



INITIATIVE NEWS

This month, our SASMI Working Group will convene the first meeting with our Advisors to begin ironing out the details of our governance structure. In the meantime, efforts are underway to take advantage of current funding opportunities by leveraging the strength of the SASMI Coalition, and we have been working to make our monthly meetings more relevant and interactive for our Coalition members. It's a busy and exciting time for SASMI, and we're eager to take the next steps toward implementation!



Mac Stone

SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

[An integrative salt marsh conceptual framework for global comparisons.](#) Researchers propose an integrative conceptual framework to assist salt marsh scientists in developing suitable questions, making accurate comparisons, and pushing for more comprehensive assessments of

salt marshes at multiple spatial scales. They present this new framework in a series of illustrative examples and discuss considerations when undertaking comparisons. They anticipate this framework will encourage cross-disciplinary and global collaborations, ultimately improving our ability to understand the complex controls on salt marsh ecosystem functions by appropriately framing salt marsh science.

[Post-workshop Blueprint 2023 improvements for the Gulf, Atlantic, and Caribbean](#). 91 people from 45 different organizations participated in a series of virtual workshops to review the draft Southeast Conservation Blueprint update for the U.S. Caribbean and the offshore Atlantic and Gulf. That feedback has been essential in prioritizing improvements before this year's update is final. A total of 59 different spatial comments were received which included places that looked good, were under or overprioritized, or highlighted areas where people had questions. Thank you to any SASMI partners who participated, and we look forward to seeing continued improvements to the Conservation Blueprint!

[Virginia Could See Conservation Gains Under New Federal Designation](#). While Virginia may be outside SASMI's range, this example demonstrates the conservation potential of our Sentinel Landscape partnerships. On July 10, a substantial portion of eastern Virginia was designated as the Virginia Security Corridor under the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership. The newly designated Virginia Security Corridor, consisting of two sentinel landscapes—the Potomac Sentinel Landscape and the Tidewater Sentinel Landscape—connects two previously designated landscapes: Middle Chesapeake and Eastern North Carolina. Together, these three sites cover an area larger than the state of West Virginia in which federal, state, and private entities can cooperatively manage terrestrial and marine ecosystems to simultaneously serve environmental, economic, and national security interests.

[View the Coastal Wetland Restoration Storymap](#). This outreach tool developed by St. Johns River Water Management District is all about coastal wetlands in Florida: their value, the threats they face, and efforts to protect and restore them. This story map provides a detailed look at several restoration projects within the district, including maps, videos, and more.

[The Gullah/Geechee People Hold Their Ground](#). Having hit Florida on November 10 as a late-season Category 1 hurricane, Tropical Depression Nicole weakened as it moved up the coast

but remained potent enough to cause significant flooding on Georgia's Sapelo Island. Healing is becoming more precarious throughout the coastal Southeast as storms intensify, bringing damaging winds and flooding. On sparsely inhabited lowland islands like Sapelo, tidal salt marshes, sand dunes and maritime forests help protect the mainland from some of the most severe storm impacts. Still, eroding shorelines, saltwater intrusion and temperature extremes caused by a shifting climate are altering the land—as is rampant, unsustainable development. Yet the Gullah/Geechee people persist in their work to sustain their culture and their homeland.

[Grant Will Help Bolster Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort from Erosion](#). NOAA selected The Nature Conservancy for a \$6.2 million grant to fund South Carolina coastal resilience and habitat restoration projects, a chunk of which will help Marine Corps Air station Beaufort address erosion near a housing area. The funds will be used to build oyster-castle living shorelines consisting of interlocking concrete blocks that become living reefs as oyster larvae attach to them and grow all while helping reduce wave energy and erosion along the shoreline.

FUNDING REMINDERS

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

This year The Biden-Harris Administration 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. Letters of Intent are due **Monday, August 21, 2023**. [Read the full press release](#).

[Climate Ready Workforce Initiative](#)

Sea Grant and the NOAA Climate Program Office, with support from the NOAA Office of Coastal Management, have opened the Climate Ready Workforce for Coastal States, Tribes, and Territories Initiative funding opportunity. NOAA envisions making between 10-20 awards under this competition, at amounts ranging from \$500,000-\$10 million each, to establish programs aimed at training people for and connecting them with good jobs related to climate resilience and assisting employers in developing a 21st century workforce that is climate literate, informed by climate resilience, and skilled at addressing consequent challenges. You have a bit more time on this one—Letters of Intent are due **Thursday, November 30, 2023**—but you can learn more today in the [press release](#).

[Two Funding Opportunities in Support of Fish Passage Projects](#)

NOAA Fisheries is announcing two funding opportunities totaling \$260 million through President Biden's Investing in America agenda to support new fish passage projects, which will not only help protect and restore migrating fish and their habitats, but yield important community and economic benefits. The two opportunities are listed below; see the [press release](#) for more details.

The \$175 million Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Notice of Funding Opportunity, which will fund projects that reopen migratory pathways and restore access to healthy habitat for fish across the coasts and Great Lakes. Application deadline **October 16, 2023**.

The \$85 million Restoring Tribal Priority Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Notice of Funding Opportunity, which will support tribes and tribal organizations in implementing fish passage work and building tribal capacity to sustain these efforts. Application deadline **November 8, 2023**.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

[Action Needed: Help Populate the NBS Database List!](#)

Katie Warnell of Duke University is seeking input for a project to design and pilot a database to support assessment of nature-based solution project effectiveness. Her request is below - please help if you can!

The Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment & Sustainability at Duke University is developing a list of databases containing information on nature-based solutions projects and effectiveness. If you know of any such databases that are not included in our current list, please add them to the Google doc. We appreciate your help in making the list as comprehensive as possible!

[GACD/NACD Southeast Regional Meeting | August 6-8 | Savannah, GA](#)

The Georgia Association of Conservation Districts (GACD) is a grassroots non-profit organization representing 40 Conservation Districts in Georgia. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that represents America's 3,000 conservation districts and the 17,000 individuals who serve on their governing boards. This meeting combines both for one huge event! If you're planning on attending, come say hi—I'll be participating in Monday's panel on Natural and Working Lands for Military Readiness.

[Webinar: Putting your community on the map - Digitizing local natural and cultural resources with OpenStreetMap | August 17, 2023 | Virtual](#)

OpenStreetMap (OSM) is a free, open database of spatial information updated by a worldwide community of volunteer mappers. It includes the locations of everything from roads, to buildings, to natural areas, and more. In this webinar, OSM representatives will give an overview of this ambitious initiative and provide a step-by-step training on how to edit OSM data and digitize new information. SECAS staff will cover the ways the Blueprint is using OSM data. We're excited to highlight the enormous potential of the OSM database to benefit a wide range of mapping applications and give everyone the tools to directly improve the Blueprint by ensuring the places they know are well-represented.

[Webinar: Case Studies in Collaborative Land Conservation: Lessons on Tackling the Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss Crises | September, TBD | Virtual](#)

Climate change and biodiversity loss are interlinked urgent crises. To date, efforts by climate scientists and conservation practitioners have largely been siloed, limiting the potential for greater collective impact. But there are important exceptions. Land conservation organizations play a vital role in planning and implementing nature-based solutions that are needed at scale to address both the climate and biodiversity challenges. Keep an eye out for the date to be finalized for this September webinar.

[77th Annual SEAFWA Conference | October 15-18, 2023 | Corpus Christi, TX](#)

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.

MARSH Forward!

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