



INITIATIVE NEWS

This has been a big month for salt marsh research! Below you'll find recent publications concerning perceptions of salt marsh in the residential landscape, the economic valuation of wetlands, thin-layer placement practices, and interactions between mangroves and salt marsh. There are also quite a few funding and learning opportunities coming up in the next few months. Be sure to give this letter a read to see what should be on your radar this summer!



UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant

SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

[Participants Wanted: Salt Marsh Network \(North Carolina\)](#). Our partners at the North Carolina Coastal Federation are launching the Salt Marsh Network (SMN) and looking for members! The Salt Marsh Network is a broad, collaborative space for information-sharing, coordination, and engagement among practitioners, researchers, regulators, nonprofits, contractors, community members, students, and

other partners interested in or working to protect, restore, and support the long-term resilience of North Carolina salt marshes and coastal communities. All who are interested are welcome, with the understanding that this group will be primarily North Carolina focused. If you are interested, please fill out this brief contact form, or reach out to Claire Rapp (clairer@nccoast.org) for more information.

[Understanding perceptions of salt marsh in the coastal residential landscape](#). This recently published paper was the topic of this month's Coffee with SASMI! Residential landowner behaviors can influence the viability of increasingly fragmented ecosystems. Researchers in this study aimed to determine how perceptions of coastal residential lawns with and without fringing salt marsh were related to environmental attitudes, lived experience, aesthetics, perceived danger, and demographics and how knowledge of salt marsh ecosystem services and disservices might influence those perceptions.

[Mangrove Presence is Associated with Lower Rates of Coastal Wetland Loss at Marsh-Mangrove Ecotone](#). Coastal wetland area has declined globally over the last century, but the magnitude of loss rates varies widely, and the drivers of spatial variability in land loss are often unclear. To examine drivers of wetland loss in northeast Florida, researchers in this study performed a land cover change detection analysis using Sentinel-2 satellite imagery and examined the roles of distance to shore, mangrove presence, and boat wake energy on marsh-to-water conversions. Learn more about their findings in this publication.

[Opportunity for Comment: Commercial Leasing for Outer Continental Shelf Minerals Offshore of Virginia](#). On November 13, 2025, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) received an unsolicited request to lease hard minerals (herein “minerals”) in an area on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore the Commonwealth of Virginia. After reviewing the request, BOEM decided to initiate the first step that could potentially lead to a lease sale by publishing this request for information and interest (RFI). Comments are being accepted on this proposal until July 23, 2026. For more information, please visit the link above. Those interested may also contact Grey Gowder of Carolina Ocean Alliance (grey.gowder@gmail.com) for more details or to be looped in with other partners in the mid and south Atlantic.

[The economic value of wetlands in reducing riverine flood losses in the USA](#). This study, conducted by the Environmental Defense Fund and published in the journal Nature Water, examines the financial impact of demolishing upstream wetlands across the country. Read the full publication at the link above

or check out this [Post and Courier article](#) providing an overview of the report with an emphasis on its implications for Charleston.

[2025 Sentinel Landscapes Accomplishment Report Released](#). The 2025 Accomplishments Report highlights significant progress across FY 2024, including more than \$1.75 billion in combined Federal, state, local, and private investment to date—\$368 million of which was leveraged in FY 2024 alone. These investments directly support military readiness by safeguarding key training corridors, reducing encroachment pressures, and strengthening landscape resilience around high-priority installations. The report also demonstrates how coordinated partnerships reduce long-term costs to DoW while supporting local communities, working lands, and landowners. Read the full report at the link above.

[Informing Thin-Layer Placement for Coastal Wetland Restoration Through Remote Sensing and Community Outreach](#). Thin-layer placement (TLP) is the spreading of sediment dredged from nearby water bodies across existing wetlands or shallow mudflats to raise surface elevation and is an approach to sustain and restore these habitats. Researchers in this study present a transferable workflow to plan TLP projects, including systematic assessment of restoration needs, development of sediment application options, and prioritization of project sites that leverage publicly available remote-sensing data products and stakeholder input. They demonstrate its applicability in a rapidly deteriorating salt marsh–mangrove co-dominated system on the Atlantic coast of Florida.

[New Tool Helps States Quantify Benefits of Coastal Wetlands](#). The Pacific Northwest Regional Blue Carbon Calculator was developed by scientists, state agencies, and nonprofit partners to easily estimate how different land management decisions—such as conserving, restoring, or disturbing the region’s coastal wetlands—can increase emissions, avoid emissions, or strengthen these habitats’ capacity to store carbon. The tool’s outputs are easy to incorporate into reports, funding applications, and other resources officials develop and rely on. Although this tool is not intended for use outside the Pacific Northwest, it can serve as a model for other states to develop their own instruments using local data.

[Nearly 1,000 acres protected in South Carolina’s fastest growing county](#). Conservation leaders are celebrating the protection of nearly 1,000 acres in rapidly growing Jasper County. Saving the Meyer Lake area near the South Carolina-Georgia border helps the environment of both states, officials said. “Conserving places like Meyer Lake not only strengthens a growing corridor of protected lands, but also helps safeguard clean water for Beaufort, Jasper, Effingham and Chatham counties by protecting natural

wetlands and Savannah River drinking water sources,” according to a news release quoting Matt Williams, president and chief executive at the Lowcountry Land Trust. Read more at the link above.

[Marsh Modeling Community of Practice - Summer Newsletter](#). The Marsh Modeling Community of Practice has released the summer edition of their newsletter! Check it out at the link above.

FUNDING REMINDERS

[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**.

[Norfolk Southern Thriving Communities Grant Program](#)

The Thriving Communities Grant Program is designed to promote sustainability initiatives, workforce development programs, and community resiliency efforts across Norfolk Southern's 22-state network. Note: as of 2026, only public 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations will be eligible for the Thriving Communities grant program. Applications are due **Monday, August 3**.

[FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance](#)

The Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant program makes federal funds available to states, U.S. territories, federally recognized tribal governments, and local governments to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings and structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in participating communities. FMA funds a variety of flood mitigation activities that are designed to reduce flood risk to policyholders to reduce the NFIP's financial exposure. The current closing date for applications is **Thursday, August 6**.

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

The RCPP promotes the coordination of NRCS conservation activities with partners that offer value-added contributions to expand our ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource

concerns. Through the RCPP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that provide solutions to conservation challenges thereby measurably improving the resource concerns they seek to address. RCPP promotes collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and various communities.

Applications are due **Monday, August 24**.

SARP's Aquatic Habitat Restoration Program FY 2027 National Fish Habitat Partnership

The Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP), with funding from the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP), will support projects in the conservation opportunity areas designated throughout the SARP geography that focus on restoration and enhancement. NFHP funding provides an opportunity for state, federal, and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and universities to participate in the ongoing process of conservation, management, and restoration in the SARP geography. Priority will be given to those projects that enhance recreational, commercial, subsistence, or traditional fishing opportunities through habitat improvements and public access, that benefit the local economy, and that have a public educational component. Proposals are due **Friday, August 28**. To discuss project ideas, questions, or next steps to apply, please contact SARP Program Manager, Todd Ewing at todd@southeastaquatics.net.

USFWS Coastal Program

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program provides technical and financial assistance to partners to support projects that protect and restore fish and wildlife habitats on public and private lands in priority coastal ecosystems. This support is provided through cooperative agreements with conservation partners and landowners, including state and Tribal agencies. Coastal Program staff work with partners, stakeholders, and other Service programs in important areas for conservation.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis with the current window closing **Wednesday, September 30**.

National Park Service/REPI Readiness and Recreation Initiative

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) invites applications for the Readiness and Recreation Initiative (RARI), administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The purpose of the program is to: 1) provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and 2) promote or support compatible land uses and avoid incompatible development in areas in the vicinity of, or ecologically related to, a military installation or military airspace, and/or to maintain or enhance disaster resilience. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through November of 2030, but funds are likely to be expended before that date.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

[Adaptation Planning for Coastal Communities Training | July 29, 2026 | Edisto Island, SC](#)

Join the ACE Basin NERR and NOAA Office for Coastal Management for a training on Adaptation Planning for Coastal Communities. Gain a thorough grounding and practical skills for incorporating adaptation strategies into planning processes. Time in class is provided to practice applying what you've learned, and opportunities for local collaboration and next steps are emphasized through discussion, participant activities and local speakers and examples.

[Webinar Series: Drones in the Coastal Zone - Why Datum Accuracy Matters | July 29, 2026 | Virtual](#)

This is the first in a 3-part webinar series hosted by Maryland Sea Grant exploring coastal monitoring using drones.

Is your drone truly tuned into points of the ground? Several best practices exist to incorporate ground control points into your flight design. Learn about types of ground control points (versus check points), American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS) standards, and the upcoming National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) modernization. Speaker: Ryan Hippensteil, DroneDeploy, former NOAA NGS Field Operations Branch Chief.

[Georgia Association of Conservation Districts \(GACD\) Annual Meeting | August 23-25, 2026 | Young Harris, GA](#)

Over the years, GACD has helped forge key partnerships among federal, state, and local entities all committed to a common goal: wise use and protection of our state's natural resources. The GACD Annual Meeting will offer breakout sessions and keynote speakers aimed at providing Conservation District Supervisors and partners with timely education and information. **Early registration ends July 31;** late registration ends August 14.

[Nature-based Solutions Planning, Design & Construction Short Course | Multiple dates from September 15 – October 15, 2026 | Virtual](#)

This virtual course will meet live twice a week to provide over 30 hours of instruction and facilitated discussion with experts and practitioners from the University of Georgia and across the country.

Led by Dr. Todd Bridges and Dr. Ram Mohan, the course will include a balance of:

- Coastal, river, and inland applications
- Hazard contexts related to flooding, drought, heat, wildfire, water quality, and more
- Integrating NbS and conventional engineering for a range of infrastructure purposes
- Planning, design, and construction
- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- Regulatory evaluation
- And more...

The short course will be held on the following dates:

- September 15, 17, 22, 24 and 29 from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. EST
- October 1, 6, 8, 13 and 15 from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. EST

Early-bird registration pricing is available until **August 16**.

Have questions? Contact Ram Mohan at ram.mohan@uga.edu

[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.

[Hope Summit 2026 | October 1-3 2026 | Charleston, SC](#)

The Hope Summit 2026 will explore how, to create vibrant communities, we must expand our understanding of who and what is part of a community. Topics and themes for the conference include: preparing the conditions for seeds of change to thrive, how do you define community, Creating Communities of Care, Gardens Growing Communities, Finding Your Civic Voice, Designing a Civic Ecology and Tactical Urbanism Toolkit, Rewilding Landscapes and Seascapes, Designing Communities for Radical Hospitality, The Nature of a Resilient City, and Creating Pathways to Rights of Nature.

[SEAFWA 80th Annual Conference | October 26-30, 2026 | Nashville, TN](#)

The 80th Annual Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference will bring together leading conservation professionals, researchers, policymakers, and industry partners from across the Southeast for a week of collaboration, innovation, and professional development. Hosted October 26–30, 2026, at the Sheraton Music City Hotel in vibrant Nashville, the conference will feature technical sessions, organized symposia, networking events, poster presentations, and discussions focused on the future of fish and wildlife conservation.

[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.

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 | [Unsubscribe](#) from this list.