



# SCARBOROUGH LAND TRUST

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## **Scarborough Land Trust (SLT) Awarded \$1.4 Million Grant from the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration for Scarborough Marsh Resiliency and Restoration Planning**

*- Grant objectives include developing a pipeline of projects to repair impacts to the Marsh and restore its natural hydrological functions, protect areas for marsh migration and wildlife movement, improve public access, and inform road infrastructure planning to mitigate flooding*

*- SLT will lead a partnership of 15 government offices/agencies and non-profit organizations on implementation*

SCARBOROUGH, MAINE, April 22, 2024 – Scarborough Land Trust (SLT), a private, non-profit, community-based organization conserving land in Scarborough for people and for wildlife, has been awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for resiliency and restoration planning around Scarborough Marsh, Maine’s largest contiguous salt marsh and an ecological area of importance for the region. The grant award was announced today in an Earth Day 2024 event at the Marsh attended by representatives from the White House Office of Science Technology Policy, NOAA, Maine’s US congressional delegation, Maine State government, and the Town of Scarborough.

“Scarborough Marsh is one of Maine’s most significant coastal ecosystems. It represents a crucial habitat for several endangered or threatened animal and plant species, it acts as a nursery for many species of fish and shellfish making it economically important, and its tributaries are vital water sources feeding the Marsh and Saco Bay. Tidal marshes also fulfill important natural functions, helping reduce flood waters and wave impacts, buffer storm surge and minimize erosion,” said Steve Pinette, a hydrogeologist, Scarborough Land Trust Board Member, and former President of Friends of Scarborough Marsh (which merged with SLT in December 2023). “Climate-linked sea level rise and flooding are presenting an urgent threat to life, human and otherwise, as well as property and infrastructure around Scarborough Marsh. Given the impacts of storms and high tides in the region this past winter, this grant represents a timely and compelling opportunity to create a framework of information and projects to help improve the health and resilience of the Marsh for the benefit of its inhabitants and the surrounding communities.”

SLT will lead the collaborative effort that brings together 10 federal and state offices/agencies and 5 non-profit organizations to implement the grant. These partners have collectively committed an additional \$2.5 million to help fund the project:

- Scarborough Land Trust (project manager)
- NOAA Office for Coastal Management (project funder)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Gulf of Maine Program and Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program



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- Maine Coastal Program/Maine Department of Marine Resources
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Maine Geological Survey/Maine Natural Areas Program
- Maine Department of Transportation
- Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future
- Town of Scarborough
- Maine Audubon
- Eastern Trail Alliance
- Ducks Unlimited
- Maine Chapter of the Nature Conservancy
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust

The objectives of the three-year grant are multifold and aim to establish a framework of information, projects, partnership, and future investment that can have a positive impact on the Marsh and surrounding area for years to come:

- Develop a pipeline of restoration projects that repair impacts from historical practices of utilizing the Marsh for agriculture, transportation, and other uses; the goal is to restore the Marsh's natural hydrological functions.
- Help inform road infrastructure planning around Scarborough Marsh to ensure that projects have access to the best available scientific information and management practices.
- Develop a pipeline of conservation projects with a focus on improving public access and protecting areas to allow for marsh migration and wildlife movement.
- Transform how Maine state agencies, municipalities, stakeholders, nonprofits, and federal agencies partner to achieve consensus on multi-objective climate-driven resiliency projects.
- Create learning experiences for a wide variety of audiences, including those with limited access to nature and coastal ecosystems.

“We applied to NOAA for this grant because protecting and preserving Scarborough Marsh as a natural, recreational and economic resource for area residents and the region is a key priority for Scarborough Land Trust. We are proud to lead this group initiative to help solve complex problems like these in an innovative way—here in Scarborough and perhaps beyond. The grant enables us to bring together coastal ecology specialists with local government and transportation professionals to focus on the health of the Marsh, which is linked to the health of our community, its residents and their quality of life,” said Andrew Mackie, Executive Director of Scarborough Land Trust, which will manage the project. “Our hope is that these collective efforts will help improve and restore habitats for fish and wildlife, increase public access to trails and waterways, and mitigate flooding along critical roads surrounding Scarborough Marsh. The exceptional commitment and expertise represented across our



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partner agencies and organizations is exciting and we look forward to kicking off this project during the second half of the year.”

## **About Scarborough Land Trust**

The Scarborough Land Trust (SLT) is a private, non-profit, community-based organization conserving land in Scarborough for people, for wildlife—forever. Originating in 1977, SLT focuses on preserving lands where natural and agricultural resources, scenic vistas, public access, wildlife habitat, and historical significance offer unique value to the community. With community support, SLT has conserved over 1,600 acres to date, including lands along the Scarborough Marsh, the land and viewshed of the Winslow Homer Studio on Prouts Neck, the landmark 434-acre Broadturn Farm in western Scarborough, the 313-acre Warren Woods Preserve in the heart of Scarborough, and seven additional public preserves with trails and parking. Beyond land conservation, SLT’s mission includes stewardship and restoration of its properties and connecting people to these lands via educational and recreational programs and volunteer opportunities.

Protecting and preserving Scarborough Marsh and the surrounding lands and watershed is a strategic priority for the region and SLT, with an expanded focus following SLT’s merger with Friends of Scarborough Marsh in December of 2023.

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## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Andrew Mackie  
Executive Director  
Scarborough Land Trust  
[amackie@scarboroughlandtrust.org](mailto:amackie@scarboroughlandtrust.org)  
M: (719) 221-6200