



INITIATIVE NEWS

The inaugural meeting of the SASMI Partnership Council is a wrap! More than 40 members representing key stakeholder groups within SASMI gathered virtually and in-person in Richmond Hill, GA to identify next steps in implementing the SASMI Plan. We had some great discussions that will help us make SASMI a national priority, track and report our progress, and set the Initiative up for success. A big thank you to all who attended!



Photo by Nancy Walters

SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

[5 Ways to Help Nature and Communities Build Climate Resilience](#). Addressing the interrelated threats to America's natural environment and people is critical for our future. Fortunately, nature and people can better withstand impacts from a changing

climate if there is a greater emphasis on considering future conditions when communities and governments are making decisions about managing the built and natural environments. Tested, science-based strategies can be employed that anticipate and lessen harm to wildlife, ecosystems, and humans, and help people and nature adapt to predicted future conditions. Learn more in this article.

[Horizontal Rates of Wetland Migration Appear Unlikely to Keep Pace with Shoreline Transgression under Conditions of 21st Century Accelerating Sea Level Rise along the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern USA](#). This scientific article may seem a bit "doom and gloom" with conclusions like this: "The results of this study demonstrate that horizontal rates of wetland migration into the accommodation space created by 21st-century accelerating sea level rise are not likely to keep pace with shoreline transgression or the adjacent retreating habitat. These findings are inconsistent with the fundamental assumptions of most wetland inundation models. Hence, those models overestimate resilience."

But it also strongly emphasizes the need for the SASMI Plan with recommendations like this:

"...it is imperative that coastal practitioners formulate and implement land management programs to acquire and/or create migration corridors and remove anthropogenic barriers, perhaps complimented by surface water management mitigation designed to restore freshwater flux towards the coastal zone in areas that have historically been dewatered."

Read the full article at the link above for the full picture.

[SERPPAS Protects Military Lands, Defense Communities, and the Coast](#). This article featured in the latest edition of the Department of Defense's [Natural Selections Newsletter](#) focuses on the work done by [SERPPAS](#) (Southeast Partnership for Planning and Sustainability) to protect military missions and ecosystems through collaboration--including SASMI. Learn more about SERPPAS and other important conservation efforts in the full version of the newsletter.

[Southeastern salt marshes are imperiled. An ambitious collaboration aims to save them.](#) [Paid Article] This article focuses on the plight of salt marshes throughout the Southeast, the important role marshes play in ecosystem and community resilience, and SASMI's efforts to conserve and protect them. Includes interviews with several SASMI partners and leaders!

[Modeling a Community-based Oyster Shell Recycling Program.](#) In 2017, with an Environmental Grant from Patagonia Inc, The Outside Foundation established a "Community-based Oyster Shell Recycling and Bed Restoration" program on Hilton Head Island in partnership with the SC Department of Natural Resources. Since then, they have partnered with 25 local restaurants (and several annual festivals) to capture over 150 tons of shell. Alongside the SCDNR, they have used these bagged shells to construct 20 new reefs along shorelines on Hilton Head Island and Bluffton. This video showcases these efforts as a model for other small communities.

[2024 REPI Report to Congress.](#) The 18th annual REPI Report to Congress summarizes the program's investments at 124 locations across 37 states and territories, highlights partnerships across local, state, and Federal agencies, and showcases mutually beneficial projects in the Pacific Region. Through the support of partner organizations, the REPI Program aims to enhance the Nation's defense capabilities, positively impact surrounding communities and the environment, and maximize taxpayer benefits. The REPI Program's cost-effective projects and expanded partnership opportunities would not be possible without support from partners who share a common goal of safeguarding military missions, preserving the natural environment, and reducing risks from extreme weather events.

Double Feature: [Connecting a Sentinel Landscape](#) and [Boots on the Ground](#). We have a couple of great videos to share from the Department of Defense.

In the spirit of Earth Day, this newly released [Grasshopper Sparrow Documentary](#) tells the story of the Department's leading role in conserving threatened and endangered species at Avon Park Air Force Range in south central Florida. Filmed at Avon Park Air

Force Range and produced by Wildpath, the film chronicles the extraordinary efforts to bring back one of the most endangered birds in the United States.

The [second video](#), filmed at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California and narrated by world-renowned photographer Joel Sartore of National Geographic Photo Ark fame, tells a story of the balance between the vital military testing, training and operational mission and the extraordinary work, commitment, and dedication of the DoD to the conservation of at-risk species.

[Ice to Ocean: From the Sources of Sea Level Rise to the Coast of North Carolina](#). North Carolina includes over 12,000 miles of ocean and estuarine coastline — teeming habitats and ecosystems essential for plants, animals, coastal communities, and the economy. While melting glaciers and ice sheets continue to buoy the world’s oceans, our own coastal terrain and ways of living will face significant changes. Now, new findings from the network of scientists who monitor North Carolina’s “surface elevation tables” are providing important clues about how the rising Atlantic will imperil our coast. Learn more in this article.

[Preliminary Results - Estimating Federal Wetlands Protections](#). This web viewer shows summarized results of estimated federal jurisdictional status for non-tidal wetlands in the conterminous U.S. based on potential interpretations of the Supreme Court's Sackett v. EPA majority opinion. *These results are preliminary, have not been peer-reviewed and may change.*

The Supreme Court recently narrowed the scope of wetlands protected under the Clean Water Act to only those non-tidal wetlands with a "continuous surface connection" to a federally protected water, an approach that is not backed by science and may be interpreted in different ways. Explore how many wetlands could lose protections by looking at scenarios for how the court's opinion may be interpreted.

FUNDING REMINDERS

[Job Announcement: Audubon SC Coastal Program Manager](#)

Audubon SC is looking for a strong leader for our coastal program! The Coastal Program Manager will be responsible for leading Audubon SC's efforts to protect priority coastal bird species and the habitats on which they rely. Learn more about this opportunity at the link. Position is open until filled.

[Defense Community Infrastructure Program \(DCIP\)](#)

DCIP is a competitive grant program designed to address deficiencies in community infrastructure, supportive of a military installation, in order to enhance military value, cadet training at covered educational institutions, installation resilience, and military family quality of life. Proposals are due **June 17, 2024**.

[National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program](#)

USFWS is seeking applications from eligible state agencies for the 2025 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. Applicants may apply for matching grants between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000 to fund coastal wetlands acquisition, restoration, and management projects that conserve and enhance coastal wetlands as defined in the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act. A total of \$20 million is available across approximately 25 awards. Proposals are due **June 21, 2024**.

[Readiness and Recreation Initiative](#)

The National Park Service will provide \$40 million in funding from unobligated Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State and Local Assistance Program balances as a potential match for REPI Program funding to support projects that will provide outdoor recreation opportunities to military families and the public while also promoting military readiness and resilience. Proposals are due **July 12, 2024**.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

[REPI Program 2024 Webinar Series | May 15, 2024 | Virtual](#)

The REPI Program webinars bring together installations and partners throughout the year to discuss efforts that support military missions, advance landscape conservation, and enhance military installation resilience to climate change. The Sentinel Landscapes

Partnership webinars are designed to educate stakeholders and the general public on projects or initiatives occurring within the sentinel landscapes community.

All webinars will be from 1:00 – 2:00 PM Eastern Time, and recordings will be posted to the REPI website afterward. To view the series or for detailed webinar descriptions and connection instructions, please visit the link above.

[SECAS Third Thursday Web Forum | May 16, 2024 | Virtual](#)

The May 16th web forum @ 10 am ET features Dr. Michelle Moorman of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southeast Inventory and Monitoring Program. She will present work conducted in partnership with Dr. Neil Ganju to assess changes in coastal wetlands through a remote sensing approach assessing unvegetated-vegetated ratios, long-term monitoring using

Surface Elevation Tables, and on-the-ground experience from managers of coastal National Wildlife Refuges. For more background on this work, read [Michelle's blog](#) from last summer.

[Salinity Affected Lands in Transition \(SALT\) Conference | June 11-12, 2024 | Cambridge MD](#)

Salinity Affected Lands in Transition (SALT) is a conference on saltwater intrusion and sea level rise in coastal agroecosystems. Discussion topics include saltwater intrusion, sea level rise, coastal farming, ghost forests, adaption solutions, mitigation strategies, and more. This conference will be June 11th and 12th at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, MD.

[International Conference on Shellfish Restoration | September 15-18, 2024 | Jekyll Island GA](#)

The International Conference on Shellfish Restoration 2024 (ICSR2024) is now accepting abstract submissions for presentations and posters. The conference will be held from September 15-18, 2024, on Jekyll Island, Georgia, USA, and will bring together experts from around the world to discuss the latest developments in shellfish restoration and conservation. Submissions may be on any topic related to the restoration or conservation of marine, brackish, or freshwater molluscan shellfish species, and

contributions from researchers, community leaders, natural resources managers, and anyone involved in shellfish restoration or conservation are welcome. The deadline for abstracts is June 7. For more information on the conference, or to make an abstract submission or register, visit the link above.

[Restore America's Estuaries Summit | October 6-10, 2024 | Arlington VA](#)

Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) proudly presents the 2024 Coastal & Estuarine Summit. In its 12th year, the 2024 Summit will bring together the coastal restoration and management communities to explore issues, solutions, and lessons learned in their work. The Summit Program will address all aspects of coastal and estuarine restoration and management, including the Great Lakes and international locales.

