



NOAA Funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AND NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE SYSTEM

Habitat Protection and Restoration Awards

Coastal Zone Management Awards

2024 Projects Recommended for Funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Combined Hydrology, Water Quality, and Botanical Characterization to Guide Coastal Wetland Restoration and Management

Recipient: The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$2,311,672

Congressional District(s): IL-13

Summary: This project will result in baseline data and analyses to inform future restoration of wetlands and beach plant communities within the Illinois Beach State Park. The project will also support enhanced educational opportunities for students and interns and updated interactive educational and recreational opportunities for park users.

Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Valley Creek Corridor

Recipient: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$500,000

Congressional District(s): WI-06

Summary: This project will result in plans to restore the entire 1.8-mile Valley Creek urban riparian corridor, an important Lake Michigan coastal tributary. The City of Port Washington and the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program will partner to develop 90 percent design plans that include nature-based solutions to prevent degradation, protect critical infrastructure, reduce flooding risk, and restore riparian, floodplain, and estuary habitat.

Gile Flowage Land Conservation Project

Recipient: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$4,100,000

Congressional District(s): WI-07

Summary: This project will acquire 1,055 acres of undeveloped property in Iron County, Wisconsin, to provide long-term conservation of critical habitat in Lake Superior's coastal zone. The acquisition will add to a contiguous block of county-owned land that is managed for conservation values, including habitat corridors, climate resilience, and public access. The project will support underserved and tribal communities by ensuring permanent public accessibility to the land and protecting treaty rights usage by the Lac du Flambeau and Bad River Indian reservations.

Manatee River Corridor Acquisition

Recipient: Manatee County Government, Environmental Lands Program

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$5,000,000

Congressional District(s): FL-16

Summary: This land purchase will protect and conserve 68 acres of native coastal habitat in perpetuity. The Crooked River Ranch property is one of the few large undeveloped parcels along the Manatee River, and will contribute significantly to creating a connected wildlife corridor and enhancing climate resilience and water quality in an area under intense pressure from development.

Southbridge East Habitat Restoration Planning Project

Recipient: City of Wilmington, Department of Public Works

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$333,558

Congressional District(s): DE-at-large

Summary: This planning project will produce designs for the restoration and enhancement of 12.7 acres of degraded wetland habitat along the Christina River in the Southbridge community. Implementation of these designs will help the community reduce flooding, enhance resiliency, accomplish ecological restoration, improve water quality in the Christina River, and create recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors.

Popes Creek Waterfront Park Living Shoreline Design

Recipient: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$120,865

Congressional District(s): MD-05

Summary: This investment will fund the design of a living shoreline along the Potomac River where it meets Popes Creek in Charles County, Maryland. The site, a former commercial restaurant, is currently being transformed into a nature-based public park in response to inclusive community input, but is subject to sea level rise, erosion, and storm impacts resulting from climate change. The project will result in plans to stabilize the shoreline with nature-based features, effectively demonstrating equitable climate resilience grounded in the connection between healthy biodiverse ecosystems and healthy human communities.

Conservation and Restoration of Biodiverse Chowan Watershed to Provide Climate Resilience, Tribal Collaboration, and Public Access

Recipient: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality/Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$5,631,150

Congressional District(s): VA-04

Summary: This project will allow Virginia to acquire 1,900 acres of one of the largest unprotected blocks of contiguous forest in the Albemarle-Pamlico watershed region. The purchase will allow for the future restoration of climate-resilient forests in one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, improve water quality in the Chowan River basin, provide an impetus for novel communication and collaboration with regional American Indian tribes, and create one of the region's preeminent public access opportunities.

Restore Oyster Reef Habitat in the Mullica River-Great Bay Estuary through Expanded Atlantic City Shell Recycling Program

Recipient: New Jersey Coastal Management Program

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$1,271,506

Congressional District(s): NJ-2

Summary: This project will expand the scale of New Jersey's successful Atlantic City Shell Recycling and Oyster Reef Restoration Program. Funding will support increased shell material collection and expanded restoration efforts within the Mullica River-Great Bay estuary. This expansion will create additional resilience in the existing oyster reefs while increasing the footprint of the reef system by 10 acres through coordinated shell planting efforts. The project team will also collaborate with local schools in the region to develop academic programs that allow students to engage in habitat-related scientific work.

Increasing Resilience of Public Access, Passive Recreation, and Habitat on Winnapaug Pond

Recipient: Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$2,635,000

Congressional District(s): RI-02

Summary: This project will preserve a five-acre coastal property containing salt marsh along an ecologically sensitive barrier peninsula in Westerly, Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council will partner with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the Town of Westerly to protect this coastal wetland and marsh migration pathway and provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and recreate on Winnapaug Pond.

Upper Bass River Coastal Habitat Restoration Project

Recipient: Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$4,666,515

Congressional District(s): MA-09

Summary: This project will restore 57 acres of former cranberry bogs to a functioning wetland system in the Town of Yarmouth, Massachusetts. Restoration activities will include the partial removal of a dam, replacement of a concrete fishway with a natural channel, targeted removal of berms and flow control structures, and replacement of an undersized culvert. This project, in combination with other work in the watershed, will support restoration of over 160 acres of the Bass River ecosystem.

Puritan Bog Coastal Wetland Restoration Project

Recipient: Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$338,134

Congressional District(s): MA-09

Summary: This project will complete modeling, design, and permitting to restore 15 acres of coastal wetland at a retired cranberry bog in the Town of Bourne, Massachusetts. The project will lead to restored wetland structure and function, reestablished tidal exchange, and enhanced ecosystem and community resilience to climate change. Restoration designs will be achieved through a meaningful and iterative collaboration among technical team members, local community liaisons, and the public.

Planning for Resilient Restoration of Scarborough Marsh

Recipient: Scarborough Land Trust

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$1,402,308

Congressional District(s): ME-01

Summary: This project will result in a pipeline of restoration and conservation projects that will repair legacy impacts, improve public access, and protect areas for marsh migration in Scarborough Marsh. Design plans developed through this award will incorporate best available science and best management practices to inform infrastructure investments and restoration and conservation efforts around the marsh.

Using Restored Tidal Flow to Combat Migratory Fish Decline and Increase Climate Resilience

Recipient: Maine Department of Marine Resources

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$4,490,000

Congressional District(s): ME-01 and ME-02

Summary: These funds will be used to replace aging, undersized pipe culverts that restrict tidal flow with habitat-supportive spans designed in two Maine towns, using best practices and incorporating climate resilient features. Replacement of culverts at the Buttermilk Brook crossing in Brunswick and Corbett Brook crossing in Perry will improve salt marsh connectivity and resilience, providing critical habitat for commercially and culturally important fish species for the Passamaquoddy Tribe.

Dune Restoration, Community Outreach, and Capacity-Building Project at Hanapēpē Salt Pond, Kauaʻi, Hawaiʻi

Recipient: County of Kauaʻi, Planning Department

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$449,484

Congressional District(s): HI-02

Summary: This project will plan and implement a dune restoration program at Hanapēpē Salt Pond to create an essential buffer against storm surge and sea level rise, and will protect the natural resources integral for the traditional and customary Native Hawaiian practice of salting. Intended benefits include improved habitat for native flora and fauna due to a restored elevated dune system, a marine flooding buffer, enhanced public access, and increased beach health.

Little River Neck and Waites Island—Merrill Boyce Tracts

Recipient: South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$4,000,000

Congressional District(s): SC-07

Summary: This project will preserve a total of 107 acres of pristine coastal habitat in Horry County, South Carolina. This collaborative acquisition and conservation project will increase public access and recreational opportunities along the Little River Neck, Waites Island, and Marsh Island and create multi-state habitat connectivity along the South Carolina and North Carolina border.

Lanier Boulevard Flood Resiliency through Acquisition Project

Recipient: Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division – Georgia Coastal Management Program

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$1,345,554

Congressional District(s): GA-01

Summary: These funds will be used to acquire property along Lanier Boulevard in Brunswick, Georgia. Under imminent threat of development, conservation of this property will be integral to safeguarding this vulnerable community from the compounded effects of coastal flooding, high tide flooding, sea level rise, and stormwater runoff.

Conserving Tidal Wetlands in the Coquille River

Recipient: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$2,123,667

Congressional District(s): OR-04

Summary: This project will protect 528 acres of tidal wetlands—a high priority ecosystem—along the Coquille River on Oregon’s southern coast. The property represents a previously common and contiguous habitat type that is now highly fragmented and rare in the Coquille River basin. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will purchase the property, incorporate it into their Coquille Valley Wildlife Area, and steward the land in perpetuity to protect, enhance, and restore it for the benefit of fish and wildlife; manage habitat consistent with their mission; provide public fish and wildlife-oriented recreation and education; and promote tribal access to traditional foods and resources.

Rancho Cañada Floodplain Restoration Project

Recipient: California State Coastal Conservancy

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$6,000,000

Congressional District(s): CA-20

Summary: This project is focused on restoring a one-mile section of the Carmel River so that natural processes will reconnect the river with historic floodplain habitat and create a mosaic of self-sustaining riparian habitat types and instream complexity, benefitting the federally threatened South-Central California Coast steelhead and other species. The project will also restore and expand habitat for other diverse species, enhance multiple wildlife corridors, and create new opportunities for nature-based environmental education and recreation. The reconnected, lowered floodplains will create a self-sustaining, climate-resilient river system that can respond to a changing climate.

Conservation of Collins Creek Confluence and Ocean Shoreline

Recipient: Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development – Coastal Management Program

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$4,851,805

Congressional District(s): OR-04

Summary: Through this project, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians will acquire a 42-acre beachfront property currently threatened by development. This property is located in an area of historic tribal villages and settlements within the tribe’s original reservation. It has a healthy, diverse

community of native plants and features creeks that converge into wetlands that lead into the Pacific Ocean. The goal is to purchase and manage this property in perpetuity, primarily for its habitat, cultural, and climate resilience values, but also for tribal resource access and passive recreation for the tribe and the public. Protection of this property—one of the last great pieces of undeveloped oceanfront in the region—is a critical, urgent priority for meeting Oregon’s coastal resilience and conservation goals.

Owl Creek Habitat Restoration Project, Phase Two

Recipient: Trout Unlimited

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$1,576,523

Congressional District(s): WA-08

Summary: This project will restore over a mile of Owl Creek and floodplain, significantly improving spawning and rearing habitats for salmonids. Restoration actions include large wood placement, floodplain reconnection, riparian planting, and invasive plant management. This project will create local job opportunities, support coastal communities and their resilience to climate change, and benefit spring/summer chinook, fall chinook, coho, steelhead, and resident trout species.

Integrated Resilience Strategy for the Padilla Bay Coastal Community

Recipient: Washington State Department of Ecology

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$500,000

Congressional District(s): WA-02

Summary: This project will advance a holistic vision for community climate adaptation and habitat restoration in Padilla Bay, Washington. It will advance the currently funded Samish restoration project in planning a design solution that delivers tidal marsh, tidal slough, and connectivity benefits while also improving road and dike infrastructure resilience through developing a numerical model for restoration design. A secondary goal builds on community discussion catalyzed by the current project to convene a broader resilience working group to address the sea level rise vulnerabilities of roads, dikes, agriculture, drainage, rural communities, and habitat along the eastern shore of Padilla Bay, the Samish River delta, and the southern and western shores of Samish Bay.

Elk River Estuary Restoration: Final Design, Permitting, and Construction

Recipient: California Trout

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$6,000,000

Congressional District(s): CA-02

Summary: The Elk River Estuary Restoration Project is the initial implementation step of a decades-long, community-based program to resolve legacy sediment and water quality impairment issues from excessive timber harvest, while also providing regional resilience to sea level rise and large episodic storm events. The project is intended to improve hydrologic and sediment processes, water quality conditions, and aquatic and riparian habitat functions in Elk River, ultimately reducing nuisance flooding in rural residential properties and agricultural land in this economically disadvantaged community.

National Estuarine Research Reserve Awards

2024 Projects Recommended for Funding through the
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Gibiskising Minis Azhe-dibinaweziwin

Recipient: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System

Project Type: Habitat Restoration Planning, Engineering, and Design

Funding Amount: \$348,860

Congressional District(s): WI-07

Summary: This project will create a community-informed plan to restore 10.9 acres of regained Ojibwe homelands on Lake Superior's Gibiskising Minis (land bridge, Wisconsin Point) to their inherent ecological and cultural nature. Input from tribal and non-tribal land managers, archaeologists, local government, tribal members, and tribal government will be incorporated into an actionable restoration and monitoring plan that accounts for the significance of this place. The completed design will be used to pursue funding to restore sand dunes, pine forests, medicinal plants, and cultural relationships.

Protection and Restoration of Ayres Point Oyster Reefs

Recipient: Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$2,064,726

Congressional District(s): TX-37

Summary: The primary outcome of this project is the restoration of 11.5 acres of oyster reef along Ayres Point in the Mesquite Bay complex that provides shoreline and marsh habitat protection, and supports a broad diversity of species. The restored oyster reef structure will be constructed in an area closed to commercial harvest, facilitating recruitment and growth of oysters and providing oyster larvae to surrounding oyster reefs in both open and closed waters. The restored oyster reef complex will have the added benefit of creating a complex habitat for numerous recreationally and commercially important fish and invertebrate species.

Shoreline Restoration to Enhance Coastal Resilience within the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Recipient: Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$3,541,936

Congressional District(s): AL-01

Summary: This project will remove a degraded bulkhead, restore an emergent marsh shoreline, and promote shoreline stewardship at the East Gateway Tract within the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The project will involve planning, engineering, design, construction, and monitoring activities, and will also serve as a demonstration site for education, outreach, professional training, and student-based coastal resilience workforce development.

Habitat Restoration and Protection to Enhance Salt Marsh Resilience to Sea Level Rise in the Wells Research Reserve

Recipient: Town of Wells, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

Project Type: Conservation and Restoration

Funding Amount: \$2,879,117

Congressional District(s): ME-01

Summary: This project will acquire a conservation easement for 9.5 acres of salt marsh and 8.5 acres of freshwater wetlands and uplands and restore the marsh's tidal hydrology. The Town of Wells and the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve will partner to restore the protected marsh by replacing a failing and undersized municipal roadway crossing. The new bridge will be more resilient to extreme storm events, improve safety for motorists and pedestrians, and allow for the migration of tidal marsh as sea level rise progresses.

Ola i ka Lo'i Wai (Life through Indigenous Knowledge)

Recipient: Kāko'o 'Ōiwi

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$3,400,000

Congressional District(s): HI-02

Summary: This project is based on Indigenous knowledge (Native Hawaiian) relating to the management of wetlands and estuaries. The project's goal is to restore 40 acres within the reserve, using Indigenous knowledge relating to wetland agroecology (lo'i wai) as a means to increase community resilience in regard to climate change, food security, and economic stability.

Mingo Creek Tract for Black River State Park

Recipient: University of South Carolina – North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$1,500,000

Congressional District(s): SC-07

Summary: This project will allow conservation partners to acquire 675 acres of ecologically significant coastal habitat within the Winyah Bay estuary in South Carolina. The Mingo Tract, which spans 4.5 miles of Mingo Creek to its confluence with the Black River at the edge of North Inlet Winyah Bay Research Reserve's target watershed, will be conserved in perpetuity. The protected properties along the Black River are intended for passive recreation that is compatible with habitat protection.

South Fenwick Island Parcel Additions to the ACE Basin Reserve

Recipient: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources – ACE Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve

Project Type: Land Conservation

Funding Amount: \$657,000

Congressional District(s): SC-01

Summary: This investment will support the acquisition of 8.6 acres of rare hummock and coastal habitat on South Fenwick Island, within the Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto Basin (ACE Basin) National Estuarine Research Reserve. This project will add acreage to an already valuable conservation land holding and will fill an existing gap in conserved land on the island, helping to create a seamless array of protected habitat that also enables the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to better manage its wildlife, cultural resources, and marsh migration corridors.

Padilla Bay Coastal Prairie Restoration

Recipient: Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Project Type: Habitat Restoration

Funding Amount: \$623,315

Congressional District(s): WA-02

Summary: The Padilla Bay Research Reserve will transition 15 acres of old pastures from a species-poor grassland dominated by non-native species to a species-rich native coastal oak prairie habitat that will be protected long-term as part of the reserve. This will be achieved by co-managing with local tribes (the Samish Indian Nation and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community), integrating modern methods with the traditional knowledge that sustained this rare habitat for centuries and will ultimately be key to its resilience to climate change. The intended benefits include increased biodiversity and habitat resilience, increased public awareness and access, increased tribal access to rare and culturally important species, and promotion of traditional ecological knowledge as central to natural resource management in a changing climate.