

Delmarva-based conservation partnership award \$1.5 million grant

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CAMBRIDGE — Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and its project partners have been awarded with a North American Wetland Conservation Act grant to support phase one of the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Resilience project, which will focus on protecting land within highly resilient marsh migration areas of Dorchester County.

ESLC's project partners include The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Ducks Unlimited, MD Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape Resilience phase one will ultimately protect over 2,250 acres of land in the region, including over 850 acres of declining wetland habitat. Protection of these habitats is key for the movement of wildlife species in the region, including waterfowl, Delmarva Fox Squirrel, and endangered species, such as the Saltmarsh Sparrow.

Match funding for all transactions under this grant will be provided through the U.S. Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Challenge program. The REPI Challenge program is designed to promote land conservation or

management activities that limit incompatible development in the vicinity of DoD installations and ranges, maintain or improve military installation resilience, or relieve current or anticipated environmental restrictions in support of key capabilities identified in the National Defense Strategy.

In 2020, TNC partnered with the U.S. Navy to secure a \$3 million grant from the REPI Challenge program. TNC's project focused on increasing coastal resilience within the Middle Chesapeake Sentinel Landscape through protection of 4,000+ acres of marsh migration zones on Maryland's Eastern Shore. ESLC, TCF, and TNC have teamed up to leverage these two awards to maximize the impact of the awards for the region.

The NAWCA program was established in 1989 to increase bird populations and wetland habitat, while supporting local economies and American traditions such as hunting, fishing, bird watching, family farming, and cattle ranching. Wetlands protected by NAWCA provide valuable benefits such as flood control, reducing coastal erosion, improving water and air quality, and recharging ground water.

For more information, contact David Satterfield, land program manager with ESLC, at dsatterfield@eslc.org, or visit www.eslc.org.