
Town of Kiawah Island

Kiawah Island Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan

Kiawah Island, South Carolina



Growing and emerging threats – sea-level rise, erosion, deteriorating water quality, irresponsible development, and benign neglect – require a comprehensive marsh management plan to ensure the long-term resiliency of Kiawah Island’s marshes.

Services

Climate Change
Conservation Planning

Bioregion

Southeast Atlantic

Watershed

Kiawah River/Atlantic Ocean

Physiographic Provenance

Southern Coastal Plain

Kiawah Island is a barrier island located just south of Charleston, South Carolina. One of Kiawah Island’s largest natural resources is its salt marsh, and approximately 34 percent of island consists of marshland. In addition to providing wildlife habitat, natural beauty, and recreation opportunities, the salt marsh provides critical protection from erosion by reducing wave action and storm surges. Negative impacts on the salt marsh from rising sea levels, erosion, or irresponsible development may reduce its effectiveness at protecting higher lands. The loss of critical salt marsh would have significant impacts on undeveloped portions of the island including maritime forest habitat. Recognizing the important role that these back-of-the-island marshes play in coastal resiliency, the Town of Kiawah Island selected the Biohabitats team, including Elko Coastal Consulting, to prepare a Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan (MMP). The MMP serves as a guide to encourage and establish local development practices, Town ordinances, policies, and capital improvement projects that enhance the quality of life on Kiawah Island and sustain its critical resources for generations.