



INITIATIVE NEWS

It's been a busy start to the new year for SASMI! We have several partners who are looking to pursue upcoming funding opportunities, our Work Groups and Leadership Team have identified next steps based on input from the Partnership Council meeting in December, and later this month we will be reconnecting with our SERPPAS partners at their Steering Committee meeting, to provide updates and look for collaborative opportunities in 2025.



Lora Clarke, The Pew Charitable Trusts

SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

[Joint Agency Report Details Coastal Wetland Status and Trends Across a 10-Year Study](#)

[Period](#). NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have released a joint report which shows how wetlands in coastal watersheds have changed in type and abundance across the major coastal regions of the contiguous United States. The report is the third in a series, with prior releases reporting on timeframes from 1998–2004 and 2004–2009. The previous study

periods provide valuable data to compare to the results of the new report. This helps us to understand longer-term trends in coastal wetland loss and gain across U.S. regions.

[Shifts in marsh erosion, migration, and wave exposure over nearly two centuries of sea-level rise in the Gulf of Mexico](#). Coastal wetlands are economically important ecosystems, but are at risk to erosion from waves, storms, and sea level rise. However, marshes can persist under rising sea level through vertical accretion and migration into adjacent higher-elevation habitats. This study examined rates of marsh shoreline change and migration within the Grand Bay estuary to better understand how rates of marsh migration compare to marsh loss. Their results and methods may inform our partners' work here in the southeast.

[Flooded barrier islands, rising mainland risks: USGS study](#). A recent U.S. Geological Survey study projects that rising sea levels and stronger, more intense storms will exacerbate four specific coastal hazards and associated management challenges for Cape Lookout National Seashore. Rising waters and eroding or sinking lands may be unsurprising on the coast, but the findings are troubling for anyone on or near the barrier islands that are so popular with visitors and vital to protecting mainland folks. Marsh restoration and protection are among the actions planned to protect Cape Lookout's people and resources.

[Shore Up the Defense: Coastal Science Goes Tactical!](#) This episode of the Sapelo NERRDs podcast looks at how the Department of Defense and military installations along our coast are helping to implement coastal resilience strategies and improve natural resources in Georgia. It highlights the great work that REPI, SERPPAS and other partners are doing there and features an interview with our SASMI Partnership Council Incoming Chair, Michelle Covi of UGA Marine Extension and GA Sea Grant.

FUNDING REMINDERS

[Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants](#)

Up to \$75 million in funding is available for fish passage projects under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This funding will support projects that reopen migratory pathways and restore access to healthy habitat for fish around the country. There will be applicant webinars on November 20 and December 3, and the closing date is **February 10, 2025**.

[Deadline Extended - FY26 Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Funding](#)

The Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) is requesting project applications for funding to restore and conserve habitat necessary to support coastal, estuarine dependent, and diadromous fish species. Federal funding available through the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) program will be used to support the top ranked proposals. A total of approximately \$200,000 in funding is available to support 2-4 projects each year; however, exceptional projects may be funded for the full amount. The previous deadline of January 31, 2025 has been extended to **February 14, 2025**.

[Restoring Tribal Priority Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants](#)

Up to \$20 million in funding is available for fish passage and tribal capacity building under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This funding will support U.S. federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and tribal organizations in implementing fish passage work and building tribal organizational capacity. There will be applicant webinars on November 20 and December 3, and the closing date is **February 27, 2025**.

[Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program](#)

The WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program provides cost shared funding to states, Tribes, and other entities as they study, design and construct large-scale aquatic ecosystem restoration projects that are collaboratively developed, have widespread regional benefits, and result in the improvement of the health of fisheries, wildlife, and aquatic habitat. For eligible activities and more information, see the link above; first round of applications are due by **April 15, 2025**.

[FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants](#)

The fiscal year (FY) 2024 funding opportunities for two Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs are now posted. For this grant cycle, \$600 million is available for the [Flood Mitigation Assistance](#) grant program and \$750 million is available to the [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) grant program. The application period is open until **April 18, 2025**. Sub applicants are encouraged to contact the state, territory, or Tribal applicant as they may have earlier deadlines.

[Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Tribes and Underserved Communities](#)

NOAA is announcing the availability of \$20 million in funding for projects that will advance the coastal habitat restoration and climate resilience priorities of tribes and underserved communities. Of the \$20 million in funding available, 15 percent is specifically available to U.S. federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and organizations that represent tribes through formal legal agreements. Projects selected through this opportunity will span several types of activities, including capacity building and restoration. Applications are due by **May 12, 2025**.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

[Southeast & Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership \(SCDRP\) Annual Meeting | February 4-5, 2025 | Wilmington NC](#)

Since its inception in 2016, the Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership (SCDRP) has grown into one of the largest cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, regional networks for resilience professionals from Federal, state, territory, and local government, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, business, and industry. The 9th annual meeting will focus on the topic of Cultivating Climate-Resilient Communities. Learn more or register at the link above.

[Partnering with REPI for Resilience and Conservation Success | February 11, 2025 | Virtual](#)

As extreme weather events become more frequent across the country, military installations and land trusts are perfect partners to ensure we have resilient landscapes and communities. The Land Trust Alliance and the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program have a longstanding relationship designed to increase land trusts' capacity to receive funding and implement resilience projects that protect, enhance, or restore conservation values.

[REPI 2025 Readiness and Recreation Initiative Help Session | February 12, 2025 | Virtual](#)

The REPI Program is pleased to partner with the National Park Service State and Local Assistance Program for the 2025 Readiness and Recreation Initiative. Now in its third year, this partnership provides \$40 million in funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as a potential match to REPI funds to support projects that provide recreation

opportunities to military families and the public while promoting military readiness and resilience. This webinar will clarify how the REPI Program and the National Park Service fund projects that successfully match LWCF and REPI funds and how to submit proposals.

[Salt Marsh Conservation Workshop in McIntosh County, GA | February 13, 2025 | Darien GA](#)

The Georgia Conservancy cordially invites you to attend a rescheduled South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative (SASMI) Summit workshop, now set to take place February 20th in Darien, GA. This interactive workshop will focus on the long-term resiliency and protection of our coastal salt marsh. The workshops will feature speakers, mapping resources, videos, light refreshments, and interactive stations designed to foster a community conversation regarding threats to our coastal marshlands and opportunities for restoration and conservation of marshland now and in the future. It aims to engage community members, academic institutions, agencies, and everyone who cares for our coastal marshlands in an open discussion which will form the basis of the Georgia SASMI Implementation Workplan.

[SECAS Third Thursday Web Forum: Keeping the Blueprint both useful and usable | February 20, 2025 | Virtual](#)

This month's topic is: "Keeping the Blueprint both useful and usable: Recent improvements to the Southeast Blueprint Explorer" with Hilary Morris, User Support & Communications, Southeast Conservation Blueprint. Tune in to learn about the latest improvements to the Southeast Blueprint Explorer! The Explorer is a simple online viewer that's intended to make the Blueprint easy for anyone to access without high-tech software or GIS expertise.

[Advancing Coastal Resilience through Nature-Based Solutions: Weathering the Storm | February 20, 2025 | Virtual](#)

This webinar will showcase two efforts aiming to understand the performance of nature-based solutions for shoreline protection during and after storm events. The two practitioners that will discuss their work are Lexia Weaver from the North Carolina Coastal Federation and Tom Ries from Ecosphere Restoration Institute.

[Innovative partnerships and strategies for building community resilience | March 11, 2025 | Virtual](#)

This webinar will highlight the Coastal Equity and Resilience (CEAR) Hub's collaborative work with the Pin Point Betterment Association to address critical challenges facing the historic Gullah Geechee community of Pin Point, GA. Explore how community-driven strategies are building Pin Point's resilience against flooding, aging infrastructure, and coastal development while also preserving their rich cultural heritage.

MARSH Forward!

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