



Homes near the water in South Bowers Beach, Delaware © John Hinkson / TNC

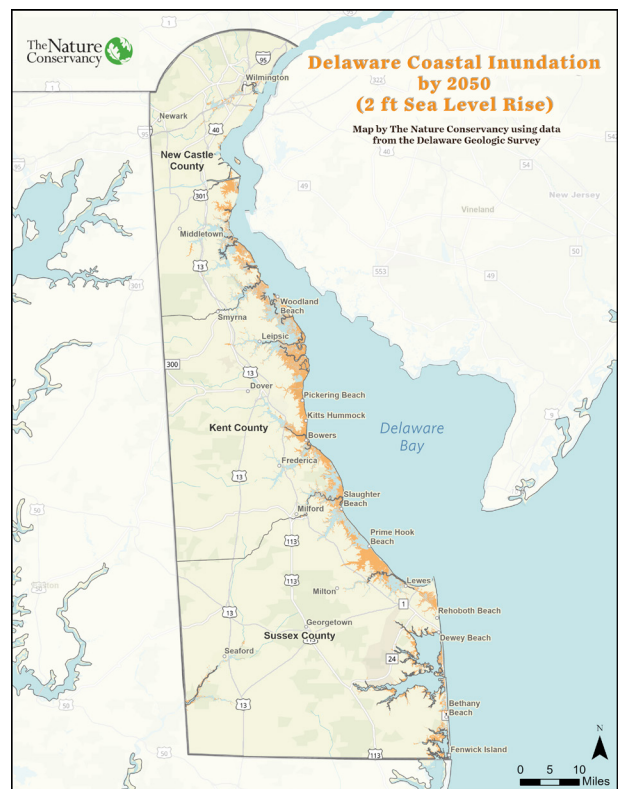
A Coastal Resiliency Roadmap for the Delaware Bayshore

TNC and its partners are aiding climate adaptation in the First State

Delaware's coastal ecosystems face an existential threat in the form of sea level rise accelerated by climate change. In addition to being home to many residents, the Bayshore supports more than 50,000 acres of coastal wetlands, most of which are located within Kent and Sussex counties. These wetlands provide critical habitat for important species including red knots, horseshoe crabs and other migratory shorebirds.

Will Helt, TNC's Director of Oceans and Coasts in Delaware, has spent the past two years working with partners to develop the first-ever Delaware Bayshore Roadmap. This guidance document, set to be released in late 2024, identifies nature-based strategies to increase the resilience of coastal ecosystems and vulnerable human communities, as well as uncover shared funding opportunities and capacity needs.

“The roadmap is a living conservation document designed to spur engagement, build capacity and drive support for these vital communities,” says Helt. “We are proud to work alongside a coalition that is committed to thinking locally and regionally in order to implement coastal resiliency projects at scale.” *(continued, over)*



A map showing projected coastal inundation in Delaware by 2050 © TNC

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An aerial view of TNC's Milford Neck Preserve in Delaware © John Hinkson / TNC

(continued from front) In order to fine-tune the roadmap and hear recommendations, TNC co-hosted a series of partner workshops throughout 2023-2024 with representation from 12 different federal, state and local agency and NGO partners. The sessions identified key recommendations and strategies to pursue, including the need to restore tidal wetlands that have faced decades of alteration; to work with Delaware's farmers as saltwater impacts croplands; and to enact policies that channel new developments away from areas at higher risk of flooding due to climate change.

The roadmap supports and advances TNC's policy work in Delaware, which advocates for additional conservation lands, new agricultural easement strategies and restoring critical habitats for fish, birds and other wildlife.

While the long-term success of the Bayshore roadmap will be measured by healthy, productive coastal ecosystems, short-term success will be determined by bringing local residents—including underserved communities—to the table.

“TNC recognizes that conservation success depends on the active involvement of people and partners whose lives and livelihoods are linked to the natural systems we seek to conserve and restore,” says Helt. “We’re pursuing solutions that help both people and nature.”

Learn more about the Delaware Bayshore Roadmap and TNC's Oceans and Coasts program in Delaware by visiting nature.org/Delaware.



A waterbird in southern Delaware © Deb Felmeij

PENNSYLVANIA DELAWARE



A farm in Pennsylvania © Nicholas Tonelli

Agroforestry program launches nationwide

TNC and its partners recently launched a five-year project to create 30,000 acres of new agroforestry plantings in 30 states, thereby creating a nationwide model to spur the adoption of agroforestry practices on tens of millions of acres of U.S. farmlands.

Agroforestry is a practice that integrates trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems while maintaining profitable farming operations. Increasing agroforestry practices will mitigate climate change (U.S. agriculture is responsible for 10 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions) and improve water quality to restore biodiversity in local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

Lucas Bolno, TNC's newly hired agroforester, will work in the Chesapeake Bay Basin alongside farmers and partners including Virginia Tech to increase the adoption of agroforestry practices.

Learn more about this work by visiting nature.org/ExpandingAgroforestry.