

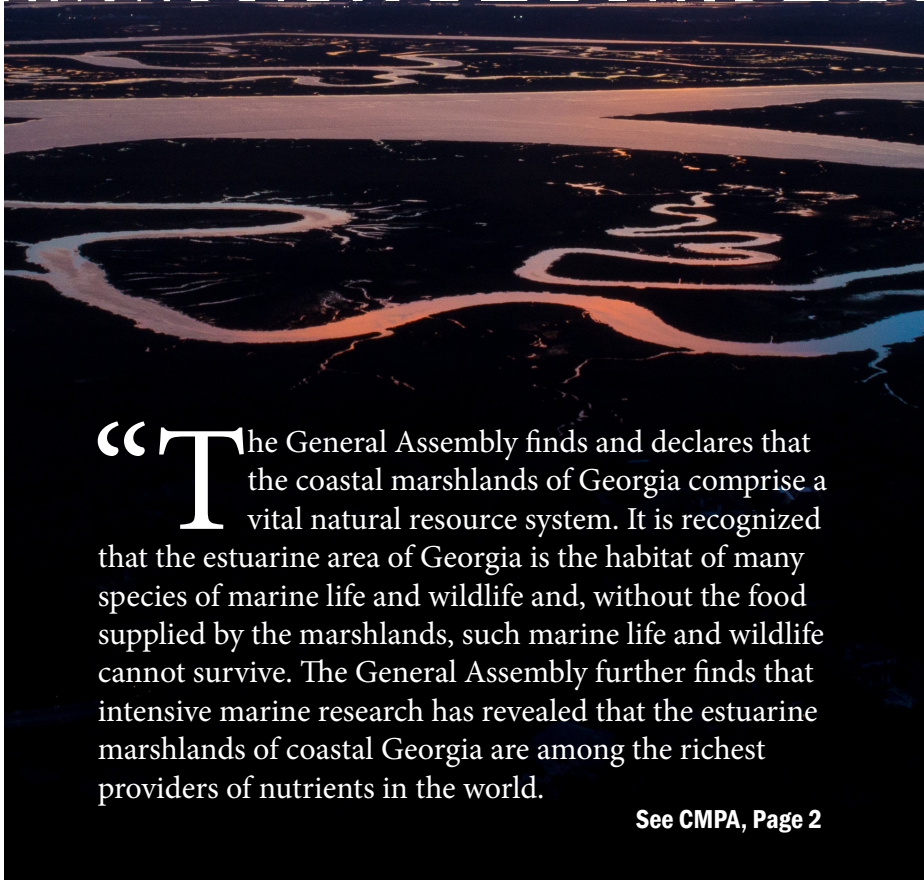
Coastal Current

A newsletter of the Georgia Coastal Management Program

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MARSH ACT TURNS 50



“**T**he General Assembly finds and declares that the coastal marshlands of Georgia comprise a vital natural resource system. It is recognized that the estuarine area of Georgia is the habitat of many species of marine life and wildlife and, without the food supplied by the marshlands, such marine life and wildlife cannot survive. The General Assembly further finds that intensive marine research has revealed that the estuarine marshlands of coastal Georgia are among the richest providers of nutrients in the world.

See CMPA, Page 2

Photo: Ben Galland

Tasciotti takes new position with GCMP

Beth Tasciotti started as the Administrative Assistant for the Marsh and Shore Management Program in March 2017 and transferred



Tasciotti

into the Grants Coordinator position for the Coastal Zone Management Program in January 2020. Beth completed her B.S. in American Studies from the College of Coastal Georgia. She completed two internships with the Coastal Georgia Historical Society and with the Howfyl-Broadfield Plantation State Historic Site. She is currently working on her M.S. in Archival Studies from Clayton State University. Beth was raised in Brazil, having lived there for over 25 years.

Green infrastructure, resiliency project entering final phase

By KELLY HILL/CRD

The Enhancing Coastal Resiliency with Green Infrastructure project is currently in Year 4 of the 5-Year Strategy and Georgia Coastal Management Program is beginning to focus on providing guidance and training on the work completed so far. Partners at the University of Georgia are finalizing a guidance document that will include resilience-based model ordinances as well as overall



Hurricane and storm surge modeling help identify risks of future flooding.

guidance on practices and policies that are available to local governments. The GCMP will also be working with

research partners to host a one-day training on May 4, 2020, for anyone interested in learning about the overall project results and potential next steps. There will also be a technical training held in Darien at the Coastal Regional Commission May 6-8 for participants to learn about the data and resources used in the modeling and Hazus analyses as part of this project. A Save the Date will be sent out in the coming weeks for both of these training opportunities.

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From CMPA

“Such marshlands provide a nursery for commercially and recreationally important species of shellfish and other wildlife, provide a great buffer against flooding and erosion, and help control and disseminate pollutants. Also, it is found that the coastal marshlands provide a natural recreation resource which has become vitally linked to the economy of Georgia’s coastal zone and to that of the entire state. The General Assembly further finds that this coastal marshlands resource system is costly, if not impossible, to reconstruct or rehabilitate once adversely affected by man related activities and is important to conserve for the present and future use and enjoyment of all citizens and visitors to this state. The General Assembly further finds that the coastal marshlands are a vital area of the state and are essential to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of all the citizens of the state. Therefore, the General Assembly declares that the management of the coastal marshlands has more than local significance, is of equal importance to all citizens of the state, is of state-wide concern, and consequently is properly a matter for regulation under the police power of the state. The General Assembly further finds and declares that activities and structures in the coastal marshlands must be regulated to ensure that the values and functions of the coastal marshlands are not impaired and to fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as public trustees of the coastal marshlands for succeeding generations.”

*-Legislative Findings and Declarations
Coastal Marshlands Protection Act
of 1970*



Coastal Current is published by the Georgia Coastal Management Program of the Coastal Resources Division (CRD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

New marine anchorage law takes effect

HB 201 became effective Jan. 1, 2020 and has implications for vessels wanting to anchor at night in Georgia’s estuarine waters as well as limiting waste discharge (treated or untreated) from all liveaboard type vessels. To address requirements in the law Commissioner Williams issued an Administrative Order establishing anchorage areas where vessels are allowed

to anchor at night, including areas that are excluded. For more information on this law and associated established anchorage areas please visit www.coastalGADNR.org/liveboards. This website provides background information, links to O.C.G.A. 52-7-8.4 and the Administrative Order, as well as illustrative maps to help identify anchorage areas and exclusion zones.



Response personnel apply a sphagnum moss-based sorbent to freshly oiled marsh grass. Sphagnum is used in marsh areas to prevent the spread of fresh oil and allow for its natural degradation.

Photo: St. Simons Sound Reponse

Oiled shoreline assessment continues

By JAMIE KING/CRD

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD) continues to monitor for impacts from the M/V Golden Ray Incident. Since October of 2019 releases of fuel and oil into the environment have been minimal and SCAT teams have detected no new oil in marshes or on beaches. To date the SCAT teams have surveyed a total of 190.90 km of shoreline within the St. Simons Sound area including beaches on Jekyll and St. Simons Island.

A total of 9.65 km of vegetated edge shoreline classified by SCAT teams as Heavy or Moderate was sprayed with a biodegradable industrial absorbent manufactured from sphagnum peat moss called Sphag Sorb.

Vegetation was cut and removed from 891 m of marsh edge and shell rakes identified as important habitat for seaside sparrows by DNR. A total of 525m of

shell rake with *Suaeda linearis* was cut as well as 366m of shoreline consisting of *Spartina alterniflora*. This was done in hopes of reducing possibility of birds becoming oiled when utilizing habitat in areas where heavier oiling was observed.

CRD staff have flown the shoreline west of Sidney Lanier bridge with the Department’s Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to establish a baseline vegetation cover and exact marsh edge location.

The Department will repeat this survey seasonally throughout 2020 and possible through 2021 to monitor the area most heavily impacted by the incident for vegetation loss and shoreline erosion.

In addition, CRD has established plots for monitoring vegetation in areas classified as Heavy, Moderate, Light, and No oil observed. These plots will allow the Department to monitor these areas for potential finer scale impacts to vegetation and invertebrate populations from the incident.