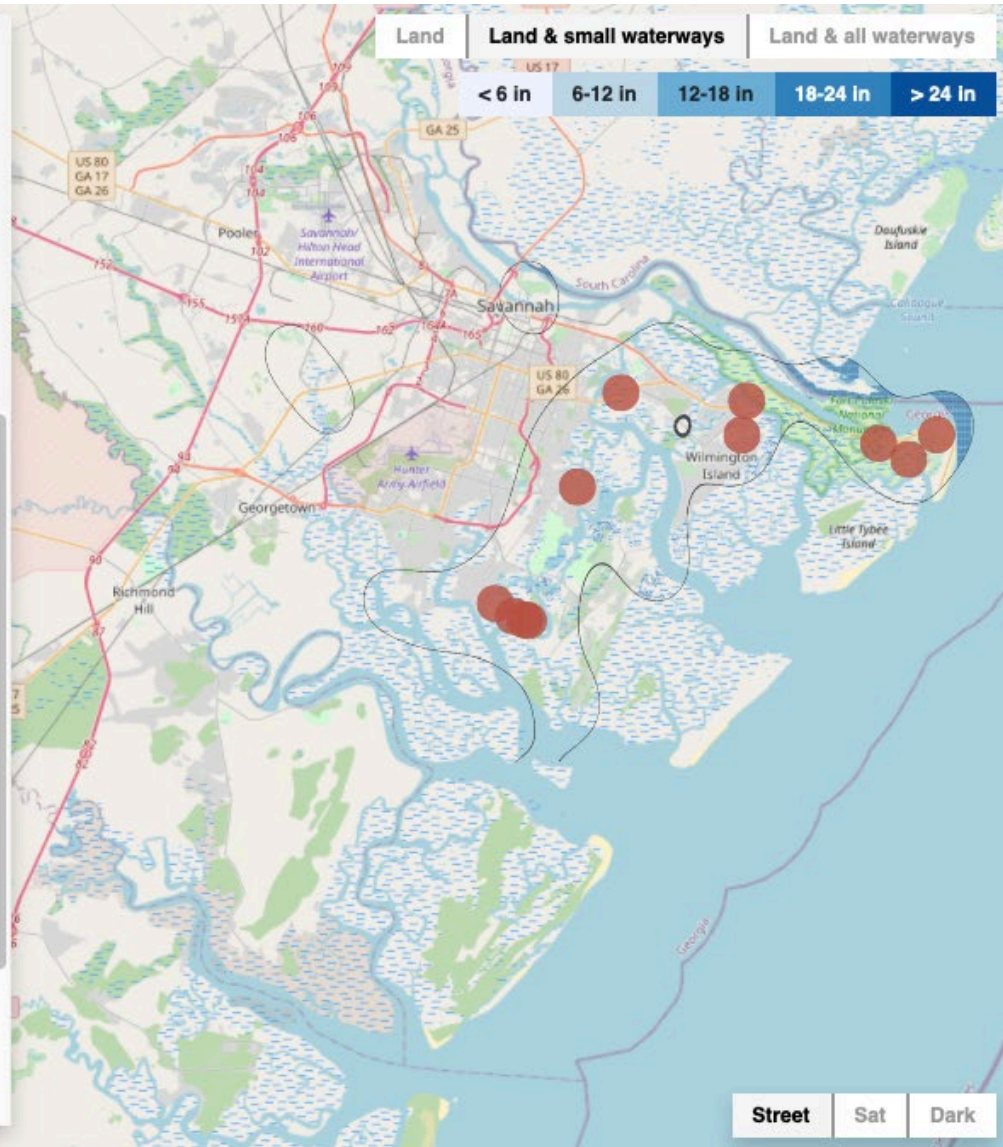
#### Shipyard Road over Shipyard creek

5 events in the last 60 days



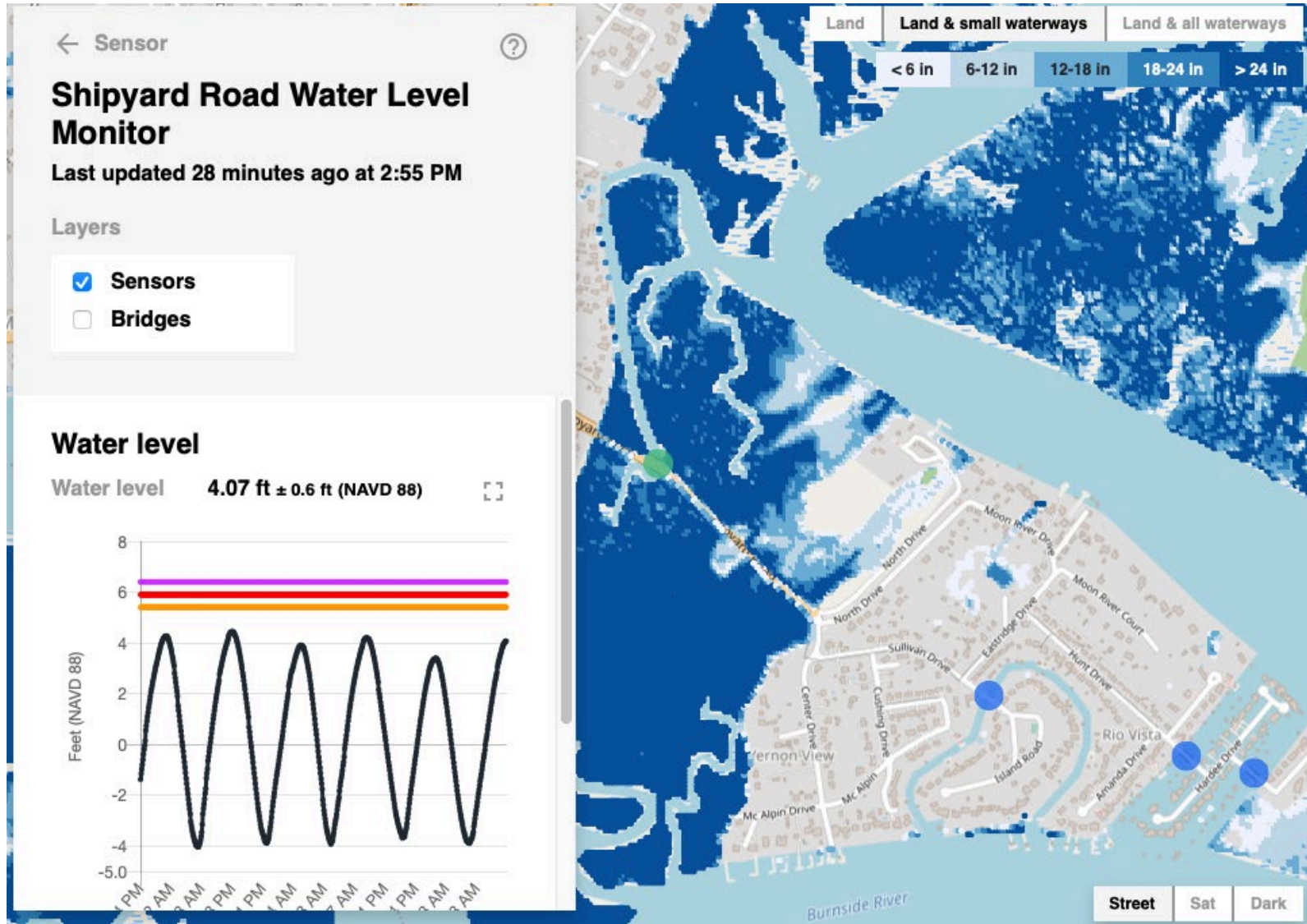
#### Catalina Drive & Sazarine Creek

4 events in the last 60 days



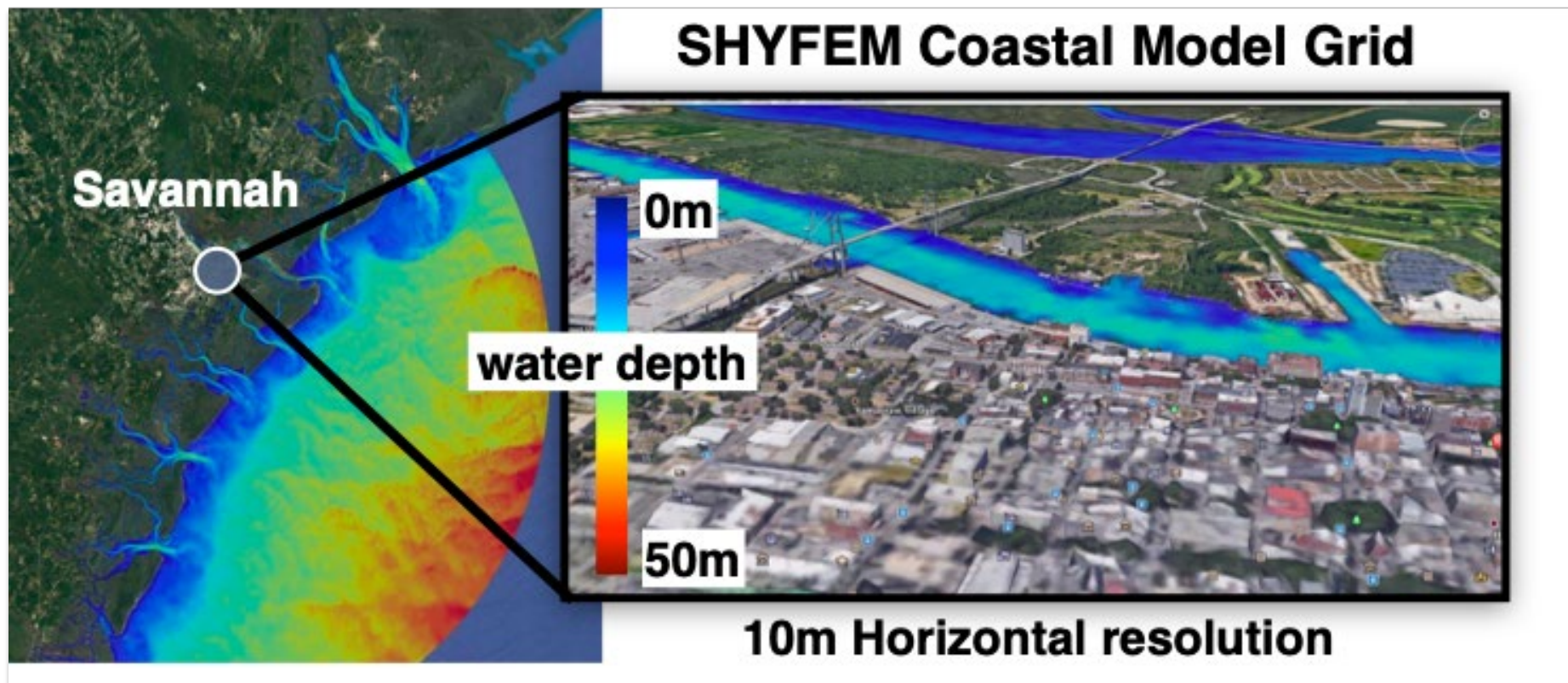


# Inundation Models



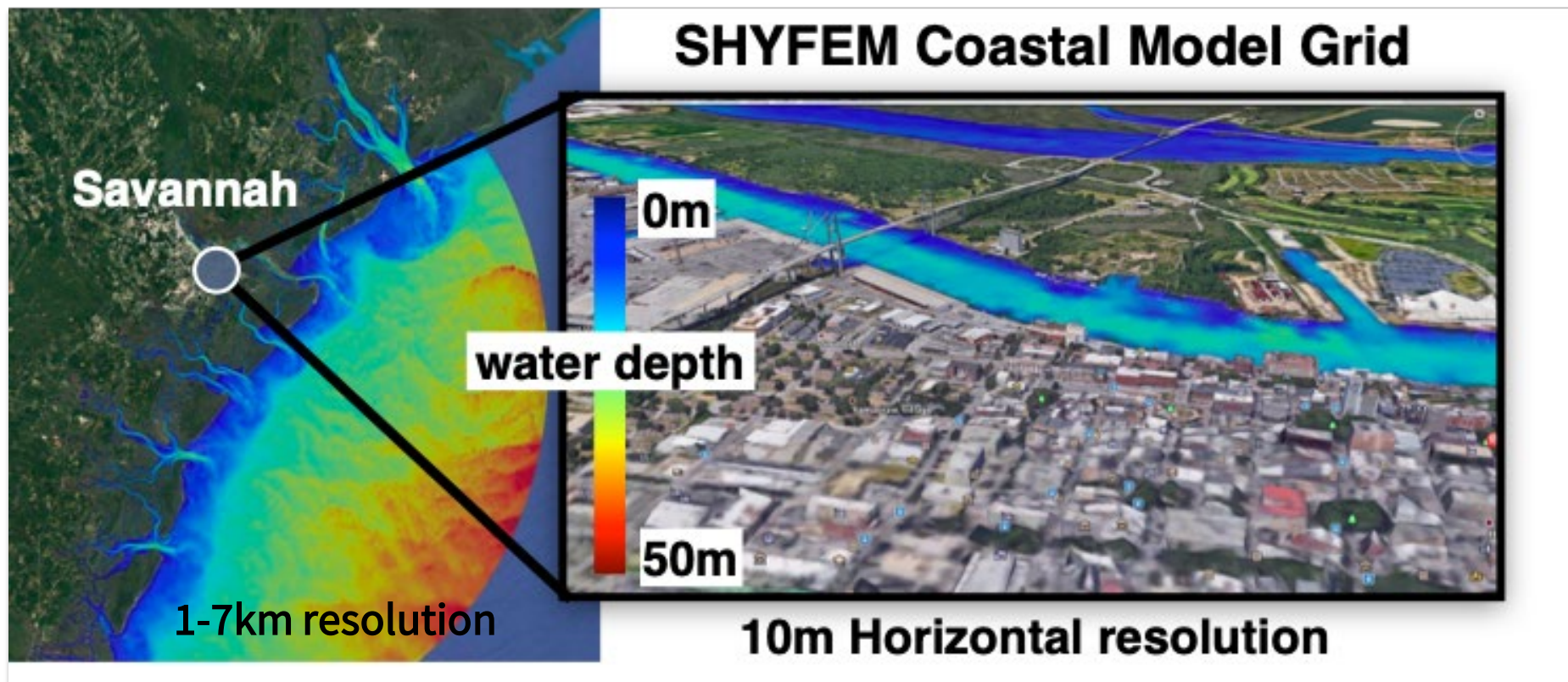
# Modeling Research Team

Led by Dr Emanuele Di Lorenzo

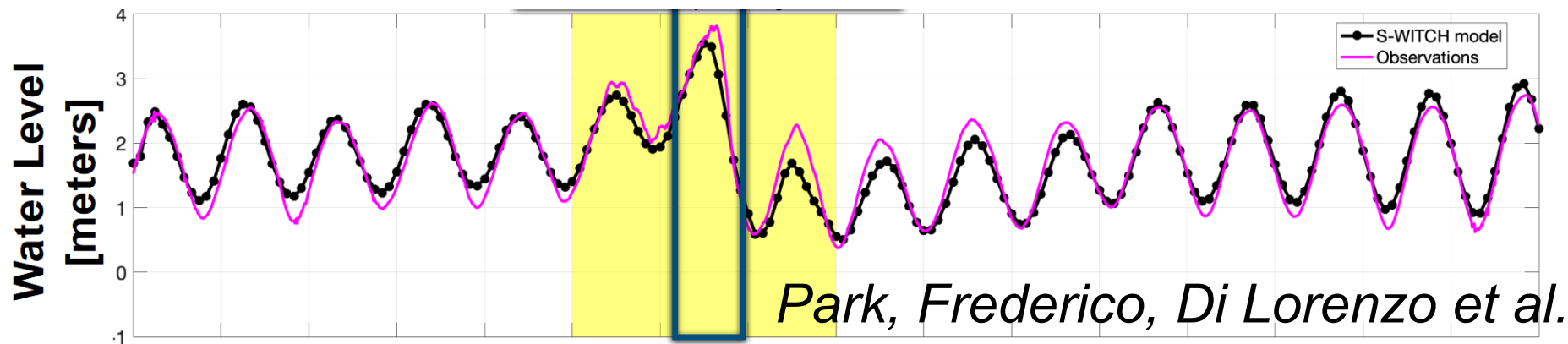


*Di Lorenzo, Frederico, Pinardi et al.*





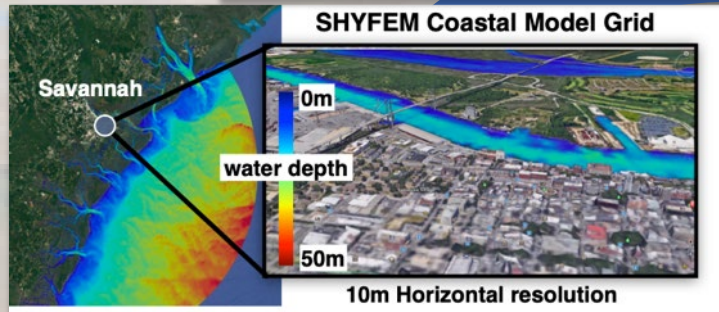
## Hurricane Matthew – data/model comparison



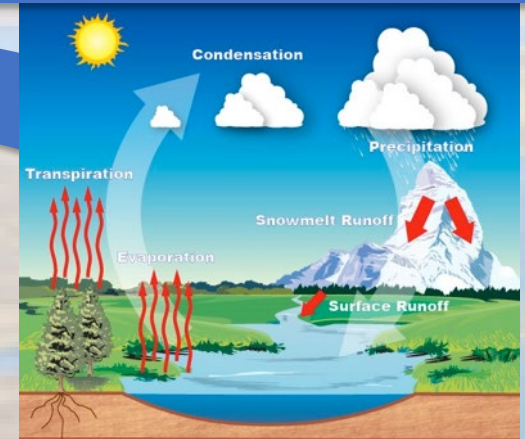


# Future goals integrated forecasts of compound risk

## Coastal Water and Ocean Model



## Regional Atmosphere & Land Hydrology Model



## Urban Flooding Models with Infrastructure



*Di Lorenzo, Pinardi et al.*  
*Lozano, Tien et al.*

# Educational Partnerships



## Sea Level Rise Curriculum



Coastal communities are experiencing an increase in coastal flooding due to storms, king tides, and sea level rise. Educating students on these issues is not only a great science and math exercise, it increases informed-decision making on adapting to climate change-related trends.

- developed by Dr. Alex Robel and Jayma Koval
- webinars for teachers available online at:  
<https://secoora.org/education-outreach/sea-level-rise-curriculum/>



# "Map Room"

Dr. Yanni Loukissas  
Georgia Tech

Community engagement  
& curriculum dev't





# Community Engagement



## ***[SCC CIVIC-FA Track B] Visualizing Resilience: BIPOC Youth Advocacy through Mapmaking***

### ***Led by Dr Allen Hyde, School of History and Sociology***

- Harambee House: Dr. Mildred McClain, Dawud Shabaka
- City of Savannah Office of Sustainability: Nick Deffley
- Savannah State: Dr Philip Omunga
- GT Team: Yanni Loukissas, Nisha Botchwey, Kim Cobb, Ruth Yow, Meltem Alemdar, Iris Tien, Russ Clark
- Planning grant awarded, new proposal submitted May 5 for \$1M
- Deep educational focus for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color youth





## **Keys to our success**

- partnerships with city, county officials from Day 1
- frequent team calls, public workshops
- deep investments by entire research team
- incredible student researchers, interns

## **Moving forward**

- SECOORA project, expand and sustain
- Continued engagement at all levels