

SASMI tipsheet April 16, 2026 South Carolina

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.

[South Carolina’s plan](#) is led by [The Nature Conservancy South Carolina](#) and supports a pilot program already underway that is identifying opportunities to build and monitor living shoreline projects in underserved and low-income communities. The plan also calls for public education, incentives for landowners to conserve important marsh areas, and better analysis of the effects of development on marshes. It outlines the need to inventory and remove or reconfigure culverts and other impediments to water flow that nourishes marshes, and it encourages expansion of a [mapping project](#) that predicts where sea-level rise will most acutely affect salt marshes.

South Carolina’s salt marshes provide more than \$2.5 billion per year in protection from storm surge and flooding. They also support the commercial and recreational fishing industries that contribute more than \$78 million and \$213 million respectively to the state’s economy every year. The habitat also protects vital military installations and training grounds, including MCAS Beaufort, MCRD Parris Island and Joint Base Charleston.

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/6i52kz35yv8blninqmo86b9ngu8z9y23>

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>