

Protecting North Carolina's Coastline: A Vital Investment for Our Future

What difference do healthy coastal habitats make for North Carolina communities?



A 2022 study found that saltmarshes can reduce wave energy by up to 95% with as low as 50% vegetation cover.⁵ This demonstrates the significant role of marsh vegetation in attenuating wave energy and protecting coastal areas.



A 2017 study found that North Carolina properties with bulkheads suffered 93% of post-hurricane shoreline damage and incurred higher maintenance and repair costs compared to natural shorelines and revetments. Bulkhead property owners reported double the repair costs for hurricane damage and quadruple the annual shoreline maintenance expenses.⁶



Healthy wetlands support a variety of recreational activities such as fishing, bird watching, kayaking, and paddle boarding. These activities attract tourists and generate significant revenue for local economies. In 2023, coastal tourism in North Carolina generated over \$7 billion in economic activity.¹



The commercial fishing industry in North Carolina, supported by healthy coastal habitats, contributes approximately \$300 million annually to the state's economy.³

What can be done with more funding for coastal restoration?



Expand coastal wetland restoration

Increased resources can support the restoration of degraded salt marshes by planting native vegetation, removing invasive species, and rebuilding natural hydrology.¹²



Enhance research and monitoring

The NC Department of Environmental Quality emphasizes the need for accurate geospatial datasets for vulnerability assessments and flood zone workshops as data gaps can hinder effective planning and implementation of restoration projects.¹³



Purchase land for coastal conservation

Conserving undeveloped, natural areas helps maintain a floodplain's capacity to absorb and gradually release excess water, enhance water quality, support wildlife, and allow ecosystems to migrate in the face of climate change.¹¹

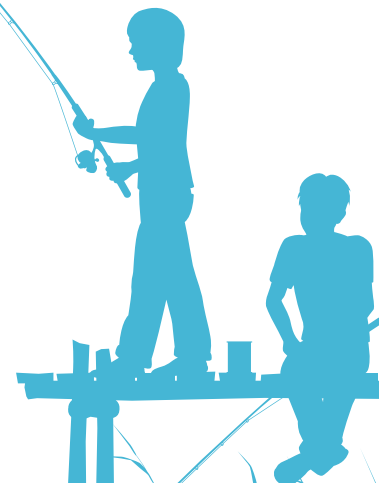


Expand programs that focus on community involvement.

Develop educational programs linking coastal restoration to clean water, storm protection, and recreational activities like swimming and fishing. This will help North Carolina residents understand the benefits and encourage their participation in restoration efforts.

92%

of voters nationwide
(88% GOP, 94% IND, and 96% DEM)
support **"restoring coastal wetlands
to help reduce the risk of
flooding to communities,
provide wildlife habitat,
and help address
climate change."**¹⁴



SCAN FOR REFERENCES