



INITIATIVE NEWS

Happy New Year, SASMI Coalition and friends! We hope you all had a wonderful and restorative holiday season. December was a huge month for SASMI, as our Sea Grant partners hosted the first ever “State of the Salt Marsh” virtual workshop, followed by a very productive meeting of the Partnership Council on Amelia Island (FL). Our leadership Team will be digging into the products of both these efforts as we work to hit the ground running in the new year.



Nancy Walters

SASMI PARTNERS' GOOD WORK

[Coalition drops concrete pyramids in Georgia marsh to build reefs.](#) An artificial reef in Georgia's Romerly Marsh Creek has been enhanced with 60 concrete pyramids to improve biodiversity and fishing, thanks to collaboration between state agencies and a concrete

company that donates leftover material. The most recent reef addition is the result of a year-long effort between the Coastal Conservation Association of Georgia (CCAGA), Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD), and concrete company Smyrna Ready Mix (SRM) to drop 60 concrete pyramids above the low tide line, where oysters like to land on solid material to attach to. Learn more about this effort at the link above.

[Georgia's marshes face collapse beneath a healthy surface](#). Researchers are taking a closer look at the health of Georgia's salt marshes by shifting focus below ground. Learn more about what they've found and what it means for the future of the marsh in this article.

[A book club for marsh and nature lovers](#). Do you have a new year's resolution to read more in 2026? Are you looking for books that make you think about how people relate to the natural environment? Carolina Ocean Alliance has you covered with the 2026 Hope Summit Book Club! Check out the recommended reading list and schedule above. The club will host quarterly meetings in Charleston. Participation is free and open to anyone (locals and non-locals alike!).

[Federally Funded Infrastructure Projects Dashboard](#). The federal funding landscape can be difficult to navigate, but this extensive dashboard may help shed some light on the situation. It allows users to visualize and filter Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) projects across three categories: Infrastructure Resilience, Aquatic Restoration and Connectivity, and Terrestrial Restoration and Connectivity. Browse by state, congressional district, or other parameters to see the distribution of funded projects.

FUNDING REMINDERS

[Impacts of Ecosystem Transformation on Testing and Training Lands](#)

The objective of this Statement of Need (SON) is to advance understanding of how recent, ongoing, or potential ecosystem transformations may impact Department of Defense (DoD) mission fulfillment and operations, directly and indirectly, and how management actions might offset such impacts. Ecosystem transformations, in which a historical ecosystem is replaced by another with contrasting properties (composition, structure, function), are driven by invasive species, altered fire regimes, severe weather, and other disturbances. Some representative examples include conversion of sagebrush steppe to annual grassland, forest to woodland or

scrub, tundra to forest, and salt marsh to open water. Proposers for this opportunity should follow the [SERDP Core FY 2027](#) Solicitation instructions and deadlines (**January 13, 2026** for pre-proposals).

Parks and Open Space Florida Forever Grant Program

The Parks and Open Space Florida Forever grant program provides funding to local governments and eligible nonprofit environmental organizations for acquisition of community-based parks, open space and greenways that further outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs identified in local government comprehensive plans. The program provides local governments the opportunity to leverage local dollars with state dollars to optimize conservation benefits and encourages both public-private partnerships and land acquisition initiatives. Applications are due by **January 19, 2026**.

FY2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program

The FY 2025 Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity is not just about rebuilding—it's about transforming local economies after disaster, with an emphasis on improving communities' economic outcomes and resilience to future disasters. This funding opportunity encourages broad based local engagement and places special emphasis on projects that involve private industry in disaster recovery and economic renewal. Readiness and Implementation grant applications will be accepted and reviewed on an ongoing (rolling) basis until funds are exhausted or the Notice of Funding Opportunity is canceled; Industry Transformation grant applications are due on **Tuesday, March 3, 2026**.

2026 Climate Smart Communities Initiative

CSCI awards provide funding and technical assistance to advance community-based climate resilience in communities or regions that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Grants typically range from \$60,000 to \$115,000 based on the scope of work proposed in the application. The program prioritizes funding for communities that include historically disinvested populations at increased risk to climate-related impacts. The competition is open to US-based project teams composed of a climate adaptation practitioner and representatives from a local or regional government entity and a community-based organization. Applications are due by **March 12, 2026**.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

[Stopping Aquatic Invaders: How Georgia's AIS Program Addresses Invasives Through Planning, Prevention, and Response | January 20, 2026 | Virtual](#)

This webinar's guest speaker, Jim Page, is a Senior Fisheries Biologist and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. In his role, he coordinates rapid responses to invasive species sightings and leads outreach initiatives to help Georgia communities prevent the introduction of harmful aquatic organisms. He also serves as secretary for the Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species and is a past president of the Georgia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

[Funding and Financing Coastal Resilience: Spotlight on Innovative Taxes and Fees | January 22, 2026 | Virtual](#)

Join NOAA's Office for Coastal Management to learn how state governments are using innovative taxes and fees to restore local waterways and mitigate coastal hazards. The webinar will feature speakers discussing the long-standing Maryland Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund and newly passed Hawaii Green Fee.

[SCDRP 10th Anniversary Annual Meeting | March 4-5, 2026 | Charleston, SC](#)

The Southeast & Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership (SCDRP) 10th Anniversary Annual Meeting will highlight proactive, collaborative strategies for navigating disasters in a future where state and local entities must continue to lead disaster preparedness, response, and recovery with potentially fewer resources. The Meeting will convene practitioners and stakeholders from across sectors and fields to identify and share innovative approaches that enhance state, territorial, tribal and local emergency management capacity and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The meeting will feature expert panel discussions, a demonstration field trip, interactive activities, and networking opportunities. **Registration closes January 30th.**

[Annual Meeting of the National Shellfish Association | March 22-26, 2026 | Portland, OR](#)

The National Shellfisheries Association is hosting their next Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon in March 2026. There are many [topics which may be of interest here](#), but take special note of the "Shellfish Restoration & Conservation" session moderated by Peter Kingsley-Smith. This segment will feature a diversity of presentations related to research and efforts to restore,

enhance or conserve molluscan shellfish species (not just oysters!). Living shorelines, ecosystems services, sustainability, and increased resiliency are all relevant themes for talks submitted to this session.

MARSH Forward!

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