

Marshes for Tomorrow Atlantic Flyway Salt Marsh Initiative

Presentation to ACJV

David Curson July 19, 2015





Marshes for Tomorrow Vision

A network of salt marsh landscapes along the Atlantic Flyway that are resilient to sea level rise and can persist, with their full assemblage of specialist birds, through the 21st Century.



Atlantic Flyway Salt marsh Strategies

- 1. Promote upslope marsh migration land protection and management.
- 2. Enhance resilience of today's marshes through management.
- 3. Communications strategies to promote SLR adaptation policies and actions.
- 4. Support status review and petition for listing of Saltmarsh Sparrow.
- 5. Assist regional research efforts to identify significant populations of target salt marsh birds.



Responding at scale

- Goal 5 projects on the Flyway
- GIS analysis revealed priority landscapes
- Full life cycle conservation for priority species







THE CONSERVATION FUND





Blackwater Climate Adaptation Project, MD

- Three phases
 - Climate impact assessment
 - Climate adaptation strategies
 - Implementation: on-the-ground projects
- Diverse partners
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Communications Advisory Committee



Adaptation Actions in "Marsh Conservation Zone"

- Most intact marsh

- Greatest predicted longevity in face of SLR
- Highest bird densities (SHARP survey)









Implementation Facilitating marsh transition in migration corridors

- "Managed marsh transition" into loblolly pine forest:
 - 13 acres trees removed
 - Phragmites control
 - USGS study of impacts
- Switchgrass as alternative crop:
 - 40 acres planted (TNC, TCF)
- Funding: WCS Climate adaptation fund.



Sandy Coastal Resilience Project at Blackwater NWR 1. Thin layering – 30 acres of submerging marsh





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Shorters Sandy Bird Points



Sandy Coastal Resilience Project at Blackwater NWR 2. Hydrologic study of Farm Creek Marsh (USGS)



Objectives:

- Determine extent and duration of inundation.
- Determine the cause of inundation.
- Provide data for engineering design.







Community engagement

- Raise community awareness
- Diverse audiences, school students to agency leaders
- Share ideas Community of Practice



Next steps

- Initiate new climate adaptation projects in South Carolina and North Carolina.
- Establish Community of Practice.

