



## INITIATIVE NEWS

It has been a red-letter month for the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative! We hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of our SASMI Partnership Council in April (marking our return to GA after having made our way through all 4 SASMI states), launched a fully updated [SASMI website](#), and debuted and celebrated the state roadmaps! Check out the articles below for more information on that amazing accomplishment and to learn how you can help spread the word.



*Trey Cooper, UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant*

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## SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

### CELEBRATING THE ROADMAPS RELEASE

[New Plans Would Conserve Salt Marsh to Protect Southeastern Coastal Communities, Military Installations.](#) This article by the Pew Charitable Trusts provides an overview of the

SASMI state roadmaps and the impressive effort that went into their drafting and debut! Check it out to learn a little about what is in each roadmap and share with others who may want to learn more about SASMI's approach in each state.

Here are some additional articles that delve deeper into the [South Carolina](#) and [Georgia](#) roadmaps. Also take a look at the recording of this month's [Coffee with SASMI](#) for a roadmap overview from each of our state leads!

And here are the links to the roadmaps themselves, along with key contacts and resources:

- [North Carolina Roadmap](#)
  - Contacts: Claire Rapp ([clairer@nccoast.org](mailto:clairer@nccoast.org)) and Jacob Boyd ([jacobb@nccoast.org](mailto:jacobb@nccoast.org)) of North Carolina Coastal Federation
- [South Carolina Roadmap](#) and [Executive Summary](#)
  - Contact: Susanna Hopkins ([susanna.hopkins@tnc.org](mailto:susanna.hopkins@tnc.org)) of The Nature Conservancy
- [Georgia Roadmap](#) and [Executive Summary](#)
  - Contact: Courtney Reich ([creich@georgiaconservancy.org](mailto:creich@georgiaconservancy.org)) of Georgia Conservancy
- [Florida Roadmap](#) and [Executive Summary](#)
  - Contact: Heather Nagy ([hnagy@nflt.org](mailto:hnagy@nflt.org)) of North Florida Land Trust

Thank you to those who have shared additional articles and mentions about the release of the roadmaps! We are still working to spread the word and would especially like to see more of a splash on social media. For resources to assist with that (and other media efforts), please check out the updated resources in our [SASMI Press Toolkit](#).

[Healing the Salt Marsh: Restoring Salt Marsh Ecosystems in the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture](#). A new short film produced by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in support of the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture (ACJV) highlights the efforts of our northern partners to protect and restore salt marsh. Navigate to the ACJV home page linked above and find the film under "Healing the Salt Marsh."

The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture and partners have been working since 2016 to support Atlantic salt marsh ecosystems and communities that depend on them through restoration. Successful salt marsh restoration looks different from marsh to marsh and state to state, making innovation and restoration success dependent on coordination of partners to understand how to best move forward. By working together across salt marsh practitioners, regulators, and researchers, we can help these important natural resources keep up with our rapidly changing environment.

This film was made possible through generous support by the Robert F. Schumann Foundation and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

[\*\*2026 REPI Report to Congress Released.\*\*](#) The Department of War's REPI Program released its 2026 Report to Congress, marking two decades of mission-critical success. From Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 through FY 2025, the Department has leveraged \$1.7 billion, with an additional \$1.5 billion from partner contributions, to protect over 1.4 million acres at 141 project locations across 41 states and territories, preserving key operational assets, infrastructure, and capabilities. View the full report at the link above.

[\*\*North Carolina Coastal Federation Expands North River Wetlands Preserve to Nearly 7,000 Acres.\*\*](#) OCEAN, N.C. -The North Carolina Coastal Federation announced it has completed the acquisition of approximately 787 acres along the North River in Carteret County, securing a critical tract that expands the North River Wetlands Preserve, protects water quality, supports military operations, and will support a new official portion of North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail. With this addition, the preserve now spans nearly 7,000 acres, protecting one of the state's most significant intact coastal wetland landscapes. The preserve encompasses the headwaters of the North River, Wards Creek, and Jarrett Bay—forming a connected natural system that filters runoff, improves water quality, and sustains productive fisheries downstream. For more information about this awesome accomplishment, reach out to Todd Miller (NCCF Senior Advisor; [toddm@nccoast.org](mailto:toddm@nccoast.org)).

[\*\*From trash to tide defense: wire oyster reefs are saving South Carolina's coastline.\*\*](#) JAMES ISLAND, S.C. (WCIV) — Along the South Carolina coast, an unlikely hero is helping defend fragile shorelines and revive marine ecosystems—discarded oyster shells. What was once thrown

away is now being used to fortify the coastline, as wire oyster reefs built by volunteers play a major role in protecting the Lowcountry. Learn more about this nature-based approach to shoreline stabilization in this article.

[Study Shows Oyster Reef Restoration Supports Salt Marsh Growth](#). Yamaha Rightwaters and Georgia Southern University released new findings from a collaborative coastal conservation project, demonstrating restored oyster reefs can significantly enhance salt marsh growth and shoreline stability along the Georgia coast. The study, conducted in partnership with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division, evaluates the impact of oyster reef restoration on marsh migration and expansion over 19 months following deployment in September 2023.

## FUNDING REMINDERS

### [North American Wetlands Conservation Fund](#)

The U.S. Standard Grants Program is a competitive, matching grant program that supports public-private partnerships carrying out projects in the United States that further the goals of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The program promotes partnerships projects that must involve a) only long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetland and associated upland habitats to benefit a variety of wetland ecosystems and b) maintaining an abundance of waterfowl (ducks, geese, and swans) and other populations of wetlands-associated migratory birds consistent with the objectives of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbird Conservation Plan for the Americas, and Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan. Apply by this **Thursday, May 7**.

### [Five Star Grant Program 2026](#)

The Five Star grant program seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources for future generations by providing modest financial assistance to local partnerships focused on improving water quality, watersheds and the species and habitats they support. Projects include a variety of ecological improvements along with targeted community outreach, education and stewardship. Ecological improvements may include one or more of the following: community tree canopy enhancement; community gardens; wildlife habitat

restoration and conservation, including wetland, riparian, forest and coastal habitat. Full proposals are due **Thursday, May 14.**

### **[2027 REPI Challenge](#)**

The Department of War's (DoW) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program has announced the release of the 2027 REPI Challenge Request for Proposals (RFP). This year's Challenge continues the program's long standing role in reinforcing mission assurance by addressing encroachment pressures and environmental constraints that directly affect the readiness and operational flexibility of DoW installations and ranges. Learn more about this year's funding priorities and submission procedures at the link above; proposals are due **Thursday, July 2.**

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

FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program is a Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant program that makes federal funds available to states, U.S. territories, federally recognized Tribal Nations, and local governments for hazard mitigation activities. It does so by recognizing the need to upgrade and modernize the nation's infrastructure against the growing risks to communities and the need for natural hazard risk mitigation activities that promote resilience with respect to natural hazards. Proposals are due **Thursday, July 23.**

\*North Carolina Emergency Management is also accepting letters of interest for a potential multi-partner proposal for this grant opportunity. [Learn more about that here.](#)

## **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **[2026 Hurricane Awareness Webinar Series | May 6-26, 2026 | Virtual](#)**

Throughout the month of May, NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team is hosting a series of webinars focused on the upcoming hurricane season. These virtual events cover a variety of topics, and the next one is coming up this Wednesday. Recordings will also be available on this page if you are unable to attend.

### **[National Adaptation Forum | May 12-14, 2026 | Pittsburgh, PA](#)**

The National Adaptation Forum is a biennial convening for adaptation professionals to innovate, network, and focus on established and emerging climate adaptation issues of the day. The Forum provides opportunities for professional development through training sessions, facilitated presentations and panels, and formal and informal networking sessions. The overall goal of the National Adaptation Forum is to move beyond adaptation awareness into adaptation action by highlighting the breadth of adaptation activities occurring in the United States and around the world.

### [Climate Change Preparedness Conference and Workshop | May 20-22, 2026 | Las Vegas, NV](#)

This conference will bring together 300+ senior leaders and experts, including representatives from Native American tribes, local and regional communities, city and county governments, state and federal agencies, NGOs, international organizations, consulting firms, academia, and private industry.

### [Webinar: The Power of Play in Coastal Inundation Engagement | May 27, 2026 | Virtual](#)

Join the Coastal Inundation Community of Practice for a panel discussion and interactive conversation exploring how games and play-based activities can transform engagements on coastal flood resilience. Speakers will share how they've used play to spark curiosity, deepen understanding, and turn complex science into meaningful, participatory experiences. Hear about their hands-on activities, creative engagement tools, and lessons learned from bringing play into conversations about complex resilience challenges.

### [From Seeds to Shoreline New Educator Training | June 4, 2026 | Charleston, SC](#)

From Seeds to Shoreline® (S2S) is South Carolina's only salt marsh restoration program designed for K–12 students and teachers. This year-long program engages participating schools with cultivating and transplanting *Spartina alterniflora* (smooth cordgrass) to designated areas along the state's coastline. This one-day training will take place in Charleston, S.C. at the S.C. Department of Natural Resources and is a pre-requisite for new teachers interested in participating in S2S for the upcoming school year. The training offers sessions on salt marsh ecology, restoration techniques, classroom applications, and more! There is no cost to attend, however, **pre-registration is required by May 22, 2026.**

[Restore America's Estuaries 2026 Coastal and Estuarine Summit | September 22-25, 2026 | San Francisco, CA](#)

Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) proudly presents the 2026 Coastal & Estuarine Summit in partnership with Save the Bay (STB) in San Francisco, California. This event will bring together the coastal restoration and management communities to explore issues, solutions, and lessons learned. The Summit will address all aspects of coastal and estuarine restoration and management, including the Great Lakes and international locales. These topics are crucial as coastal communities pursue new, more robust strategies to manage, protect, and restore their resources in a changing climate and the need to support all community members.

[North Carolina Coastal Conference | November 17-18, 2026 | Chapel Hill, NC](#)

North Carolina Sea Grant's biennial conference serves as a platform for engaging with like-minded participants and potential collaborators dedicated to the prosperity of our state's coastal communities, environments, and economies. Join us for stimulating presentations and discussions featuring researchers, agency and business experts, community leaders, educators, students, and all individuals passionate about coastal topics. [Proposals for presentations](#) are now being accepted and are **due on June 1**.

**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.