



## INITIATIVE NEWS

As we continue to work toward establishing SASMI’s structure for implementation, we are looking at ways to keep our Coalition engaged, motivated, and marshing forward. During last month’s Coffee with SASMI, we discussed how we can use that monthly meeting for this purpose—and you responded with some great ideas! We will be structuring future meetings based on themes derived from the SASMI Plan, with guest speakers whose knowledge and experience can help other SASMI partners in their own conservation efforts. Thank you to everyone who has reached out with speaker suggestions, and look for more details to come.



*Andy Johnson / Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

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## SASMI PARTNERS’ GOOD WORK

[Sentinel Landscapes Partnership Announces the 2024 Designation Cycle](#). The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership is thrilled to launch the 2024 Sentinel Landscape Designation Cycle! Building upon the success of the 11 existing sentinel landscapes, this exciting initiative reflects a

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decade of valuable lessons learned by the partnership in fostering innovative connections amongst partners in conservation, working lands, climate resilience, and national defense. All parties interested in applying for a designation must submit a completed expression of interest to [FCC@sentinellandscapes.org](mailto:FCC@sentinellandscapes.org) by 11:59 PM in your local time zone on July 27, 2023. In Fall 2023, representatives of the Sentinel Landscapes Federal Coordinating Committee will notify applicants regarding whether they have been invited to submit a full proposal. Applicants who are selected will then have at least 60 business days to submit their full proposals. The Federal Coordinating Committee will announce final designations in April 2024.

[Will they stay or will they go - understanding South Atlantic Coastal Wetland Transformation in Response to Sea-Level Rise](#). Threats to coastal wetlands, including sea-level rise and subsidence, led the National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) System to protect over 500,000 hectares of coastal wetlands during the twentieth century, with approximately 20% occurring in the South Atlantic geography. This effort has involved systematic long-term monitoring of changes in marsh elevation using surface elevation tables and marker horizons at 20 sites across 19 NWRs in the southeastern coastal USA. Of these sites, only six were gaining elevation at a rate that was equal to or greater than the long-term rates of sea-level rise and therefore considered resilient. Only Waccamaw and Currituck NWRs, both located in oligohaline marshes, were gaining elevation at a rate that exceeded sea-level rise by 1 mm/year. These results support the mounting evidence that many coastal wetlands, particularly in the South Atlantic geography of the USA, will undergo ecological transformations in the next several decades.

[Horizontal Integrity a prerequisite for vertical stability: Comparison of Elevation Change and the Unvegetated-Vegetated Marsh Ratio Across the Southeastern USA Coastal Wetlands](#). Surface elevation tables (SETs) estimate the vertical resilience of coastal wetlands to sea-level rise (SLR) and other stressors but are limited in their spatial coverage. Conversely, spatially integrative metrics based on remote sensing provide comprehensive spatial coverage of horizontal processes but cannot track elevation trajectory at high resolution. Here, researchers present a critical advance in reconciling vertical and horizontal dynamics by assessing the relationship between elevation change, relative tidal elevation ( $Z^*$ ), and the unvegetated-vegetated marsh ratio (UVVR) across coastal wetland complexes in the southeastern USA.

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[USDA Announces Historic Investment in Wildlife Conservation](#). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced that it will expand its work on wildlife conservation by investing at least \$500 million over the next five years and by leveraging all available conservation programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), through its Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) effort. These commitments will ramp up the conservation assistance for farmers, ranchers, private forest owners and tribes with a focus on working lands in key geographies across the country as well as hiring for key conservation positions. The funding will help deliver a series of cohesive Frameworks for Conservation Action, which establish a common vision across the partnership of public and private interests and goals for delivering conservation resources, combining cutting-edge science with local knowledge. Look for more information on this opportunity in the future!

More SASMI Plan Coverage. We also have a couple of additional articles to share highlighting the release of the SASMI Plan, featuring quotes by our Coalition members. [This article](#) focuses on efforts in Georgia and features commentary by Courtney Reich of the Georgia Conservancy, while [this one](#) focuses on Florida with quotes from Representative Simons-Jenkins of the Gullah/Geechee nation and Cam Jaggard of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

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## FUNDING REMINDERS

### [America the Beautiful Challenge | Timeline Updates](#)

Intended to streamline grant funding opportunities for new conservation and restoration projects around the U.S., the America the Beautiful Challenge consolidates funding from multiple federal agencies and the private sector to enable applicants to conceive and develop large-scale projects that address shared funder priorities and span public and private lands. Pre-proposals are currently being reviewed, and full proposal invitations were sent out June 16. For those who received invitations, full proposals are due by **Thursday, July 20, 2023**.

### [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#)

The Biden-Harris Administration recently announced the availability of \$500 million in funding to advance partner-driven solutions to conservation on agricultural land through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). RCPP leverages a voluntary approach to conservation that expands the reach of conservation efforts

and climate-smart agriculture through public-private partnerships. Proposed projects must generate conservation benefits by addressing specific natural resource objectives in a State/multistate area or address one or more primary resource concerns within an NRCS-designated critical conservation area (CCA). The application deadline is **Friday, August 18, 2023**.

#### [LWCF State Assistance + REPI Partnership Challenge Program](#)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to fulfill a bipartisan commitment to safeguard our natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. Using zero taxpayer dollars, the LWCF invests earnings from offshore oil and gas leasing to help strengthen communities, preserve our history and protect our national endowment of lands and waters. Applicant eligibility is limited to a lead agency designated by the Governor or by state legislation for the purposes of implementing LWCF in that state. Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM, ET on **Monday, August 21, 2023**.

#### [NOAA Climate Resilience Regional Challenge](#)

Approximately \$575 million is available for projects that build the resilience of coastal communities to extreme weather (e.g., hurricanes and storm surge) and other impacts of climate change, including sea level rise and drought. Funding was made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act, a historic, federal government-wide investment that is advancing NOAA's efforts to build Climate-Ready Coasts. The focus of this grant program is on collaborative approaches to achieving resilience in coastal regions. Proposed projects should address risk reduction, regional collaboration, and equity, and build enduring capacity for adaptation. The Letter of Intent is due **Monday, August 21, 2023**. [Read the full press release here](#).

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

#### [Georgia Sea Grant State Fellowship | Application deadline July 7, 2023 | Georgia](#)

The Georgia Sea Grant State Fellowship Program provides a unique educational and professional opportunity to eligible graduate students who are interested in coastal and marine resources in Georgia, and the policy and management decisions affecting those resources. Modeled after the highly successful Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Program, the State Fellowship Program is designed to provide recent graduates an opportunity to acquire "on the

job” experience in planning and implementation of coastal and marine policies and programs in Georgia. Applications are due July 7, 2023, by 5 p.m. EST.

#### [\*\*DoD Climate Resilience Workshop | July 10-13, 2023 | St. Louis, MO\*\*](#)

This Workshop will provide a forum for DOD stakeholders and partners to explore the many facets of climate change, a national security threat that has tangible impacts to military readiness. Installations, environmental organizations, and climate change professionals will all be broadly represented to help inform the Military Departments on data, tools, and resources for addressing and combatting climate change threats. Several of our SASMI partners will be attending this workshop, and we hope to see you there!

#### [\*\*Scaling up urban growth projections with FUTURES | July 20, 2023 | Virtual\*\*](#)

FUTURES is an open source urban growth model developed to address the environmental and ecological impacts of urbanization by explicitly capturing the spatial structure of development. Anna Petrasova from NC State University will introduce the model, talk about the challenges associated with scaling it up, present the results, and discuss how to keep the developed data product up-to-date. She will also describe efforts to model climate-aware scenarios for the Southeast US that integrate dynamic flood event modeling and human adaptive response to forecast patterns of urban growth via population redistribution and adaptation.

#### [\*\*ORISE Fellowship on Climate Change and Wildlife Action Planning | Application deadline July 21, 2023 | Multiple locations\*\*](#)

A research opportunity is currently available with the U.S. Geological Survey’s (USGS) locations in Knoxville, TN Raleigh, North Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia, or remotely within the Southeastern U.S. Exceptions may be considered. This project will provide science synthesis, user support/technical assistance, and science communication related to impacts of climate change on species and habitats that can inform State Wildlife Action Plans and adaptation strategies in the southeastern U.S. Results of this research will provide needed information on potential impacts of climate change for natural-resource managers from state agencies and other organizations. The project will involve close interaction with ecological scientists from a range of organizations and engagement with natural-resource management officials at state and federal agencies. Applications are due July 21, 2023 by 3:42 PM ET.

### [Southeast Monthly Webinar Series | Multiple Dates | Virtual](#)

The Southeast Climate monthly webinar series is held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am ET. This series is hosted by the Southeast Regional Climate Center (SERCC), the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), and the NOAA National Weather Service. These webinars will provide the region with timely information on current and developing climate conditions such as drought, floods, and tropical storms, as well as climatic events like El Niño and La Niña. Speakers may also discuss the impacts of these conditions on topics such as agriculture production, water resources, wildfires, and ecosystems.

Upcoming Webinar Special Topics ([register here](#)):

July 25 - Flash Drought in the Southeast

Aug 22 - Future water availability and streamflow characteristics in the Southeastern U.S

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