



INITIATIVE NEWS

We are marshing forward with plans to host our SASMI Partnership Council this May (13th and 14th) in Beaufort, NC. During that meeting, we will hear from our state teams about their roadmaps—strategic documents that take the guidance in the regional SASMI Plan and apply it to state-level priorities, resources, and challenges. We are looking forward to seeing many of our partners in-person on the North Carolina coast!



Karl Dudman

SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

[NOAA-Funded Research Highlights Economic Effects of Oyster Reef Restoration](#). Researchers at Morgan State University's Patuxent Environmental and Aquatic Research Laboratory quantified how restored oyster reefs in the NOAA Middle Peninsula Habitat Focus Area in Virginia would affect the local economy. Oyster reefs provide habitat and food for commercially important species, and they are often a component of living shorelines that are established to protect salt marsh. Learn more about how they benefit the bottom line in this article.

[Major Update to Satellite-Based Datasets Used to Assess Salt Marsh Vulnerability](#)

[Nationwide](#). The Unvegetated-Vegetated Marsh Ratio (UVVR) now computes national salt marsh vulnerability using satellite imagery from 1985-2023—a significant increase from the original 2014-2018 dataset. UVVR is widely used by Federal, state, and non-governmental organizations across the Nation to assess salt marsh vulnerability and make restoration and land management decisions.

[Audubon sanctuary gets \\$3 million for work to save marsh](#). COROLLA, NC — Officials with the Donal C. O’Brien Sanctuary and Audubon Center at Pine Island hope to add to their toolkit for mitigating the effects of sea level rise on marsh environments with help from a recent \$3.05 million grant. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded the money to the sanctuary in Currituck County in late 2024, “to fund innovative marsh restoration pilot projects.” Learn more about the sanctuary and this important work in this article.

[Natural habitats can reduce flood losses](#). A recent article highlights how natural habitats, including salt marshes, can provide significant protection against storms and help reduce insurance losses. An analysis of Florida's coastline, which has the most coastal property exposed to storm surge of any US state, showed that the natural protection in these areas reduced the frequency of insurance losses from lower severity weather events from 2009 to 2022. Learn more at the link above.

[How Hurricane Ida's Impact on Wetlands Endangers Inland Communities](#). While this article focuses on the impacts of Hurricane Ida on marshes in the Gulf, the lessons learned here about damage to coastal wetlands and subsequent effects on coastal and inland resilience are likely to resonate within SASMI as well. Learn more about these results and the tools used to measure them here.

FUNDING REMINDERS

[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 applications are due by **April 15, 2025**.

[NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants](#)

Projects selected through this funding opportunity will have a transformative impact for coastal communities and tribes across the country. They will help sustain our nation's fisheries, make significant strides in the recovery of threatened and endangered species, and help protect coastal communities and ecosystems. They will support efforts such as reconnecting rivers to their historic floodplains, outplanting corals to rebuild reefs, building living shorelines that protect coasts from erosion and sea level rise, and more. The deadline is **April 16, 2025**.

[Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#)

Funding for the purpose of implementing a sustained pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation program to reduce overall risk to the population and structures from future hazard events, while also reducing reliance on federal funding from future disasters. Eligible applicants include County governments, Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized), City or township governments, Native American tribal organizations, and select others. The closing date for this opportunity is **April 18, 2025**.

[NFWF National Coastal Resilience Fund 2025](#)

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is pleased to announce the 2025 National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) Request for Proposals (RFP)¹. NFWF will make investments in planning, design, and implementation of nature-based solutions to enhance protection for coastal communities from the impacts of storms, floods, and other natural hazards while improving habitats for fish and wildlife. Pre-proposals are due **May 6, 2025**.

[Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants](#)

NOAA is announcing the availability of \$20 million in funding for projects that will advance coastal habitat restoration and resilience priorities. 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

[South Carolina Resilience Conference | April 7-9, 2025 | Greenville SC](#)

This unique conference unites the dynamic sectors of health and wellness, conservation, and community and economic sustainability. This gathering, unlike any other in the nation, assembles leaders, innovators, and advocates from many different fields under one roof to delve into pressing issues, share insights, and forge collaborative pathways toward a healthier, more sustainable future. Day-of registration is available.

[North Carolina Coastal Federation's 2025 Coastal Summit | April 8-9, 2025 | Raleigh NC](#)

This two-day summit will highlight the progress and interconnectivity of work related to the advancing science, restoration, and preservation activities of many important coastal ecosystems. Hosted by the Coastal Federation at the Marbles Kids Museum in Raleigh, this event will feature the work of the Federation and the many partners who are working to advance Oyster, Salt Marsh, and Water Quality initiatives in the state. The summit will convene decision-makers, including legislators and partners from North Carolina and other states.

[REPI Webinar Series: 2025 REPI REPORT TO CONGRESS | April 16, 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. During this webinar, participants will learn how the REPI Program and the National Park Service fund projects that successfully match LWCF and REPI funds and how to submit proposals.

[The Hope Summit 2025 | September 25-28, 2025 | Charleston SC](#)

The Hope Summit 2025 will be held from September 25 - 27 in Charleston, South Carolina at the Charleston Museum. The theme this year is "promoting resilience, regeneration, and the

restoration economy through community-driven solutions." There will be a two-day conference on Thursday the 25th and Friday the 26th with a film festival running from Friday night to Saturday night at the same location. Early Bird conference passes will open in early April along with applications for the Next Generation Conference Scholarships for students and early career professionals.

MARSH Forward!

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