

SASMI tipsheet April 16, 2026 Florida

This is a draft and can be adapted as necessary. Please feel free to add a quote from your organization as well.

A regional partnership spanning North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida released targeted plans for each state this week to conserve [coastal salt marshes](#)—grassy wetlands that fill with saltwater and drain as the tides ebb and flow. These habitats protect communities and more than a dozen at-risk military installations from floods, provide fish breeding grounds, and offer recreation and seafood to millions of people.

The plans, which are part of an effort to conserve and restore 1 million acres of salt marshes—roughly the size of Grand Canyon National Park—were developed by state-based member teams from the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative (SASMI), a group of more than 400 stakeholders working to save marshes from encroaching seas, polluted runoff, unsustainable development, and other threats. SASMI members include state and federal agencies, the U.S. military, scientists, businesses, Gullah Geechee representatives, and nonprofit organizations.

“These state specific plans are a roadmap for successfully conserving one of the country’s most spectacular and valuable areas of intact salt marshes. Communities can expect real benefits from protecting this habitat that absorbs floodwaters, provides us delicious seafood and shapes our coastal lifestyle,” said Lora Clarke, a senior officer with The Pew Charitable Trusts, which founded SASMI along with the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability, a group that brings together governments, the military, and others to address conservation and resilience issues.

The initiative released a [regional plan](#) in 2023 that outlined broad strategies to conserve and restore marshes. And now, the individual state plans build on that regional plan by identifying actions that are most important for each state.

[Florida’s plan](#), led by [North Florida Land Trust](#), focuses on East Central and Northeast Florida from the Georgia border to roughly Melbourne, south of Cape Canaveral. It suggests considering whether to create salt marsh migration and protection zones where development would have less impact on marshes. The plan also would consider upgrading stormwater systems, developing and funding buyout programs for areas that experience repeated flood losses, expanding living shoreline projects, working with ecotourism businesses to increase tourist experiences in marshes, and developing cost share programs for private landowners to assist with salt marsh restoration projects. The plan suggests engaging with insurance companies for research to show the benefits of nature-based solutions and providing insurance benefits to property owners for conserving marsh.

Salt marshes along Florida’s East Coast provide more than \$600 million per year in protection from storm surge and flooding. The marshes also support the recreational fishing industry that contributes more than \$833 million to the state’s economy every year. The habitat protects vital military installations and training grounds, including Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island, Naval Station Mayport, and Patrick Space Force Base.

SASMI partners will work with local and state decision-makers, planners, and others to put these suggestions into action and to pursue funding sources, such as grants and public-private partnerships. The plans are designed to guide salt marsh conservation work for at least the next five years and will be updated as efforts progress.

See all four state plans by visiting www.marshforward.org or reading Pew's post here: [New Plans Would Conserve Salt Marsh to Protect Southeastern Coastal Communities, Military Installations | The Pew Charitable Trusts](#)

For more information, please email contact@marshforward.com

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Photos: <https://marshforward.org/media/euwmv30r/sasmi-photos-for-media-usedocx.pdf>

B-roll: <https://cornell.app.box.com/s/6i52kz35yv8blningmo86b9ngu8z9y23>

Videos: <https://marshforward.org/resources/videos/>

Salt marsh facts: <https://marshforward.org/media/5fpp21or/salt-marsh-facts.pdf>

Map: <https://marshforward.org/media/yypfdjif/sasmi-map.pdf>