

Erosion threatens Alaskans

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As much as \$500 million may be needed in Alaska to move people living in three coastal communities threatened by erosion.

A report Monday in the Alaska Daily News said it will cost \$412,000 per person or a total of \$130 million to relocate residents of the Bering Sea coastal town of Newtok, which has about 320 residents.

To move the people of Kivalina, a barrier island in the Chukchi, could cost as much as \$125 million while relocating residents of Shismaref is estimated at \$200 million, the newspaper said.

State planner Sally Russell Cox told the Daily News the big question is where will Alaska get the money to finance the relocation of the three endangered communities.

"I hate to put things in economic terms because these are human beings we're talking about," says Cox. "These are lifestyles they've led for thousands of years that have been passed on to them by their forefathers."

In past years, native Alaskans moved to safer places if their homes were threatened but modern buildings, airstrips and roads keep once-nomadic people anchored in place, the newspaper said.

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