

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



INTRODUCTION

About us

The Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance (SHEA), a New Hampshire non-profit corporation, formed in 2013 to protect the coastal and aquatic resources and preserve the Hampton-Seabrook estuarine system through education, community outreach, and research.

Our Mission

We are dedicated to preserving, restoring, and championing the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary and its watershed's health and social functions to support a thriving and diverse habitat, enhance water quality, mitigate flood risks, and offer sustainable recreational and commercial opportunities.

Our Vision

The Hampton-Seabrook Estuary thrives as a nursery and haven, hosting diverse ecosystems that support healthy populations of fish, shellfish, birds, plants, and native species. Surrounding communities embrace its aesthetic, recreational, and economic benefits, recognizing the interconnected habitats, litter-free beaches, and clean waters as the foundation of their identity.

With responsible development, we safeguard both natural resources and infrastructure, enabling the estuary and its watershed to naturally adapt to the challenges of climate change, including groundwater and sea level rise, coastal storm surges, and flooding. Our vision is a sustainable coexistence where residents, visitors, and local governments respect and enjoy the enduring vitality of this precious ecosystem.



MEET OUR TEAM



**Jay
Diener**
President



**Deborah
Wrobel**
Vice President



**Shawn
Hanson**
Treasurer



**Grace
McCulloch**
Secretary



**Matthew
Cranney**
Board Member



**Steve
Miller**
Board Member



**Kaitlin
Van Volkom**
Board Member



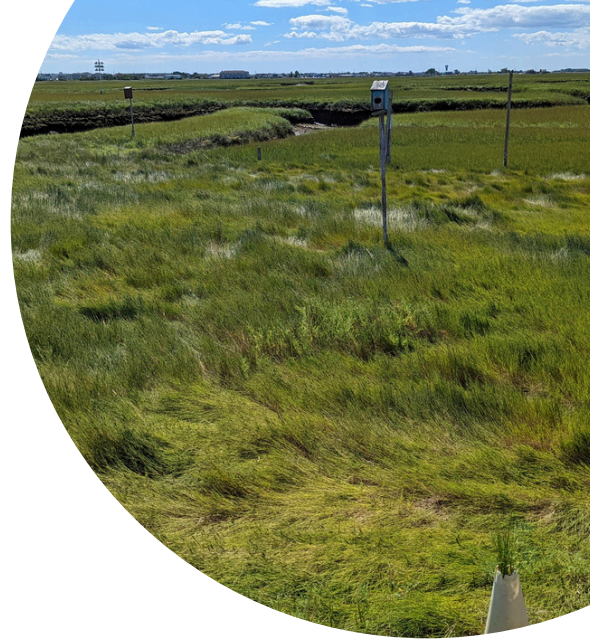
**Rayann
Dionne**
*Executive
Director - Project
Lead*



**Sara
Gagnon**
*Coastal
Conservation
Coordinator*

OVERVIEW

2024 was a notable year for SHEA on a number of fronts: Funding was approved for our \$1.4 million Congressionally-Directed Spending proposal that was submitted through NH Senator Jeanne Shaheen's office in 2023; Work continued on a Project of Special Merit awarded through the NH Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program, through which SHEA created and filled a position for a Coastal Conservation Coordinator in January; SHEA partnered with the Rockingham Planning Commission and NH Sea Grant on a NH DES Coastal Resilience Grant to begin to assess the sand dune walkovers in Seabrook; Funding from the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) enabled SHEA to continue to support the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative; and a NH DES Coastal Program Technical Assistance Grant supported a variety of educational and public outreach programs, as well as Hampton's Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team. The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) worked with SHEA to complete a report on the projected economic impacts of sea level rise in Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls in 2050.



Key Accomplishments

- Pursuing New Funding Opportunities: SHEA sought new funding and grant opportunities to support its ongoing and future initiatives.
- Community Outreach and Education:
 - Engaged Seabrook Middle School in estuary-related outreach and education programs, including continuing explorations of the salt marsh for 6th grade students, and piloting a "Lunch With A Scientist" program for 7th and 8th grade students.
 - Supported the field assessment of Seabrook's dune walkovers with a series of public workshops.
- Event Highlights: Hosted an Emergency Preparedness workshop with Emergency Management Directors from Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls.
- Partnership with NOAA: Collaborated with NOAA to develop an Economic Forecast, completed in 2024, that assessed the potential economic impacts of sea level rise in Seabrook, Hampton, and Hampton Falls. Began a series of presentations of the report's findings to municipal boards and at the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup's 2024 Climate Summit.
- Expanding Outreach: Partnered with the Seacoast Science Center to host 3 sold-out kayak tours of the estuary to increase public engagement and awareness of salt marsh ecosystems.

Organization Growth

SHEA's increased its capacity with the addition of a grant-funded Coastal Conservation Coordinator, supported by a Project of Special Merit from NHDES. This is a newly-created position, designed to help SHEA support the conservation commissions of the towns surrounding the Estuary. The Coordinator was hired at the end of 2023 and began work in 2024. Notable accomplishments included helping the Hampton Falls Conservation Commission successfully apply for grant funding to create a Natural Resource Inventory, and initiating work to create a Conservation Land Strategy with the Hampton Conservation Commission

SHEA added Grace McCulloch, Steve Miller, and Kaitlin Van Volkom as new members of the organization's Board of Directors. All three bring unique skills and experiences.

SHEA remains committed to advancing estuary conservation and resilience through collaboration, education, and proactive management.



OUTREACH, PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

In 2024, SHEA hosted variety of estuary-related presentations, educational programs, and community-involvement events to broaden people's knowledge and understanding about the estuary.

Flood & Emergency Preparedness Workshop

In March, over 60 people came to hear from the Emergency Management directors from Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls about various storm safety issues.



Piping Plover Webinar

On April 2, NH Fish & Game Biologist Brendan Clifford spoke about Piping Plovers, their habits and habitats, and the protections in place for them and answered questions about this endangered species



Lunch With A Scientist

SHEA established this program for 7th and 8th grade students at Seabrook Middle School. Local professionals and graduate students in diverse environmental fields shared pizza with small groups of students and discussed what interested them about their chosen professions, and what their learning and career paths have been. There were robust conversations at each session.



OUTREACH, PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

continued

Seabrook Dune Walkover Workshops

On May 1 and October 24, SHEA, the Rockingham Planning Commission, and NH Sea Grant hosted public workshops to provide updates about the ongoing assessments of Seabrook's municipal dune walkovers. The presentations included information about the condition of the walkovers and the vegetation that helps stabilize the dunes.

Estuary Kayak Tours

Three sold-out Salt Marsh Kayak Tours were held in the Summer and early Fall, in partnership with the Seacoast Science Center, and with funding support from Kennebunk Savings Bank.

Salt Marsh Sparrow Webinar

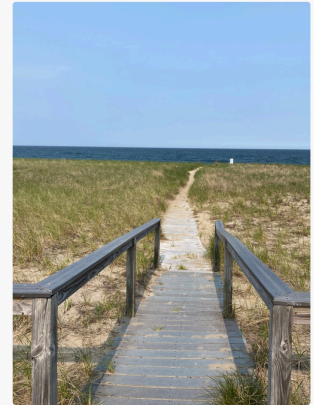
On September 26, Grace McCulloch, a graduate student at UNH, discussed her research into developing tools to prioritize salt marsh conservation efforts to protect these song birds that rely on the salt marsh for their survival.

Salt Marsh Vegetation Investigation

In October, SHEA conducted a program for Seabrook Middle School 6th grade students in the salt marsh behind their school to help them learn the vegetation differences in low marsh, high marsh, and uplands.

CAW Climate Summit

At this regional Climate Summit, SHEA presented a brief overview of its report on the projected economic impacts of sea level rise in three coastal communities in 2050.



GRANTS



NHDES Coastal Program Technical Assistance

SHEA continued work funded by a \$15,000 Technical Assistance Grant to complete a variety of public outreach, educational, and research activities. This 12-month grant ended June 30, 2024, and a new Technical Assistance Grant was awarded to begin on July 1, 2024. This grant is provided by National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act, in conjunction with the NHDES Coastal Program.

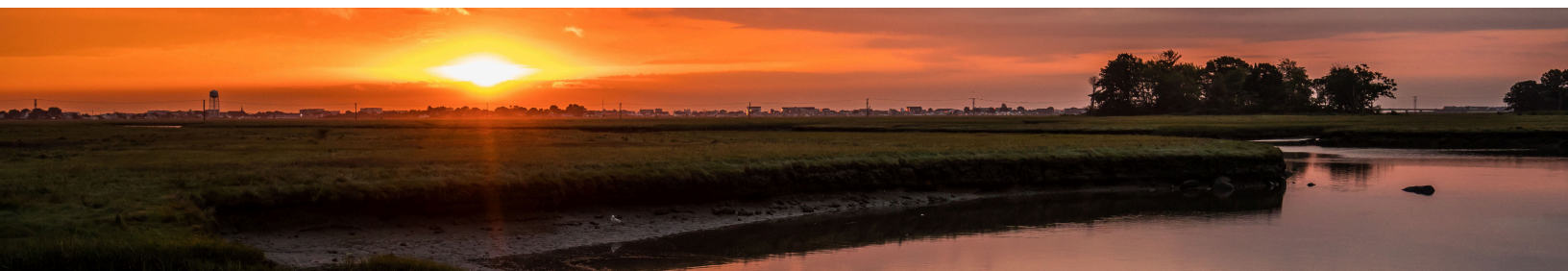
Key activities in 2024 included:

- Participating in the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW).
- Supporting the Hampton Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) with administrative, technical, and meeting assistance.
- Hosting public outreach events, workshops, and webinars.
- Collaborating with UNH Cooperative Extension and NH SeaGrant on programs for Seabrook Middle School, including a saltmarsh field study for 6th graders in October.
- Continuing the "Lunch With A Scientist" program for 7th and 8th grade students at Seabrook Middle School.
- Supporting updates and progress on the Estuary Management Plan.
- Updating the 2020 Conservation Land Projects using new high-resolution tidal wetlands maps, with all projects either completed or significantly advanced.



Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

In 2023, SHEA was awarded \$30,000 from PREP for each year through 2027. These funds will support the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative (HSEC) Coordinator position, as well as the SHEA Executive Director for projects related to the implementation of SHEA's Estuary Management Plan.



GRANTS



NHDES Program of Special Merit

Awarded in 2023, this grant funded a newly-created position of Coastal Conservation Coordinator. The position was filled in January, 2024, and is funded through March, 2025. The Coordinator works with the Conservation Commissions in Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls to provide additional capacity to achieve a variety of conservation-focused goals.



NOAA - Congressional Direct Spending Grant

Early in 2023, SHEA submitted a \$1.4 million, 3-year Congressional Direct Spending Grant proposal through the office of Senator Shaheen of New Hampshire. Later that year the U.S. Senate voted to add the proposal to the next year's federal budget. In the Spring of 2024, a Continuing Resolution that included the proposal was approved by Congress, thus approving the funding for SHEA's project. The proposal was then sent to NOAA for formal contracting and oversight of the programs. The proposal includes work to create a baseline report on the health of the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary; developing a long-term monitoring program based on the baseline report; establishing and managing a small grant program focused on implementation of the Action Steps in the Estuary Management Plan; converting the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative Coordinator position from part time to full time; and converting the Coastal Conservation Coordinator position from part time to full time. It is anticipated that this funding for these projects will be available early in 2025. The grant will then run until early in 2028.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

HAMPTON



The Hampton Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT), formed in January 2019, continued to meet throughout 2024. The group of municipal and residential representatives is charged with researching and identifying potential adaptation strategies for the Town to consider as it attempts to cope with and adapt to increasing tidal and storm-surge flooding.

CHAT's Key Focus Areas

- Improve coordination of flood hazard management and adaptation efforts in Hampton.
- Investigate, analyze, and prioritize flood management and adaptation strategies and present recommendations to Hampton's municipal boards and commissions for consideration.
- Inform residents about the flood hazard management and adaptation options the Town is considering and gather community input.
- Offer educational and public outreach opportunities on flood hazard management and adaptation strategies.

Throughout 2024, CHAT continued to advance the draft recommendations developed in 2020, by refining, presenting, and promoting these adaptation strategies for dealing with the impacts of sea level rise. Some areas of involvement included supporting an implementation committee for Hampton's Master Plan; reviewing ordinances/warrant articles to address resilience; Flood Ready Neighborhoods; Kings Highway drainage; water quality issues of floodwaters; surveying homeowners in high flood areas (Voluntary Elevation and Property Acquisition Survey). CHAT meeting notes, member updates and announcements are posted on SHEA's website.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

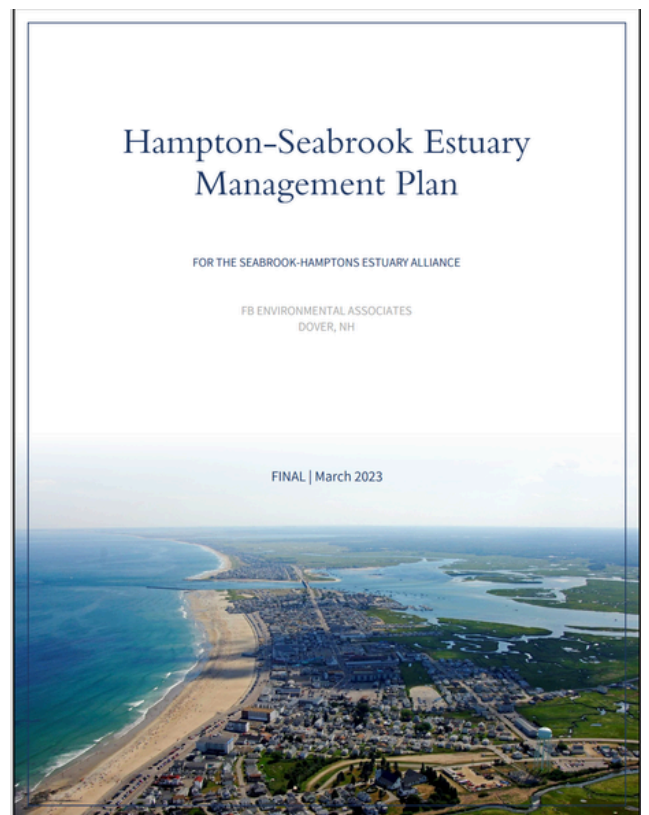
Seabrook Dune Walkway Assessment

In 2023, the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) and SHEA were awarded a Coastal Resilience Grant to evaluate Seabrook's dune walkovers, as beach access and dunes are key areas of concern. They looked at 19 public walkways to evaluate current conditions and considered ways to improve and support dune structures. The project included a public survey regarding usage and concerns about the walkways, and several public workshops to discuss the status and early findings of the evaluations. A final report will be delivered in 2025.



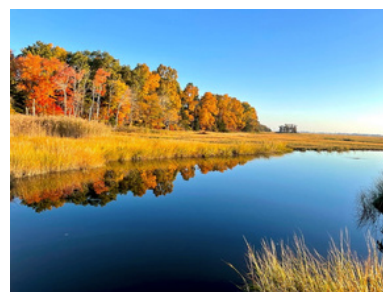
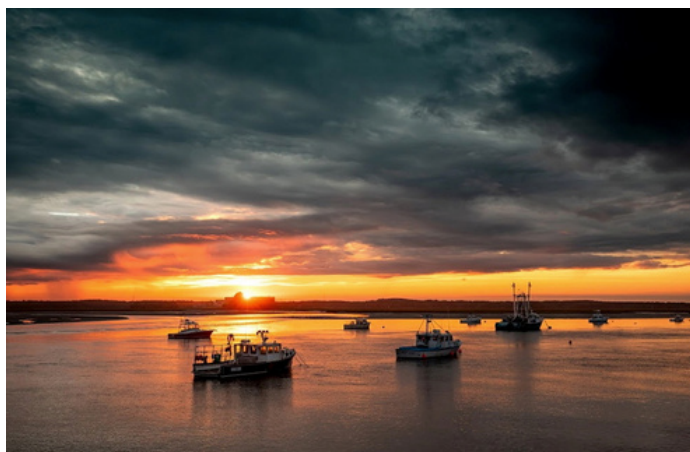
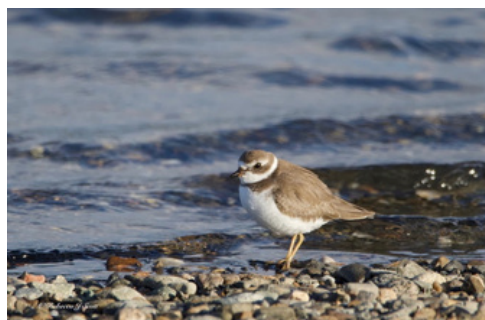
Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Management Plan

Consultants FB Environmental completed the Estuary Management Plan (EMP) in early 2023. Similar to a Master Plan, the EMP provides guidance for all three of the towns (Hampton, Seabrook, Hampton Falls) bordering the estuary on ways to protect and preserve the estuary while still providing for various commercial and recreational uses. The EMP is also a guiding document for SHEA. The SHEA Board has worked to prioritize the 150 Action Steps in the EMP, designating 17 Action Steps as High Priority, 6 as Medium Priority, and 7 as Low Priority. SHEA has been working with municipal, state, and non-profit partners to address those Action Steps. In the Fall of 2024, SHEA contracted with an independent planner to conduct an audit of the current land use ordinances in the surrounding town as compared to the recommendations in the EMP. That audit will be completed in 2025.



NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK

The SHEA National Estuaries Week Photo Contest is held over National Estuaries Week every September. SHEA accepted and selected winning photos of the estuary in several different categories. Winners in each category received cash awards. Funding for the National Estuaries Photo Contest winners comes from the Hampton, Hampton Falls, and Seabrook Conservation Commissions. The winning photos are featured on the SHEA website and in promotional materials. Many excellent photographs were submitted in 2024; shared below are some of the winning photos. National Estuaries Week outreach included holding a Children's Estuary Coloring Contest, hosted by local libraries in Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls. SHEA was impressed by the entrants' exceptional use of color!



Photos - Top: Karen Carrara, Bonnie Turek, Rebecca Scott. Center: Matt Parker, Karen Carrara. Bottom: Becky Nolan, Bonnie Turek

Key Estuary Partnerships

Members of the SHEA Board and SHEA's Executive Director regularly attend meetings with a wide range of local, State, and Federal partners to advance estuary-related projects and proposals, including the Conservation Commissions and Planning Boards in Hampton, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls, the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup, the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative, the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Hampton-Seabrook Estuary (HSE) Collaborative

The Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Collaborative, a group of federal, state, and local entities that have a shared focus of improving the long-term health and vitality of the Estuary and its communities, continued to meet throughout 2024. SHEA participates as a member of the Steering Committee of the Collaborative. The Steering Committee helps plan Collaborative meetings and provides direction for the Collaborative.

In 2024, funding for a Short-Term Coordinator for the Collaborative continued to be provided by NOAA through NERACOOS (Northeastern Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems) and by the US Fish and Wildlife through the Wildlife Management Institute.

The Collaborative convened regularly to discuss ongoing and planned projects, consider project partnerships, and discuss ways the Collaborative could take advantage of upcoming project funding opportunities.

- Articulate the value of a landscape-scale approach to coastal ecosystem and community resilience.
- Coordinate and align resources and activities to more effectively provide the science and data to help communities understand, manage, and protect the Estuary.
- Explore near-term opportunities for collaboration that aim to ensure these efforts are mutually supportive, contribute to commonly shared goals for the Estuary, and set the stage for longer-term, more robust monitoring, adaptive management, and restoration.

The partnership includes NOAA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Fish & Wildlife, NHDES, PREP, the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (GBNERR), the Army Corps of Engineers, and SHEA. With funding provided by the EPA, PREP, and NextEra, a consultant was brought in to help focus and coordinate the efforts of the collaborative.

NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) and Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) Staff Meetings

SHEA participates in the NH Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW), as well as regular Staff and partner update meetings of the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership

Financial Information 2024

SHEA received \$99,480 in grants and donations in 2024. Operating expenses, including contractual obligations, employee wages, contest prizes, speaker fees, supplies, and administrative charges totaled \$95,317.

Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance Quarterly Financial Report January - December 2024

	Jan - Mar, 2024	Apr - Jun, 2024	Jul - Sep, 2024	Oct - Dec, 2024	Total
SHEA Checking Account					
Beginning Balance	\$8,228.89	\$8,068.51	\$7,773.43	\$15,249.09	--
Ending Balance	\$8,068.51	\$7,773.43	\$15,249.09	\$11,992.52	--
Non-Profit Revenue					
Fundraising/Donation					
Donations/Awards	500.00		5,000.00	200.00	5,700.00
Ocean Gaming Proceeds		6,395.71	8,090.31		14,486.02
SHEA Merchandise		97.30	77.72		175.02
Total Fundraising/Donation	\$500.00	\$6,493.01	\$13,168.03	\$200.00	\$20,361.04
Grant Reimbursement					
NERACOOS	4,229.00	3,111.00			7,340.00
NHDES Project of Special Merit 2023-2024	6,621.42	11,524.42	4,142.67	13,399.50	35,688.01
NHDES TA Grant - 2023-2024	3,477.00	4,190.46	7,309.02		14,976.48
NHDES TA Grant 2024-2025				5,079.13	5,079.13
Rockingham Planning Commission - CRG 2024-2025		937.92		3,358.56	4,296.48
UNH/PREP BIL 2023-2027	4,198.42	2,206.18		5,334.96	11,739.56
Total Grant Reimbursement	\$18,525.84	\$21,969.98	\$11,451.69	\$27,172.15	\$79,119.66
Total Revenue	\$19,025.84	\$28,462.99	\$24,619.72	\$27,372.15	\$99,480.70
Expenditures					
Contest Prizes				300.00	300.00
Contractors	7,225.00	7,070.00	2,672.50	7,865.00	24,832.50
Gaming Rental Fee		1,400.00			1,400.00
Insurance	252.00	528.00			780.00
Job Supplies				75.00	75.00
Legal & Professional Services	325.00			438.75	763.75
Office Supplies & Software	905.47	315.45	426.74	369.26	2,016.92
Other Business Expenses	57.99		40.80		98.79
Membership Fees		50.00	135.00		185.00
Website Dev/Maintenance		3,876.00	84.00		3,960.00
Workshop/Training Registration		84.00	240.00		324.00
Total Other Business Expenses	\$57.99	\$4,010.00	\$499.80	\$0.00	\$4,567.79
Total Payroll Expenses	\$10,210.55	\$14,576.92	\$13,224.46	\$21,086.15	\$59,098.08
Reimbursable Expenses	157.20	346.40	320.56	363.87	1,188.03
Taxes & Licenses		75.00			75.00
Workshop/Outreach Event Food	53.01	36.41		130.69	220.11
Total Expenditures	\$19,186.22	\$28,358.18	\$17,144.06	\$30,628.72	\$95,317.18

