



## INITIATIVE NEWS

This past week we reconnected with the [SERPPAS](#) Steering Committee to provide updates on SASMI's progress, summarize our process for identifying metrics of success and drafting an annual report, and share our [marsh migration primer](#) and video series. We look forward to also attending the SERPPAS Principals in November to celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and strengthen those connections and forge new ones for SASMI!



*Nicole Dix*

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## SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

[Conserving Iconic Coastal Habitat In South Carolina's Grand Strand](#). South Carolina partners preserved 107 acres to secure public access, protect wildlife, and provide storm protection. The site, initially conserved by the Open Space Institute and four siblings whose family has owned portions of the land for more than a century, represents iconic local landscapes and cultural importance to the Gullah Geechee and Waccamaw Indian peoples. Learn more in this article.

### **[NC State Students Are Restoring Crucial Coastal Habitats with First-Of-Its-Kind Plant Nursery.](#)**

As part of this summer's marine science field course, a group of NC State undergraduates spent one day in early June wading into the swampy grounds of the North River Wetlands Preserve, where the North Carolina Coastal Federation is restoring 6,800 acres of wetlands. The team of students and volunteers planted approximately 4,500 young marsh grasses, helping create a 1-acre "donor marsh" that will supply plants for future coastal restoration projects. SASMI gets a shoutout here as well!

**[2024 Sentinel Landscapes Accomplishments Report Released.](#)** The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership is pleased to announce the release of the 2024 Sentinel Landscapes Accomplishments Report, highlighting how the Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Department of the Interior (DOI) have worked together since 2013 to protect military mission capabilities, sustain working lands, and bolster local agricultural and forestry economies. The report showcases how the DOD, USDA, DOI, and their on-the-ground partners collaborate to solve complex land-use challenges, combining resources and aligning funding across the sentinel landscapes.

**[Restoring Habitat, Bolstering the Economy, and Supporting Jobs in Florida.](#)** Coastal restoration might bring to mind images of wetlands, sand dunes, and tidal marshes—but there's another impact of this work: jobs and economic growth. A new economic analysis shows that community-led restoration contributes broadly to local, state, and national economies. It finds that \$72.5 million invested across 12 habitat restoration projects in Florida is estimated to support jobs and wages and increase both spending and economic activity. In total, more than \$100 million will be added to the economy.

**[How much is a marsh worth in Hampton Roads? New tool puts a dollar value on coastal wetlands.](#)** Virginia researchers recently published findings which show that marshes in the Middle Peninsula generate about \$90 million for that region each year, which equates to about 3% of the area's annual gross domestic product. That value is attributed to the ability of coastal marshes and living shorelines to absorb wave energy, boost marine habitat, store carbon, and mitigate pollution. Learn more about this effort and the published results in this article.

## FUNDING REMINDERS

### [REPI Challenge 2026](#)

The 2026 REPI Challenge will focus on safeguarding strategic missions across the United States and its territories to restore trust in the military, rebuild our military, and reestablish deterrence. This year, the REPI Program may provide up to \$20 million in funding for activities in the vicinity of DOD installations and ranges that support the 10 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) § 2684a, 10 U.S.C. § 2679, and 16 U.S.C. § 670c-1 statutory authorities by preventing land use conflicts (including unwanted foreign investment), alleviating environmental restrictions, and enhancing military installation resilience. Full proposals (by invitation only) are due **September 2, 2025, at 8 PM ET**.

### [FWS Coastal Program FY25](#)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program is a community-based program that helps coastal areas with technical and financial support to address complex conservation challenges of priority coastal ecosystems. This support is mainly provided through cooperative agreements with conservation partners and landowners, including state and Tribal agencies. The goal is to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitats on both public and private lands. Proposals are due **September 30, 2025**.

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### [Southeast CASC Science Symposium | September 9-11, 2025 | Asheville, NC](#)

The 2025 SE CASC Regional Science Symposium will be held September 9-11, 2025, at the Renaissance Hotel in Downtown Asheville, NC. Goals of the symposium include sharing science resources and tools, identifying gaps and needs for actionable science production and delivery, and providing a venue for researchers, managers, and other resource people to share information about current activities, plans, and opportunities for collaboration. Save the date and learn more at the link above.

### [Documenting Coastal Change Through Community Science | September 11, 2025 | Virtual](#)

Stephanie Murphy (WHOI Sea Grant) and Jess Kuonen (New York Sea Grant) worked together on a project starting in 2020 that engaged communities in tracking coastal change through photos and will walk through some of the program highlights. For this talk, they'll take a deeper

dive into some of the outcomes. This webinar is for anyone interested in using photos and engaging communities in documenting flooding or coastal erosion.

**[SECAS Third Thursday Web Forum: Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into conservation and restoration | September 18, 2025 | Virtual](#)**

The September 18th Third Thursday Web Forum for the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS) will feature a presentation by Corlee Thomas-Hill, Tribal Liaison with the Southeastern Grasslands Institute (SGI). Corlee will provide an overview of the Southern Grasslands Institute's Tribal Program, which incorporates Indigenous Knowledge into their conservation and restoration efforts.

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

The theme of this year's Hope Summit 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 at the Charleston Museum 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.

**[79th Annual SEAFWA Conference | October 26-29, 2025 | Biloxi, MS](#)**

The Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is a forum for the exchange of ideas and critical information regarding the management and protection of fish and wildlife resources primarily in the southeast. The conference attracts over 500 representatives from state and federal agencies, citizens' organizations, universities, private wildlife research groups, fisheries and wildlife scientists, agency enforcement personnel, and other natural resource-related organizations.

**[Living Shorelines Tech Transfer Workshop | October 29-30, 2025 | New Haven, CT](#)**

Co-hosted by Restore America's Estuaries and Save the Sound, the Living Shorelines Tech Transfer Workshop will be the nation's largest gathering focused on the science, practice, and policy of living shorelines and nature-based solutions, with an expected 200+ attendees including landowners and professionals working in the marketing, design, construction, or permitting of nature-based shoreline stabilization. The Workshop will include field sessions,

plenary presentations, an Expo Hall, dozens of poster presentations, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and a networking reception.

**[Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Meeting \(CERF\) | November 9-13, 2025 | Richmond, VA](#)**

The theme for the CERF 2025 Conference is “Estuaries: Tradition and Transition” to encompass the history of estuarine research while understanding emerging challenges and future opportunities. The planned program draws on the deep heritage of estuarine science in the Chesapeake Bay region where CERF started and where the 2025 meeting will be held, but embraces how estuarine and coastal research, management, and education are world-wide and of more importance than ever. Learn more about the event or register at the link above.

**MARSH Forward!**

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