

SALT MARSH

Salt marsh supports wildlife, ecosystems and the local Delaware economy



Salt marsh overview

Salt marshes are coastal wetlands that are flooded and drained by salt water brought in by the tides. Sometimes they are known as tidal wetlands, and they are one part of a complex coastal ecosystem with many interdependent habitats.

Salt marshes clean the water by filtering runoff, and they also provide food, shelter and nursery grounds for birds, fish and other wildlife. And conserving salt marsh helps people, too.

Marshes can reduce erosion, stabilize shorelines, protect against storm surge, and support species that are crucial to recreational and commercial fishing, hunting, birding, and other activities.

Designating ample buffers between land uses and salt marshes allows this vital habitat to adapt to changing environmental conditions and improve community resilience.

SALT MARSH FACTS:

- One acre of salt marsh can absorb up to **1.5 million gallons of floodwater**, which is equivalent to more than 2.25 Olympic-size swimming pools.
- On average, salt marshes provide **\$695,000 of value per square mile** during storms by reducing the impacts of surge and flooding.
- Salt marshes and coastal wetlands sequester and store carbon at a rate **10 times that of mature tropical forests**, helping to moderate the effects of climate change.
- On average, the **U.S. loses 80,000 acres of coastal wetlands**, including salt marshes, each year.



The Waterways Infrastructure and Investment Network (WIIN) is a coalition of partners and stakeholders that was awarded grant funding by the National Coastal Resilience Fund (through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) to create a natural resource evaluation and management plan for the Mispillion and Cedar Creek watersheds.

To learn more, visit us at: derascl.org/wiin.

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Sources: NOAA, Univ. of CA, San Diego, Pew