



NORTH CAROLINA SEAGRASS MAPPING & INVENTORY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Coastal wetlands, including salt marsh, seagrasses, and mangroves, also called “blue carbon” habitats, are incredibly efficient at capturing and storing carbon. A key first step to account for the carbon captured and stored in these habitats is through the development of a greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory. But national and state inventories have up to now lacked a key habitat – seagrass beds. North Carolina has the largest extent of seagrass coverage along the Atlantic coast, measuring approximately 105,000 acres in 2013. To address this omission, the state is developing a GHG inventory for its coastal wetlands, including seagrasses, to help the state better understand how much blue carbon these areas capture and store, and help guide management actions to enhance these resources.

OBJECTIVES

- Create a GHG inventory for North Carolina’s coastal wetlands, including the incorporation of seagrasses for the first time.
- Develop a plan for protecting and restoring coastal wetlands, including seagrasses.
- Leverage federal funds to support blue carbon conservation and restoration efforts.

PATHWAYS FOR SCALING



Completion of a blue carbon inventory in North Carolina will set an example for other coastal states to incorporate blue carbon and seagrasses into their own GHG inventories.



A completed GHG inventory and seagrasses map will help guide the state’s restoration efforts, including utilization of coastal restoration funding available through the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act.

LOCATION

North Carolina

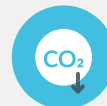
PROGRAM PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

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FINDINGS TO DATE



North Carolina’s coastal wetlands hold approximately 48.8 million metric tons of carbon, resulting from hundreds of years of accumulation in their sediments.



Emergent and scrub shrub wetlands sequester approx. 326,000 metric tons of CO₂e and seagrasses around 67,000 metric tons of CO₂e each year.



Seagrasses’ ability to sequester carbon has decreased over time due to habitat loss, making their continued protection and restoration important.

For more information about this and other innovative and scalable projects implementing Natural Climate Solutions in the U.S., please visit www.usnature4climate.org/building-ambition/.