

For More Information Contact Your NRCS/Conservation District Office

<http://www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov>

Belknap County

64 Court St.
Laconia, NH 03246
(603) 527-5800

Carroll County

73 Main St. / PO Box 533
Conway, NH 03818
(603) 447-2771

Cheshire County

11 Industrial Park Dr.
Walpole, NH 03608
(603) 756-2988

Coos County

4 Mayberry Ln.
Lancaster, NH 03584
(603) 788-4651

Grafton County

19 Archertown Rd., Ste. 1
Orford, NH 03785
(603) 353-4651

Hillsborough County

#468, Route 13
Milford, NH 03055
(603) 673-2409

Merrimack County

10 Ferry St., Box 312
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 223-6023

Rockingham County

110 North Rd.
Brentwood, NH 03833
(603) 679-2790

Strafford County

264 County Farm Rd.
Dover, NH 03820
(603) 749-3037

Sullivan County

95 County Farm Rd.
Unity, NH 03743
(603) 542-4891

NRCS State Office

273 Locust St., Ste. 2D
Dover, NH 03820
(603) 868-7581

Concord Field Service Center

Serving Hillsborough &
Merrimack Counties
10 Ferry St., Ste. 211
Concord, NH 03301
603-223-6023

Conway Field Service Center

Serving Carroll &
Belknap Counties
73 Main St.
Conway, NH 03818
603-447-2771

Epping Field Service Center

Serving Rockingham &
Strafford Counties
629 Calef Hwy, Ste. 203
Epping, NH 03042
603-679-1587

Lancaster Field Service Center

Serving Coos County
4 Mayberry Ln.
Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-4651

Milford Field Service Center

Serving Hillsborough &
Merrimack Counties
468 Rte. 13 South
Milford, NH 03055
603-673-2409

Orford Field Service Center

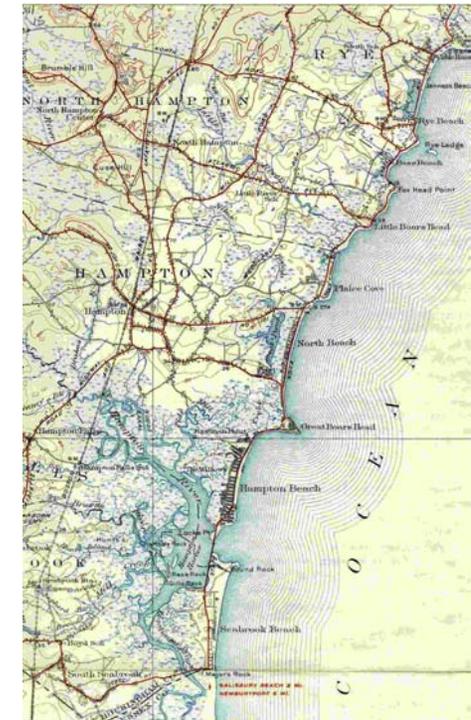
Serving Grafton County
19 Archertown Rd., Ste. 1
Orford, NH 03777

Walpole Field Service Center

Serving Cheshire &
Sullivan Counties
11 Industrial Park Dr.
Walpole, NH 03608
603-756-2988



Let's Restore New Hampshire's Salt Marshes



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What is a salt marsh?

A healthy salt marsh is a complex ecosystem delicately balanced between the marine and terrestrial environments. It appears as a flat, low growing, meadow of lush, salt tolerant, grasses dotted here and there with shallow saline pools called pannes. A system of meandering creeks distributes tidal water throughout a healthy salt marsh. Because they are intimately associated with tidal waters, salt marshes in New Hampshire are only found along the coast and around the Great Bay estuary. There are about 6,200 acres of salt marsh in New Hampshire.

Why are they important?

Healthy salt marshes provide many important values to the residents of New Hampshire's coast. They are habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Some wildlife species such as sharp-tailed sparrows are only found in healthy salt marshes. Salt marshes are major feeding grounds for snowy egrets and great blue herons.

Salt marshes improve the water quality of coastal waters. They are visually attractive and provide open space along the coast. Healthy marshes breed fewer mosquitoes than deteriorating marshes. Unhealthy salt marshes may become overgrown by invasive plants like phragmites and purple loosestrife that have a low value for wildlife.

Why do they need restoration?

Some of our salt marshes have been degraded by human activity. A healthy salt marsh has several requirements the most important being adequate tidal flow. In some places, tidal flow is blocked by roads railroads, and other

restrictions. Many road culverts along the coast were sized to handle upland runoff but are inadequate to allow the twice-daily tidal cycle to bring salt water into the marsh. Tidal flow is the lifeblood of salt marshes.

Restoring Salt Marshes

There are three steps in restoring salt marshes (or any other native ecosystem).

- Understand the ecosystem under natural conditions.
- Understand the human caused stressors that have degraded it.
- Figure out how to relieve the stressors.

NRCS will work with landowners to develop a restoration plan tailored to their specific situation. Participation in these programs is voluntary. Restoration measures include replacement of road culverts and ditching to restore a system of tidal creeks. In some cases, planting of native species and the chemical control of invasive plants is also recommended. Federal and state cost-share programs are available to help landowners restore salt marshes on their property.

Joint Efforts

Many landowners are working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and County Conservation Districts to restore salt marshes on their property. Cooperating in this effort are state, federal and town agencies and non-profit groups. Included are the Conservation Commissions of coastal towns, New Hampshire Coastal Program, Audubon Society of New Hampshire, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Bay Estuarine

Research Reserve, Wells Estuarine Research Reserve, NH Natural Heritage Program, and the University of New Hampshire.

What can you do?

First, learn about the importance of keeping salt marshes healthy. Call one of the offices listed on the back of this brochure. Help educate your neighbors about the importance of salt marshes to the ecology of New Hampshire's coast and the Gulf of Maine.

Second, learn to use the tools available to help you evaluate the potential for restoring salt marshes in your community. These include the "Method for the Evaluation and Inventory of Vegetated Tidal Marshes in New Hampshire," written by Audubon Society of New Hampshire and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Third, volunteer to take an active role in salt marsh evaluation, monitoring, and restoration. Many coastal towns in New Hampshire are getting involved in maintaining the health of our coastal marshes. Over 500 acres of salt marsh are now being restored through the cooperative efforts of Agencies and citizen volunteers.

There are many opportunities for citizens to participate in ongoing restoration and monitoring of salt marshes in New Hampshire. Contact your nearest NRCS and Conservation District office. They will assist you in determining if you have a potential restoration site on your property. They can also offer assistance on restoring other important ecosystems such as Pine Barrens, fresh water wetlands and grasslands.