



## THE SASMI PLAN HAS LAUNCHED!

It's official— the SASMI Plan, titled ["MARSH FORWARD! A Regional Plan for the Future of the South Atlantic Coast's Million-Acre Salt Marsh Ecosystem,"](#) is live as of May 16, 2023! Alongside the Plan, we have launched our new SASMI website, [marshforward.org](http://marshforward.org), which provides links to a number of helpful resources. Thank you to all our Coalition members who have contributed to the completion and celebration of the Plan with articles, press releases, social media posts, events and more. We will continue to celebrate this monumental accomplishment even as we marsh forward into implementation.



*Photo by Cameron Jaggard, Pew Charitable Trusts*

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## SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

**Media attention for the SASMI Plan.** The Coalition has made great use of the media toolkit to spread the word about the SASMI Plan launch! Here are some examples of featured items:

### News Articles

[NOAA](#)

[Pew Charitable Trusts](#)

[Texas A&M NRI](#)

[USGS](#)

[Coastal Review](#)

[Fishing Wire](#)

[E&E](#)

[Carteret News-Times](#)

[FL News-Leader](#)

[11Alive](#)

### Social Media Posts

*Facebook*

*Instagram*

*Twitter*

*LinkedIn*

[Audubon SC](#)

[CCL](#)

[DoD](#)

[Outside Foundation](#)

[TAMU NRI](#)

[IGFA](#)

[Gullah Geechee](#)

[CCL](#)

[USGS](#)

[NCCF](#)

[FL Wildlife Fed](#)

[Coastal Review](#)

[SERPPAS Principals meet to discuss climate resilience and other challenges](#). The SERPPAS Principals gathered at Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville Florida on May 18-19 for the 2023 SERPPAS Principals Meeting. Hosted by Navy Region Southeast, the meeting allowed the Principals to continue to build relationships and, through learning and engagement on partnership progress, inspire continued advancement of the SERPPAS mission in the southeast United States. The meeting successfully highlighted the mission at Naval Station Mayport and the encroachment and climate resilience challenges and opportunities that connected to many of the SERPPAS priorities and actions in the [SERPPAS Strategic Plan](#). The SERPPAS Principals were able to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act and the exciting launch of the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative Marsh Forward Plan. The Principals also shared anticipated challenges that will inform the partnership priorities moving forward.

**SASMI Plan Launch Celebration in South Carolina.** On May 23 we celebrated the release of the SASMI plan with a reception co-hosted by the SC Coastal Conservation

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League and the SC Department of Natural Resources at the College of Charleston. Robert Boyles (Director of SC DNR), Faith River James (Executive Director of SCCCL) and Lora Clarke (Pew) spoke about SASMI and the importance of salt marsh to South Carolina. This was followed by a viewing of the Marsh Forward film produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Robert Boyles captivated the audience by asking them to close their eyes while he read a Pat Conroy passage about salt marsh, and Faith River James spoke about her days growing up near the marsh. Approximately 80 guests attended, including Queen Quet and Elder Carlie Towne of the Gullah/Geechee Nation, the mayor of Sullivan's Island, county/town council members from Beaufort and Port Royal, staff for the town of Mt. Pleasant, and a staff person for Congresswoman Nancy Mace. Cornell film producers Andy Johnson and Megan King also attended. It was a special night full of enthusiasm for implementing the SASMI plan, with a wonderful mix of SASMI Coalition members and new faces.

[Residents ask for more protections of Beaufort watershed](#). The Coastal Resources Commission, when it meets June 15, is expected to consider whether a rarely tried resident-led effort to extend an area of environmental concern for a Carteret County watershed should be pursued. The Beaufort Citizens Alliance group nominated Gibbs Creek, a tidal creek watershed in the North River estuary, to be designated as a natural and cultural resources area of environmental concern, or AEC, as a way to encourage responsible development of the 86 mostly undeveloped acres surrounded by the creek, but not prohibit development entirely. If the commission approves the nomination, a management strategy can be put in place for Gibbs Creek, which is classified as SA High Quality Waters and open to commercial shellfish harvest.

[S.A.L.T. - Saving a Lowcountry Treasure](#). "The South Atlantic Salt March Initiative has moved us to truly be the salt flavoring our southeastern coast with different perspectives on why the salt marsh is valuable and in so doing, choosing to "marsh forward" together in a long overdue work that will help leave a flavorful and healthy legacy for future generations. Coupling cultural heritage resilience with environmental resilience has been central to my contribution to the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative. It has been wonderful adding some Gullah/Geechee flavor to what this

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multicultural and multidisciplinary collaborative team has cooked up to serve along the coast.” -Queen Quet, Chieftess and Head-of-State for the Gullah/Geechee Nation

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## FUNDING REMINDERS

### [FY 2024 REPI Program Challenge](#)

The Department of Defense’s (DOD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program may provide up to \$40 million in fiscal year (FY) 2024 funding for land conservation, improvement, or management activities that promote compatible development in the vicinity of DOD installations and ranges; enhance military installation resilience to climate change or extreme weather events; or relieve current or anticipated environmental restrictions in support of key mission capabilities of strategic importance. Once again, this year the REPI Program will divide the \$40 million in REPI Challenge funding to allocate up to \$25 million to projects that apply through the REPI Challenge process and up to \$15 million to projects that apply through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF).

Pre-proposals are due by **8pm EDT on June 12, 2023** and must be submitted online via the [REPI Challenge Database](#).

### [Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program](#)

On March 24, the DOD’s Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) announced the pre-proposal opening for the 2023 Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot (DCIP) Program. The DCIP Program addresses deficiencies in community infrastructure and supports military installations to enhance military value, installation resilience, and military family quality of life. DCIP proposals can complement an ongoing or new REPI installation resilience project by supporting any built or grey infrastructure requirements. DCIP proposals are due on **Friday, June 23, 2023**.

### [FY 2024 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program](#)

The NCWCG Program provides eligible State agencies with grants for projects that protect and restore valuable coastal wetland resources. Projects can include acquisition of a real property interest (e.g., conservation easement or fee title) in coastal lands or

waters (coastal wetlands ecosystems) from willing sellers or partners for long-term conservation; restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands ecosystems; or a combination of acquisition, restoration, enhancement, and management. All projects must ensure long-term conservation (at least 20 years) of coastal wetland resources. Due **Friday, June 23, 2023**; participation is limited to State agencies or entities designated as eligible by the Governor of a coastal State.

#### [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 will be going out **June 16**. For those who receive invitations, full proposals will be 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). A webinar for interested applicants will be held [Wednesday, June 7 from 2-3:30 PM ET](#), and the application deadline is **Friday, August 18, 2023**.

## **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

[Implications of the Supreme Court's Sackett Decision for Protection of Wetlands and Waters | June 14, 2023 | Virtual](#)

On May 25, 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision in Sackett v. EPA. The majority opinion establishes Justice Scalia’s “relatively permanent” analysis as the standard for determining when a wetland, stream, or other water is a “water of the United States” (WOTUS) protected by the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). This webinar will provide an overview of the decision and some of the ambiguities it contains, discuss the decision’s potential impacts on aquatic resource protection, and explore some of the potential next steps for states and tribes. [Register here](#).

### **[Overcoming Permitting Barriers to Unlock Coastal Resilience | June 20, 2023 | Virtual](#)**

This webinar, co-hosted by Restore America's Estuaries and Duke University’s Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment & Sustainability, will first summarize state-level policy trends and gaps related to coastal protection and restoration, and then dive into permitting barriers, often called green tape, to achieving coastal restoration goals. Speakers from North Carolina and Washington will offer examples and insights from recent coastal restoration permitting reform policies and programs in both states. With historic funding unlocked for coastal resilience, discussion between the speakers will focus on development, implementation, utilization, and impact of these permitting reforms, with a focus on lessons learned and emerging challenges for coastal restoration practitioners in other states seeking to address permitting and scale restoration. [Register here](#).

### **[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](#)):

June 27 - 2023 Hurricane Outlook

July 25 - Flash Drought in the Southeast

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

**[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.

[Register here \(free\).](#)

**[Georgia Sea Grant State Fellowship | Application deadline July 27, 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. [Learn more here.](#)

**[Climate Change and Wildlife Action Planning Fellowship | Application deadline July 21, 2023 | Remote within the Southeast](#)**

The goal of the fellowship is to help state agencies and other partners across the Southeast access existing data and tools summarizing potential effects of climate change on species and habitats in ways that support integrating this information into wildlife action plans. The position is ideally suited for someone interested in how research results are translated into practice and will involve close interactions with a range of stakeholders. The fellow will be part of a growing community of researchers actively working to support natural resource managers in planning for and adapting to climate change and will benefit from professional development opportunities and mentorship. The fellowship includes a monthly stipend based on the individual’s

experience and education (equivalent to a GS 9-12 pay scale), health insurance stipend, travel and training. [Learn more here.](#)

## MARSH Forward!

This newsletter is distributed by the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative. Please share salt marsh related news, learning opportunities, publications, and management tools by emailing [amanda.gobeli@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:amanda.gobeli@ag.tamu.edu) | [Unsubscribe](#) from this list