US Army Corps of Engineers®
New England District

U.S. ARMY

PUBLIC NOTICE

Comment Period Begins: October 24, 2023
Comment Period Ends: November 24, 2023
File Number: NAE-2005-01143
In Reply Refer to: Mr. Taylor Bell
Phone: (978) 318-8952
Email: Taylor.m.bell@usace.army.mil

SUBJECT:

This notice announces a request to modify the Maine Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund In-Lieu Fee (ILF) Program Instrument for the addition of twelve individual projects.

ILF PROGRAM SPONSOR:

Maine Department of Environmental Protection
17 State House Station
28 Tyson Drive
Augusta, Maine 04333-0017

BACKGROUND:

The Maine Department of Environmental Services is the sponsor of the Maine ILF Program which serves as an alternative form of compensatory mitigation for impacts to aquatic resources. The Maine ILF program is authorized by the New England District, Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). A copy of the signed ILF agreement titled “State of Maine-In Lieu Fee Program Instrument,” dated “August 2011,” includes details about the ILF Program goals and objectives in general and can be found at the following link: New England District > Missions > Regulatory > Mitigation > In-Lieu Fee Programs > ME (army.mil)

Twelve projects were submitted as proposed additions to the ILF Instrument pursuant to 33 CFR 332, Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources (Federal Register: April 10, 2008, effective June 9, 2008). Pursuant to 33 CFR 332.8 (d), the District Engineer will provide public notice of the proposed addition of ILF program mitigation sites. As such, we are issuing a public notice to solicit comments for the instrument modification due to the proposed addition of ILF mitigation sites.

The Maine ILF Program accrued funds from the sale of compensatory mitigation credits resulting from USACE and Maine Department of Environmental Service permitted impacts in the State of Maine. The funds were made available through a competitive grant process for the preservation, restoration, and enhancement of wetland and watercourse resources with associated upland buffers in the State of Maine.

PURPOSE:

The twelve proposed projects would provide compensatory wetland and stream mitigation for permitted impacts to the Central and Western Mountains, Central Interior and Midcoast, Downeast Maine, and Southern Maine Service Areas.

After the end of the comment period, the district engineer will review all comments received and make an initial determination as to the potential of the proposed projects to provide compensatory mitigation for activities authorized by DA permits. That determination will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposals, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposals will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural value, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain value, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

An ILF program involves the restoration, establishment, re-establishment, enhancement, rehabilitation and/or preservation of aquatic resources through funds paid to a governmental or non-profit natural resources management entity to satisfy compensatory mitigation requirements for Department of the Army permits. Similar to a mitigation bank, an ILF program sells compensatory mitigation credits to permittees whose obligation to provide compensatory mitigation is then transferred to the ILF program sponsor. The operation and use of an ILF program are governed by an ILF program instrument. A group of federal and state regulatory and resource agency representatives known as the Interagency Review Team (IRT) oversees the establishment and management of the program. The IRT is chaired by the Corps and the primary role of the IRT is to facilitate the establishment of the ILF program through the development of an ILF Instrument. The IRT also reviews ILF mitigation proposals and provides comments to the Corps. The approval of the use of the ILF program for specific projects is the decision of the Corps pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and/or Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Corps provides no guarantee that any individual or general permit proposing to use the ILF program for compensatory mitigation would be authorized.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Attached to this notice are maps and summaries of each project. Additionally, information consistent with a prospectus is located here: https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:378:8001631362587::::P378_PROGRAM_ID:261 in the cyber repository, 2023 Full Proposals.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT:

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267), requires all federal agencies to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Essential Fish Habitat describes waters and substrate necessary for fish to spawn, breed, feed, or grow to maturity.

The District Engineer has made a preliminary determination that site-specific adverse effects will not be substantial, if there is any impact at all. Further consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding EFH recommendations is being conducted and will be concluded prior to the final decision.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

Based on our initial review, the proposed activity would affect historic properties. Additional review and consultation to fulfill requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, will be ongoing as part of the review process.

ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSULTATION

The USACE is reviewing the applications for the potential impact on Federally listed threatened or endangered species and their designated critical habitat pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as amended. Our review will be concluded prior to the final decision.

OTHER GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZATIONS

The states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island have approved Coastal Zone Management Programs. Where applicable, the applicant states that any proposed activity will comply with and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the approved Coastal Zone Management Program. By this public notice, we are requesting the state concurrence or objection to the applicant's consistency statement.

The following authorizations have been applied for, or have been, or will be obtained:

(X) Permit, license or assent from State.

(X) Permit from local wetland agency or conservation commission.

(X) Water Quality Certification in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

COMMENTS

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, federal, state, and local agencies and officials, Native Tribes, and other interested parties to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit if needed for these proposals. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, and to determine the need for a public hearing and gauge the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

All comments received will be available for public review in their entirety and will be considered a matter of public record. In order to properly evaluate the proposal, we are seeking public comment. Anyone wishing to comment is encouraged to do so. Comments should be submitted in writing by the above date. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Taylor Bell at taylor.m.bell@usace.army.mil, (978) 318-8952, (800) 343-4789, or (800) 362-4367.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the modification. Requests for a public hearing shall specifically state the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. The Corps holds public hearings for the purpose of obtaining public comments when that is the best means for understanding a wide variety of concerns from a diverse segment of the public.

The initial determinations made herein will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice. Copies of letters of objection will be forwarded to the applicant. Typically, the Corps will request that the applicant contact objectors directly in an effort to reach an understanding.

THIS NOTICE IS NOT AN AUTHORIZATION TO DO ANY WORK.

C. Grace Moses

Grace Moses
Acting Chief, Technical Support Branch
Regulatory Division

Please contact Ms. Tina Chaisson at bettina.m.chaisson@usace.army.mil or (978) 318-8058 if you would like to be removed from our public notice mailing list.

Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program

2023 Proposals

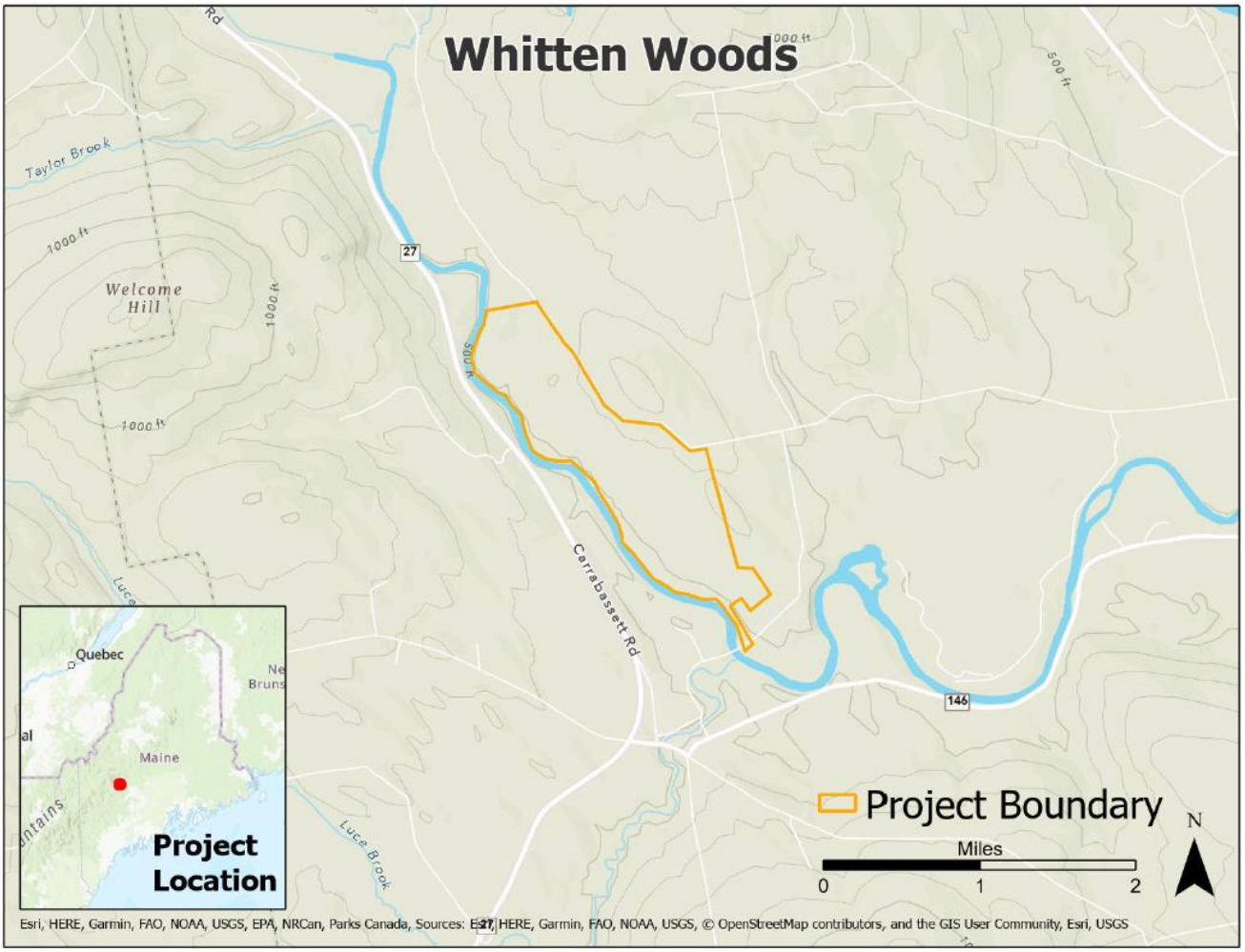
MNRCP Region	Project Name	Project Sponsor	Town(s)	Total Cost	Funds Requested	Total Acres	Compensation Type
Central and Western Mountains	Whitten Woods	Somerset Woods Trustees	New Portland	$685,320.00	$599,000.00	420	Preservation
Central Interior and Midcoast	Enhancing Hockomock Bay Marshes	Kennebec Estuary Land Trust	Woolwich	$144,775.50	$139,525.50	41.3	Enhancement
Central Interior and Midcoast	Enhancing Little River Marsh	Kennebec Estuary Land Trust	Georgetown	$248,675.50	$243,675.50	105.7	Enhancement
Central Interior and Midcoast	Musquash Pond Restoration	Midcoast Conservancy	Jefferson	$1,359,500.00	$1,349,500.00	9.88	Creation, Restoration
Central Interior and Midcoast	Penobscot Mill Creek Marsh Tidal Resilience Project	Town of Penobscot	Penobscot	$304,165.00	$304,165.00	1.5	Restoration, Enhancement
Central Interior and Midcoast	Three Ponds One Forest	Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust	Bremen	$1,052,500.00	$523,000.00	230	Preservation
Central Interior and Midcoast	Weskeag Marsh Restoration Phase I	Ducks Unlimited	South Thomaston	$727,130.00	$720,130.00	126	Enhancement
Downeast Maine	Jordan River Coastal Conservation and Restoration Project	Frenchman Bay Conservancy	Trenton	$887,450.00	$300,000.00	11.5	Restoration
Downeast Maine	Mount Desert Island Salt Marsh Enhancement Project	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Mount Desert and Tremont	$63,000.00	$45,500.00	38	Enhancement
Southern Maine	Goosefare Salt Marsh Enhancement	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Saco	$818,566.00	$679,519.00	98	Enhancement
Southern Maine	Spruce Creek - Major Preserve	Kittery Land Trust, Inc.	Kittery	$254,500.00	$242,500.00	8	Preservation, Enhancement
Southern Maine	Spurwink Marsh Restoration/road removal	Town of Cape Elizabeth	Scarborough and Cape Elizabeth	$1,950,000.00	$1,816,500.00	63	Restoration, Enhancement

Central & Western Mountains Region

Project: Whitten Woods

Applicant: Somerset Woods Trustees
Location: New Portland, Somerset County, Latitude 44.903202, Longitude -70.103502

The Whitten Woods project offers the opportunity to conserve, through fee acquisition, multiple, highly productive vernal pools and a diversity of high-quality, buffered wetlands identified as priority resource types in the MNRCP Central & Western Mountains Region. The 420-acre forested parcel boasts nearly 2 miles of undeveloped frontage on the Carrabassett River. Under permanent conservation ownership with Somerset Woods Trustees, the property will be managed to maintain its natural state and maximize protection of its wetland resources.

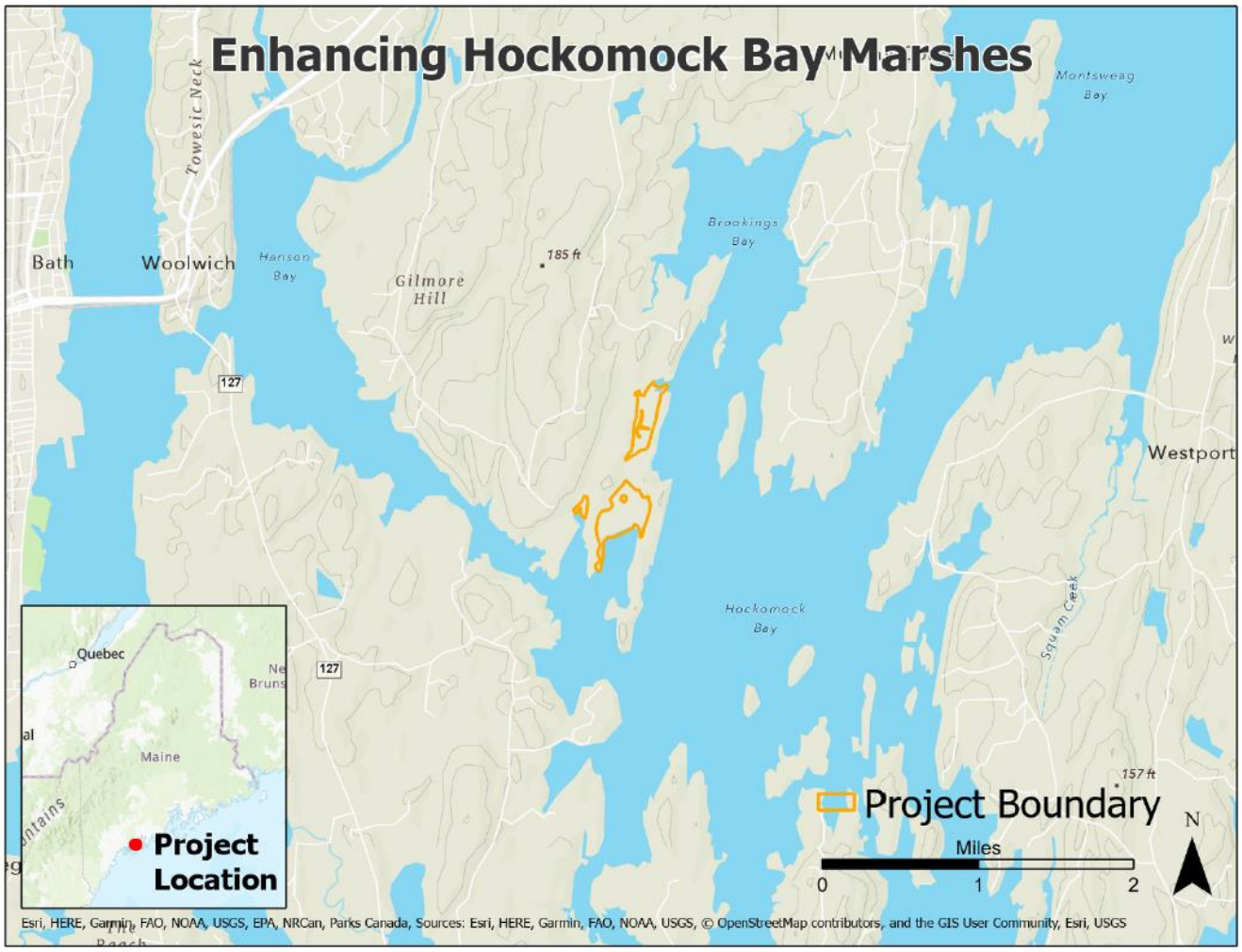


Central Interior & Midcoast Region

Project: Enhancing Hockomock Bay Marshes

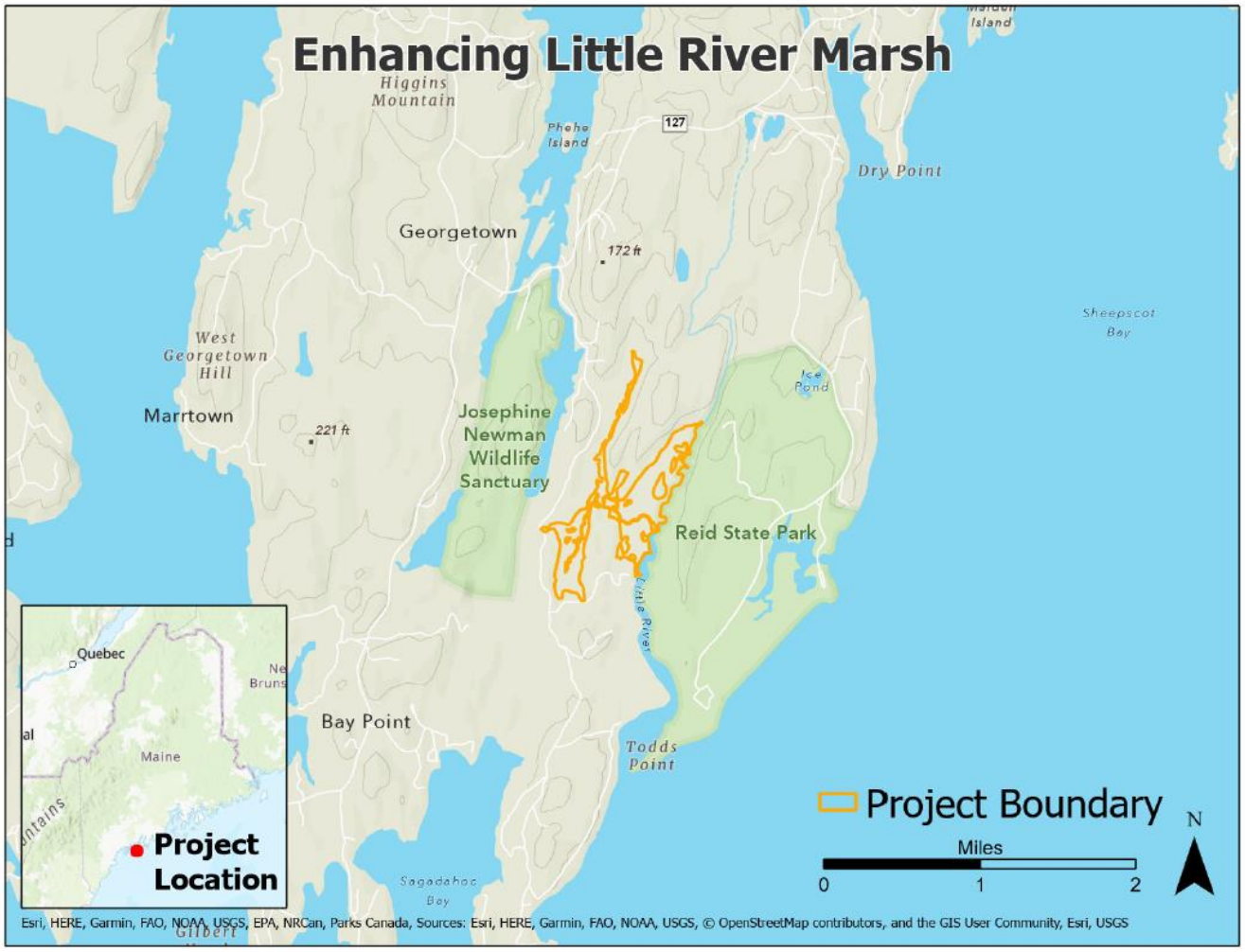
Applicant: Kennebec Estuary Land Trust
Location: Woolwich, Sagadahoc County, Latitude 43.8997, Longitude -69.760398

This project will enhance habitat at 41.3 acres of tidal marshes around Hockomock Bay in Woolwich by remediating historic agricultural structures - ditches and embankments - that are causing marsh degradation and subsidence. The project is located on property conserved by KELT – Hockomock Bay Farm easement and Hockomock Preserve. The easement property is owned by Hockomock Bay Farm Inc. managed by the King family, who worked with KELT to establish the easement in 1998. KELT will work with Geoff Wilson (Northeast Wetland Restoration) and the SMARTeam (Salt Marsh Adaptation Resiliency Team) to address the damage caused by historic agriculture at the site. At the tidal marshes on Hockomock Preserve and Hockomock Bay Farm Easement, there is evidence of both historic ditches and embankments, and there is also evidence of the problems they cause. Megapools and vegetation die-off can be observed at the preserve. Phragmites is becoming established in areas of the easement, and there is a large patch of it on KELT's preserve. There are also areas where vegetation dieoff and pannes are occurring. To interrupt this pattern of degradation and subsidence, KELT will contract with Geoff Wilson to design and put into place a single channel hydrology to remediate and enhance the site. KELT will carry out pre and post restoration monitoring to document the current conditions, inform the restoration designs, and track the success of restoration at the site.



Project: Enhancing Little River Marsh
Applicant: Kennebec Estuary Land Trust
Location: Georgetown, Sagadahoc County, Latitude 43.788296, Longitude -69.741101

This project will enhance habitat at 104.1 acres of Little River salt marsh in Georgetown by remediating historic agricultural structures that are causing marsh degradation and subsidence. The project is located in Georgetown on Little River marsh on property owned by KELT (Little River Lundstrom Marsh Preserve) and MDIFW (part of Kennebec Estuary WMA). The project area is adjacent to Reid State Park. KELT will work with Geoff Wilson (Northeast Wetland Restoration) and the SMARTeam (Salt Marsh Adaptation Resiliency Team) to address the damage caused by historic agriculture at the site. At the Little River salt marsh, there are a number of areas where there is standing water or bare ground on the marsh surface. Most of this standing water can be linked to historic agricultural modifications to the marsh surface that are trapping the water and preventing it from draining. This standing water is decreasing the health and stability of the marsh platform. It is also dramatically decreasing the resilience of the marsh to sea level rise, as the areas of open water and bare ground are unable to readily trap and accrete sediment or gain elevation through annual addition of vegetative matter. To interrupt this pattern of degradation and subsidence, KELT will contract with Geoff Wilson to design and put into place a single channel hydrology to remediate and enhance the site. KELT will carry out pre and post restoration monitoring to document the current conditions, inform the restoration designs, and track the success of restoration at the site.

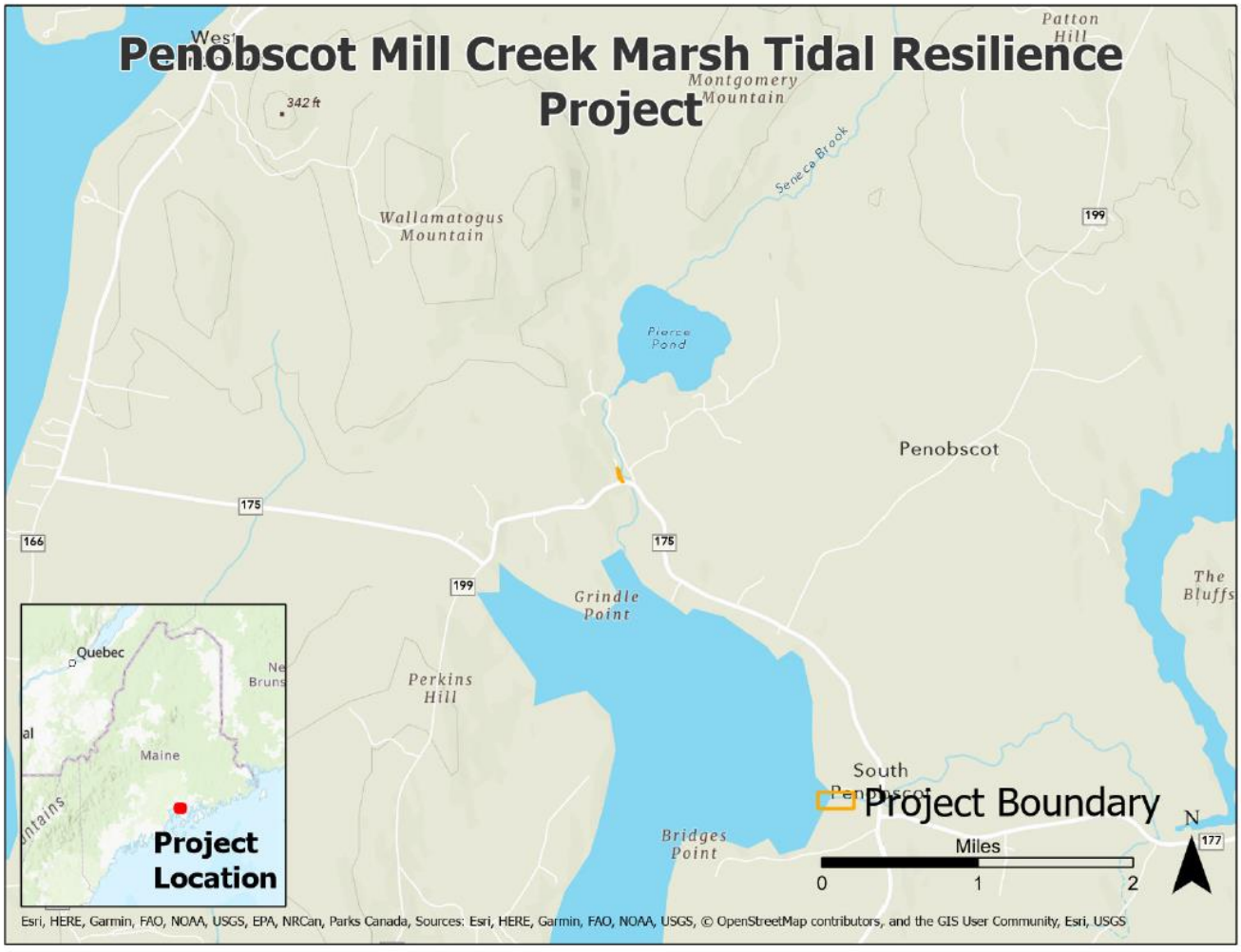


Project: Musquash Pond Restoration
Applicant: Midcoast Conservancy
Location: Jefferson, Lincoln County, Latitude 44.156957, Longitude -69.520512

Midcoast Conservancy is partnering with SWCA Environmental Consultants to reclaim and restore two abandoned gravel pits on a 500-acre parcel of conserved land. They propose to create up to 4.72 acres of freshwater wetlands, one vernal pool, and 2.62 acres of critical vernal pool terrestrial habitat. Additionally, Midcoast Conservancy proposes to remove a pre-existing paved roadway that currently disrupts the hydrology within the existing wetland complex and restore 0.22 acres of freshwater wetland. To stabilize areas at risk of erosion and sedimentation to nearby wetland complexes, they propose to stabilize and restore and additional 2.32 acres of upland buffer consisting of the gravel pits' steeply sloped walls.

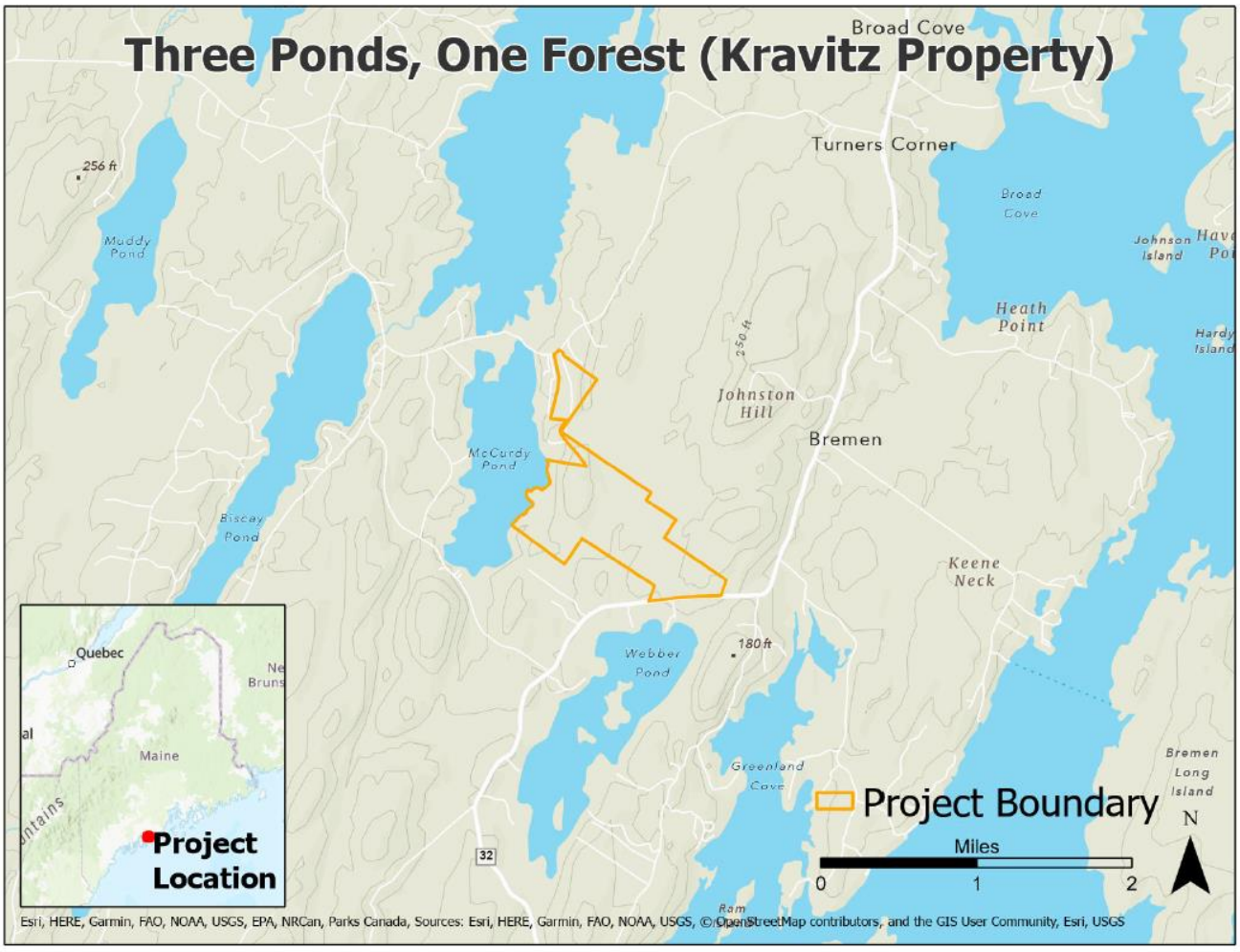
Project: Penobscot Mill Creek Marsh Tidal Resilience Project
Applicant: Town of Penobscot
Location: Penobscot, Hancock County, Latitude 44.474373, Longitude -68.726948

The Project will restore degraded wetlands owned by the Town of Penobscot (Town) along Mill Creek adjacent to estuarine intertidal wetlands. MNRCP funding is requested to restore approximately 7,130 square feet of former marshland that during several decades has been the site of the Town's open-air sand-salt pile operated by the Town's road crew. Leachate from the pile has degraded the adjacent Mill Creek tidal marsh, a tributary of the Bagaduce River's Northern Bay that empties into Penobscot Bay. Operations at the site have packed spilled sand and salt, encroaching into and degrading the former marshland under and adjacent to the piles. Requested funding will be used to remove the hard-packed gravel, sand, soil, and salt leachate consistent with regulations for removal and disposal. Requested funding will be used for appropriate methods, upon the advice of wetlands experts, to remove fill to match the existing marsh plane elevation and revegetate the marsh. The Town owns sufficient land upland of the wetland restoration site to provide a vegetated buffer.



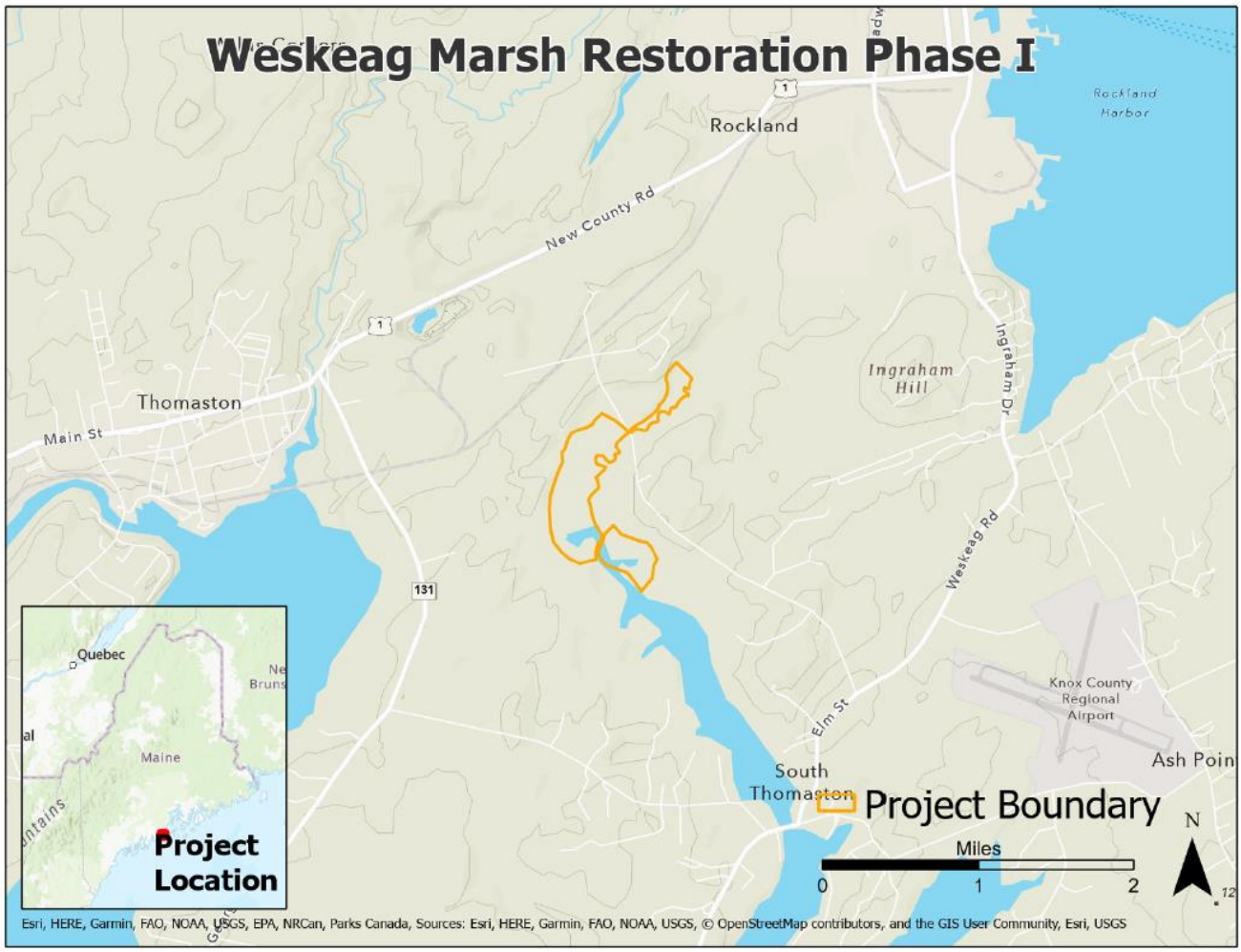
Project: Three Ponds One Forest
Applicant: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust
Location: Bremen, Lincoln County, Latitude 44.006632, Longitude -69.442694

The Three Ponds, One Forest initiative will ultimately connect Pemaquid, McCurdy, and Muscongus (Webber) Ponds, as well as (saltwater) Greenland Cove on Muscongus Bay. CRCT acquired a key parcel (Kurlan, 167-acres, with over half a mile of frontage on Pemaquid Pond) in April 2023, and will acquire the second key parcel (Kravitz, the subject of this grant), by the end of 2023. CRCT will place a (donated) conservation easement on a third parcel (Muscongus Pond CE) in August, 2023 as well, leaving only a few small parcels to conserve in order to complete our initial vision of connecting the three ponds and Muscongus Bay. The ultimate goal is to conserve a 1,000+ acre habitat block between these three ponds, along with connecting corridors to other habitat blocks. Coastal Rivers is seeking MNRCP funding for the fee acquisition of the Kravitz Property. With approximately 230 acres, a half mile of pond frontage, 12 acres of Inland Waterfowl/Wading Bird habitat, large high-quality wetlands, and numerous significant vernal pools, this property is one of the largest and most diverse on the Pemaquid Peninsula. The property is highly developable, and if not purchased by Coastal Rivers, will be sold on the open market. CRCT holds an Option to Purchase on the Kravitz land, through to February 2024.



Project: Weskeag Marsh Restoration Phase I
Applicant: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Location: South Thomaston, Knox County, Latitude 44.074091, Longitude -69.143276

The current and rapid degradation of coastal wetlands caused by historic farming, past management practices, and sea level rise is well documented across Maine's 17,000 acres of salt marsh. Restoration and management of these areas for both ecological integrity and community resilience is urgent, before these systems decline to a point where restoration would be more costly, and likely less effective. This will likely require a combination of techniques at multiple spatial scales and a phased restoration approach. The proposed project will lead to improvements in the longevity of the State-owned R. Waldo Tyler Wildlife Management Area (WMA), hereafter Weskeag Marsh. This project will begin the first phase of a holistic and comprehensive restoration approach to address vegetated marsh loss and restore a more natural tidal hydrology within the system. Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) is proposing to (1) evaluate and develop a restoration plan and (2) restore an approximately 126-acre section of salt marsh that was heavily altered by salt marsh haying (ditching and berms), Open Marsh Water Management (OMWM), and subsequent ditch collapse. This project is a partner-based effort that aims to build partnerships and expand on expertise that will be transferrable to future salt marsh projects in Maine. Specifically, DU and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife staff will work together on all aspects of the project, with the project to be managed by DU. All partners are qualified to implement this important work, have a history of restoration successes, and are committed to leverage resources to see the project through completion.



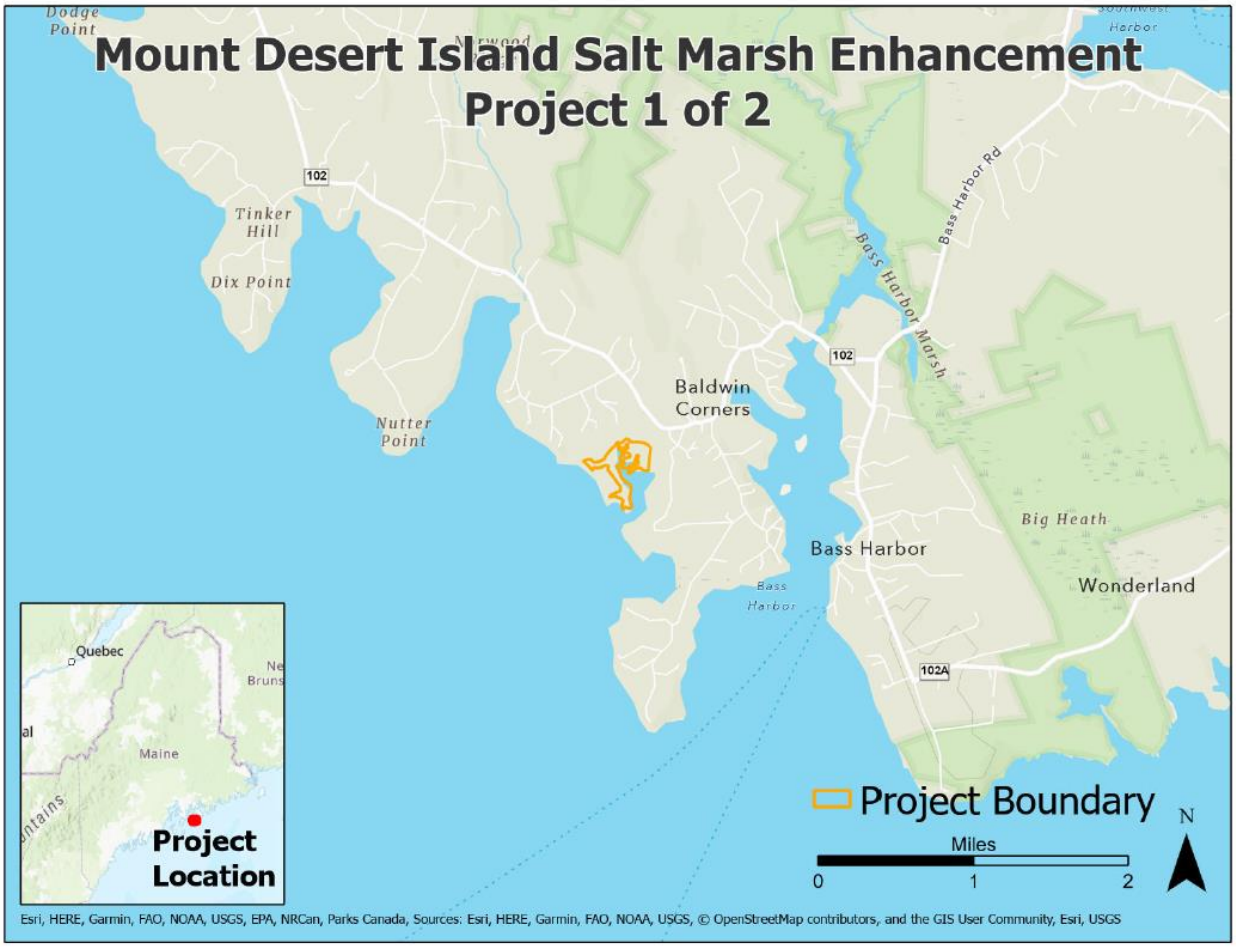
Downeast Maine Region

Project: Jordan River Coastal Conservation and Restoration Project
Applicant: Frenchman Bay Conservancy
Location: Trenton, Hancock County, Latitude 44.491323, Longitude -68.359307

The Jordan River Coastal Restoration Project (JRCRP) is located on a 147-acre parcel in Trenton that Frenchman Bay Conservancy purchased on September 28, 2023. The JRCRP is a unique opportunity to restore significantly altered coastal wetlands and provide space for future marsh migration due to sea level rise. Despite the significant existing natural resources of this property, the hydrologic and wetland function has been significantly manipulated and impaired to meet the needs of the former golf course. Aerial photography of the site from 1960, show an intertidal area around 11 acres that has since been converted to a freshwater pond with a large earthen berm. Additionally, freshwater streams have been altered and buried. FBC is committed to restoring the full extent of natural flow including restoring an intertidal area, re-establishing free running tributaries, and reconnecting habitat corridors. Initial assessment results show that a key restoration action would be to remove the earthen berm at the existing freshwater pond that has long blocked the natural tidal flow. Phase One will include restoration of the tributary confluence beneath the pond and its connection to the tidal zone. It will also include active vegetation restoration (planting/seeding) of the areas between the tributaries to ensure restoration of the full lower tidal connection to the freshwater habitat complex. FBC requests MNRCP support to fund Phase One of this restoration project focused on coastal wetland restoration of the tributary confluence out to the tidal zone.

Project: Mount Desert Island Salt Marsh Enhancement Project
Applicant: Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Location: Mount Desert and Tremont, Hancock County, *see below for Lat/Long for each site*

The Mount Desert Island (MDI) Salt Marsh Enhancement Project encompasses 38 acres of Spartina Salt marsh on two Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) preserves on Mount Desert Island: Babson Creek Preserve (16.3 marsh acres), and Mitchell Marsh Preserve (23.7 marsh acres). Both sites have evidence of hydrological impairments from salt-hay agriculture modifications (ditches and embankments). These are impacting the functions of the marsh, resulting in pooling, vegetation die-off, and subsidence. This loss of marsh elevation in the face of sea level rise (SLR) threatens the longevity of these systems. This project aims to interrupt this subsidence trajectory using techniques developed by the Salt Marsh Adaptation and Resiliency Team (SMARTeam). The techniques involve first reducing the density of ditches via "ditch remediation," a technique that takes Spartina vegetation harvested on-site, rolled, and placed in undesirable ditches to capture sediment and regain elevation over time. The second technique involves digging shallow, wide runnels to connect pooled regions of the marsh platform back to the main tidal channel. Sediment from the runnels will be piled to create micro-topographical mounds for nesting habitat for birds like sharp-tailed sparrow. The combination of these techniques reestablishes a hydrological pattern that maintains sustainable tidal flow to and from the marsh surface, allowing vegetation to regrow. Healthy vegetation captures sediments, and adds organic materials to the marsh peat, thus building elevation over time and making the system more resilient to SLR. As part of this project, in the winter/spring of 2024, educational outreach events will be held in MDI communities to talk about these legacy features, and the restoration efforts that are being implemented at a regional scale.



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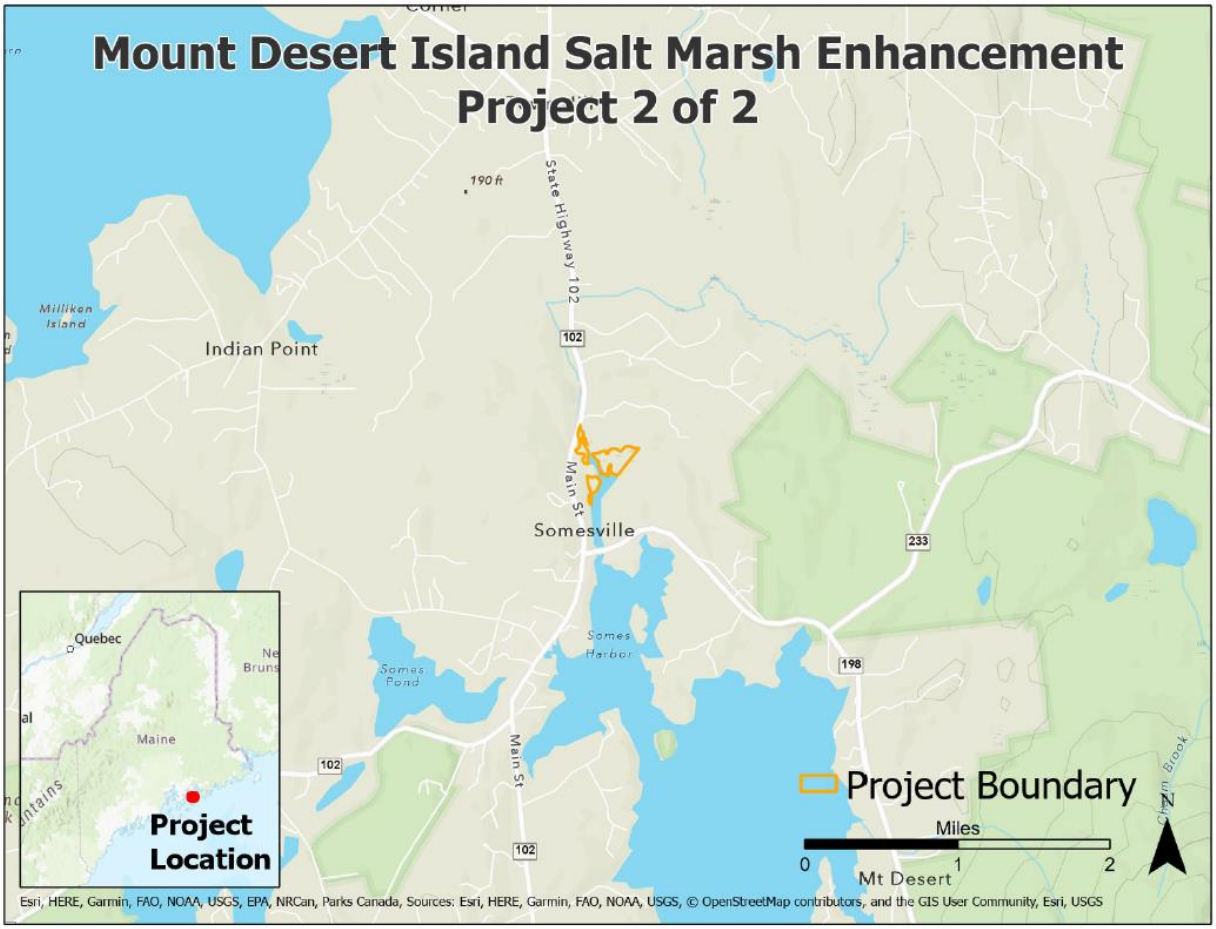


Latitude 44.375099, Longitude -68.328536

Southern Maine Region

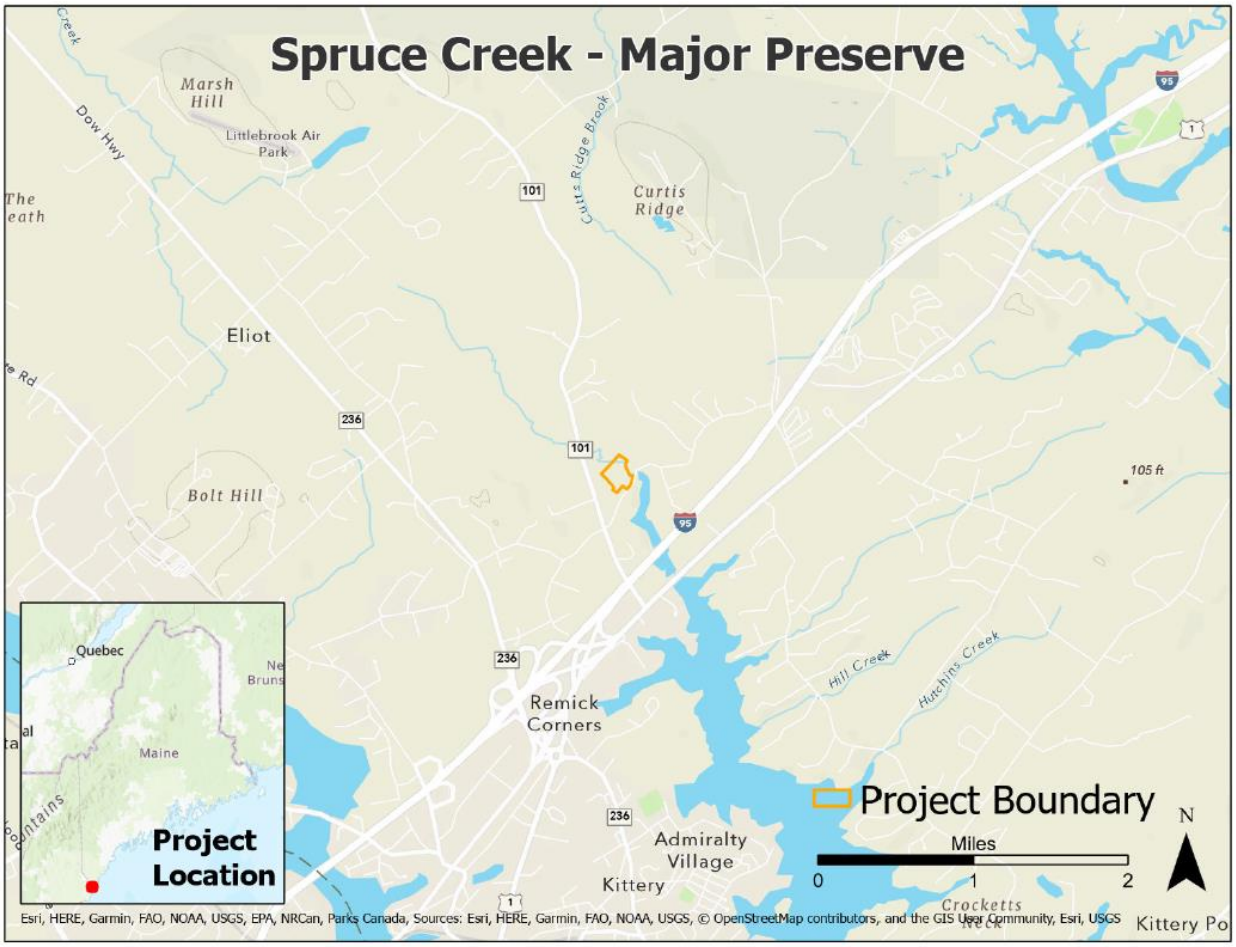
Project: Goosefare Salt Marsh Enhancement

Applicant: US Fish and Wildlife Service
Location: Saco, York County, Latitude 43.493752, Longitude -70.392875

USFWS proposes to enhance 98 acres of salt marsh (high marsh) located to the south side of Goosefare Brook in Saco, Maine. This site is heavily ditched and is experiencing substantial degradation as evidenced by large vegetation die-back areas (aka mega-pools) seen in multiple locations as well as a limited number of Phragmites australis patches. USFWS proposes to enhance this site through the SMARTeams 4-Tiered method of marsh assessment, surface hydrology correction, wildlife habitat improvement and long-term management. USFWS will re-establish single channel hydrology, re-establish vigorous plant growth (thus building elevation), and create microtopography mounds as immediately available high marsh habitat. The physical goals of this enhancement project are to repair marsh ecosystem functionality, increase marsh resiliency to effects of sea-level rise, enable the marsh to be self-sustaining so it can continue to provide ecosystem services into the future, and to create immediately available areas of marsh that are higher in elevation. An important adjunct goal is to provide young adults with increased awareness of the importance of coastal wetlands and hands-on professional training opportunities. By collaborating with the University of New England (UNE), undergraduate interns will conduct field and drone monitoring. Drs. Pam Morgan and Will Kochtitzky (UNE) and Dr. Susan Adamowicz (FWS) will provide supervision and mentorship.

Project: Spruce Creek - Major Preserve
Applicant: Kittery Land Trust, Inc.
Location: Kittery, York County, Latitude 43.119935, Longitude -70.738291

The Kittery Land Trust (KLT) is pleased to submit this proposal for funding land acquisition, buffer enhancements, and associated costs for the proposed "Spruce Creek – Major Reserve." This land represents an opportunity to provide an anchor parcel for preservation along the upper reaches of the estuarian portion of Spruce Creek. KLT will obtain fee simple ownership of the land and manage the property. The proposed ~8-acre acquisition is undeveloped land containing tidal marsh, wet meadow wetland, wooded upland, and upland fields. Historically, the property was operated as a farm. Years of farming the fields has left several ruts in the wet meadow. This meadow has been identified as having topography conducive for salt marsh migration. KLT proposes to enhance the wet meadow by planting a 25' x 200' vegetated buffer along the existing salt marsh edge. A 720-foot tidal section of Spruce Creek flows through the property and the associated marsh is part of a 14-acre spartina saltmarsh. Spruce Creek is a tributary of the Piscataqua River, meeting 2.8 miles downstream of the project. The property has 2.5 acres of Tidal Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat, most of which is salt marsh. The Maine Stream Habitat Viewer map shows Spruce Creek as documented habitat for alewife. Adjacent to part of the salt marsh is mature woodlands at the east and west sides of the property. The Beginning with Habitat maps show New England Cottontail habitat on the land and a group of rare plants and natural communities on the portion of Spruce Creek. The property has a particular quality of climate resiliency, as the site can support significant tidal marsh migration up the gentle slope of the wet meadow at the center of the site, including scenarios as high as a potential 6.1 foot sea level rise. Under a 6.1 foot sea level rise scenario, there is roughly 2 acres of potential marsh migration space, primarily within the field.



Project: Spurwink Marsh Restoration/road removal
Applicant: Town of Cape Elizabeth
Location: Scarborough and Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland County, Latitude 43.590424, Longitude -70.269358

The project will remove 1/4 mile of Sawyer Street located on the surface of Spurwink Marsh, eliminating a tidal restriction and enhancing approximately 63 acres of salt marsh surface. The Sawyer Street culvert, located on the Cape Elizabeth/Scarborough municipal boundary, has been identified as infrastructure vulnerable to sea level rise. At a 2022 joint workshop, both Town Councils agreed to pursue a road removal strategy. Major land abutters are the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Town of Cape Elizabeth, both of which are managing properties for conservation, and can accommodate coastal wetland inland shift (marsh migration). The surface of Sawyer Street sits within 1-2 feet of the marsh surface at high tide. Scour pools and marsh floor subsidence are evident on both sides of the culvert and along the road. Removal of the road and base will directly restore approximately 3/4 acre of marsh. Removal of the tidal restriction will enhance approximately 63 acres of wetland. Additional marsh enhancement work including ditch remediation and runneling will also occur prior to road removal to prepare the marsh for improved tidal flow. The Spurwink Marsh is part of the Scarborough Marsh Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance and includes rare or exemplary natural communities, rare plants and animals (i.e. salt Sharp-Tailed sparrow), significant tidal wading bird and waterfowl, inland wading bird and water fowl habitats.