The Future of Salt Marshes in the Gulf of Maine

All around the Gulf of Maine, initiatives to monitor, manage, and restore salt marshes are gaining momentum. Dozens of habitat restoration projects have been completed and many more are planned and in progress, as recognition of salt marshes’ importance continues to grow. Meanwhile, scientific studies are advancing the understanding of salt marsh ecology and the techniques for restoration and monitoring.

However, regional gaps in information, funding, and cooperation need to be addressed for salt marsh restoration and monitoring to fulfill their potential. Numerous partners, including Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment and NOAA, are working to address these gaps. A major priority is to expand and standardize salt marsh monitoring on a regional scale to:

- Provide baseline information about the region’s salt marshes
- Identify restoration needs and opportunities
- Measure the success of independent restoration projects and regional programs
- Determine whether the overall extent, distribution, and ecological condition of marshes is changing over time
- Reveal the causes and consequences of changes in salt marshes
- Evaluate science-based approaches for ensuring sustained productivity, use, and enjoyment of salt marsh ecosystems

An expansion of salt marsh restoration and long-term change analysis around the Gulf of Maine in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia can help ensure that salt marshes support coastal food webs, fisheries, and water quality into the future.
I. Cited References


II. Other Suggested Reading


Halifax: Ecology Action Centre. 8 p.


www.gulfofmaine.org
Linear drainage ditches are strikingly unnatural against the sinuous pattern of tidal creeks in a Barnstable, Massachusetts, salt marsh.

MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/MassGIS
View of salt marshes and the surrounding seascape in a Massachusetts salt marsh. MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs/MassGIS
Gulf of Maine Council Mission

“To maintain and enhance environmental quality in the Gulf of Maine and to allow for sustainable resource use by existing and future generations.”