



U.S. DEPARTMENT  
OF THE INTERIOR  
INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



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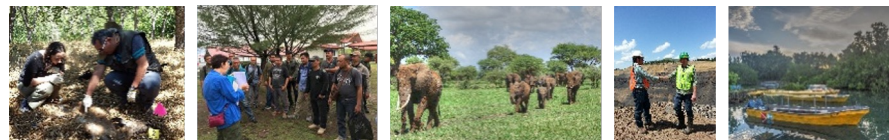
# REGIONAL FLYWAY INITIATIVE TRAINING SERIES: From Wetland Ecosystem Services to Nature-based Solutions

ADB HQ on 27–30 June 2023





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INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



# Wetlands & Ecosystem Services: Opportunities & Applications

**Dr. Ariana Sutton-Grier**  
**DOI International Technical Assistance Program &**  
**US Geological Survey**  
Land Change Science/Climate R&D Program Coordinator



# Definition of a Wetland

- 3 key features define a wetland (Mitch et al. Wetlands 6<sup>th</sup> Edition):
  - Presence of standing water during some or all of the growing season
  - Unique soils (hydric soils) which only form under saturated conditions
  - Vegetation adapted to wet conditions (facultative or obligate wetland plants)



<https://theworld.org/stories/2013-11-29/saved-mangroves-philippine-town-dodges-haiyans-storm-surge>



# What makes wetlands unique?

- “Kidneys of the landscape”
- Downstream receivers of water and waste from both natural and human sources
- Settle sediment, transform nutrients  
☐ clean the water



Agusan Marsh; <https://www.silverkris.com/inspiration/nature-adventure/outdoors/agusan-marsh/>



# What makes wetlands unique?

- “Nature’s supermarket”
- Extensive food chain and rich biodiversity they support



Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary; <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ramsar-wetlands-of-philippines-importance-in-wetland-conservation.html>



# What makes wetlands unique?

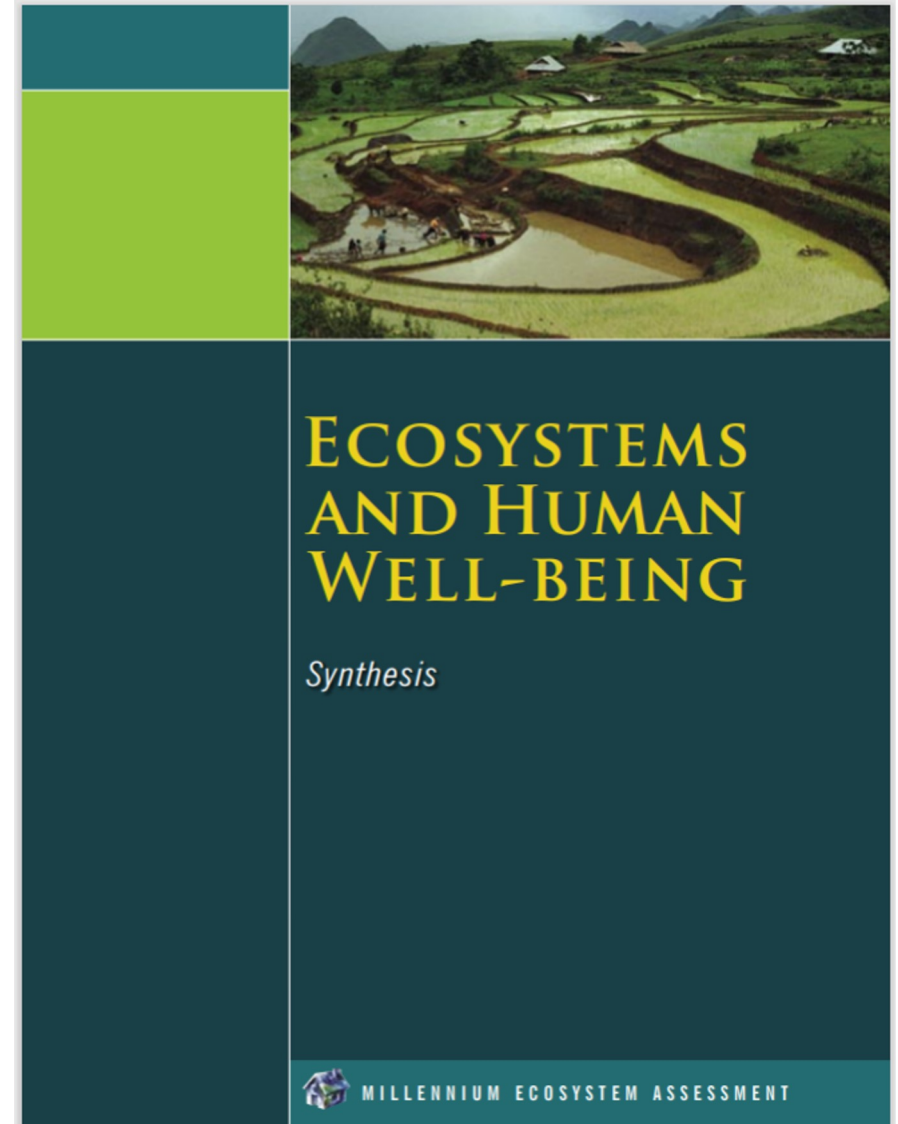
- Not isolated systems
- Interact strongly with adjacent terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems
- Flood control
- Drought mitigation
- Carbon storage



Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetlands; <https://www.goodnewspilipinas.com/pampangas-sasmuan-wetland-is-new-ramsar-site-of-international-importance/>

# What are Ecosystem Services?

- The benefits humans get from nature
- Food, clean water, flood risk reduction, carbon sequestration
- Term was made popular in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005)
- 4 categories of services
  - Supporting (e.g., primary production, nutrient cycling)
  - Provisioning (e.g., Food, water, fuel)
  - Regulating (e.g., climate, flood, water purification)
  - Cultural (aesthetic, recreational, spiritual, educational)



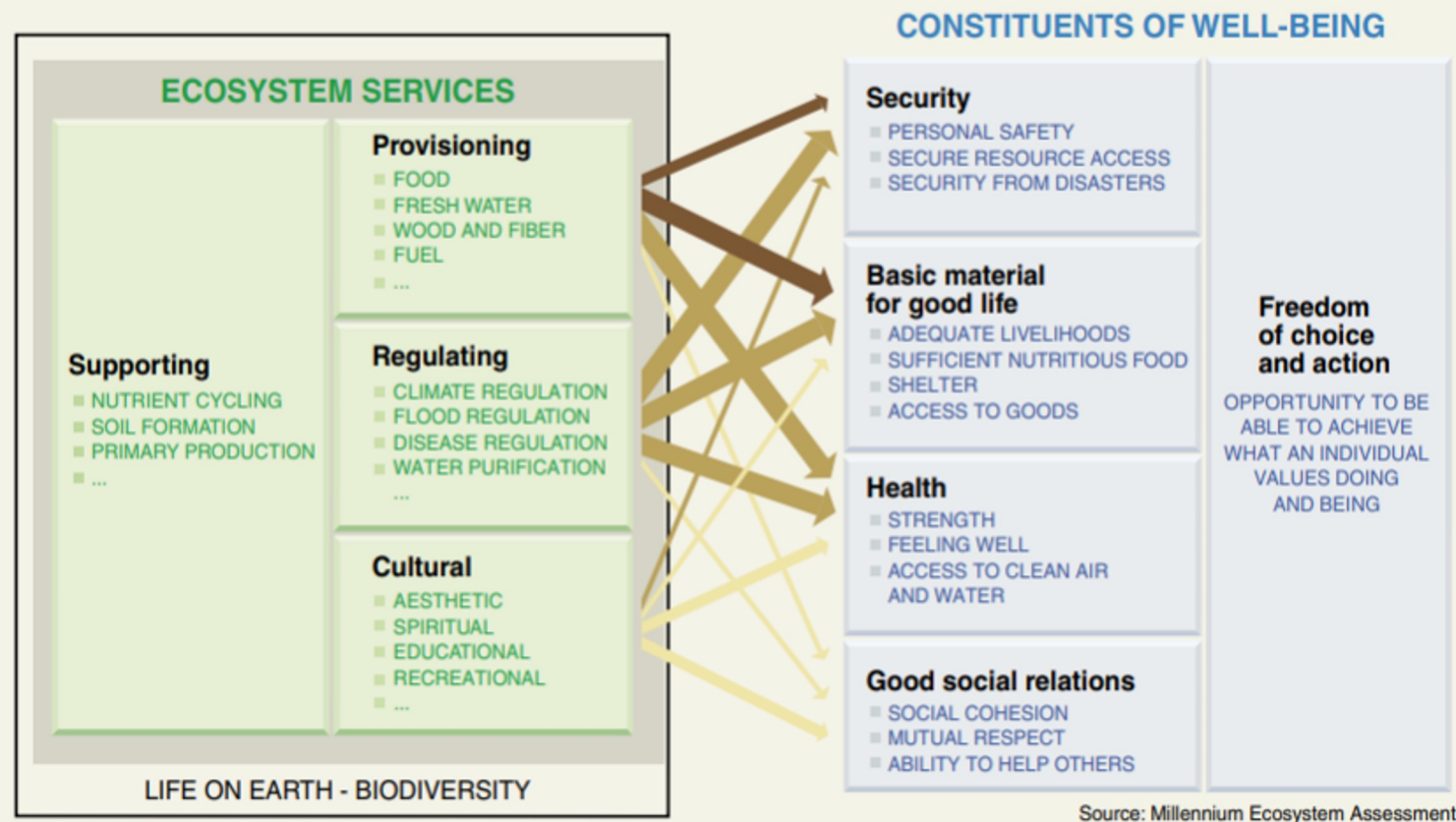


# Human Well-Being

- Context is not just health, meaning not being ill, but full suite of aspects of well-being
  - Security
  - Livelihood options
  - Social cohesion
  - Freedom of choice

**Figure A. LINKAGES BETWEEN ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND HUMAN WELL-BEING**

This Figure depicts the strength of linkages between categories of ecosystem services and components of human well-being that are commonly encountered, and includes indications of the extent to which it is possible for socioeconomic factors to mediate the linkage. (For example, if it is possible to purchase a substitute for a degraded ecosystem service, then there is a high potential for mediation.) The strength of the linkages and the potential for mediation differ in different ecosystems and regions. In addition to the influence of ecosystem services on human well-being depicted here, other factors—including other environmental factors as well as economic, social, technological, and cultural factors—influence human well-being, and ecosystems are in turn affected by changes in human well-being. (See Figure B.)



ARROW'S COLOR Potential for mediation by socioeconomic factors	ARROW'S WIDTH Intensity of linkages between ecosystem services and human well-being
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span> Low	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; border:1px solid black;"></span> Weak
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:gold; border:1px solid black;"></span> Medium	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; border:2px solid black;"></span> Medium
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:darkgoldenrod; border:1px solid black;"></span> High	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; border:3px solid black;"></span> Strong





# Coastal Ecosystem Services

Examples of benefits:

1. Wave attenuation/coastal buffering
2. Carbon storage
3. Fisheries (subsistence, recreational and commercial)
4. Recreation & tourism
5. Water filtration
6. Cultural services
7. Habitat for other species

# Socializing ecosystem services

- How we talk about ecosystem services matters
- Not too technical or jargony
- “What can marshes do for Crisfield?”
  - Protect
  - Fun & beauty
  - Breeding ground for food and birds
  - Recreation and tourism
- Use simple words and discuss values that community cares about



## What Can Marshes Do for Crisfield?

### Protect Crisfield

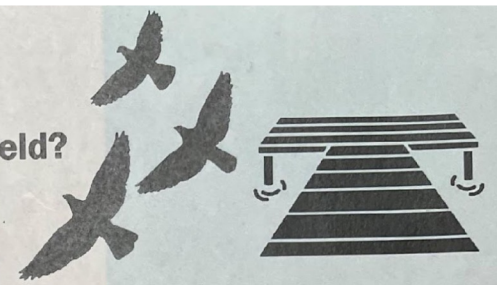
- Provide protection from storms - slow waves and decrease wave height.
- Plants secure sediment and protect coastlines from erosion.
- Absorb excess carbon from the atmosphere.
- Filter pollutants and improve water quality.

### Provide a Unique Resource

- Fun things to do outdoors.
- Environmental education opportunities.
- Natural beauty.
- Breeding grounds, food sources, and habitat for coastal wildlife:
  - ◊ Crabs and fish
  - ◊ Saltmarsh sparrows, ducks and other waterfowl
  - ◊ Frogs, turtles, and other reptiles

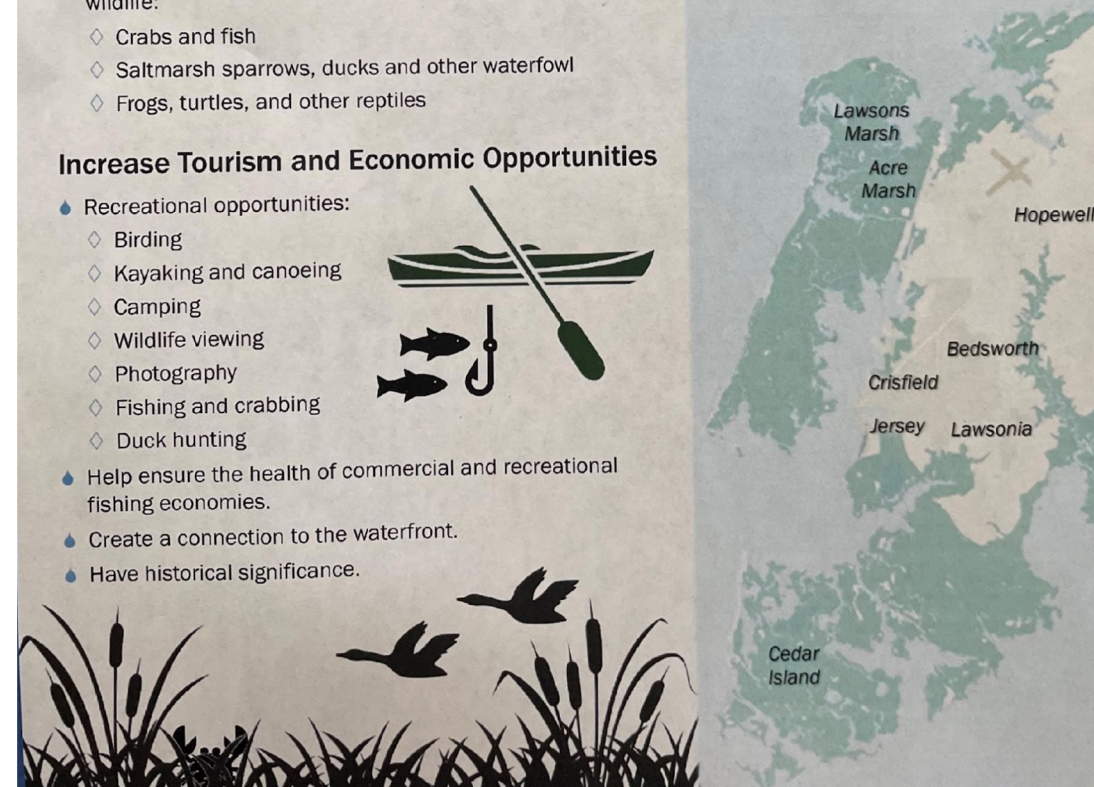
### Increase Tourism and Economic Opportunities

- Recreational opportunities:
  - ◊ Birding
  - ◊ Kayaking and canoeing
  - ◊ Camping
  - ◊ Wildlife viewing
  - ◊ Photography
  - ◊ Fishing and crabbing
  - ◊ Duck hunting
- Help ensure the health of commercial and recreational fishing economies.
- Create a connection to the waterfront.
- Have historical significance.



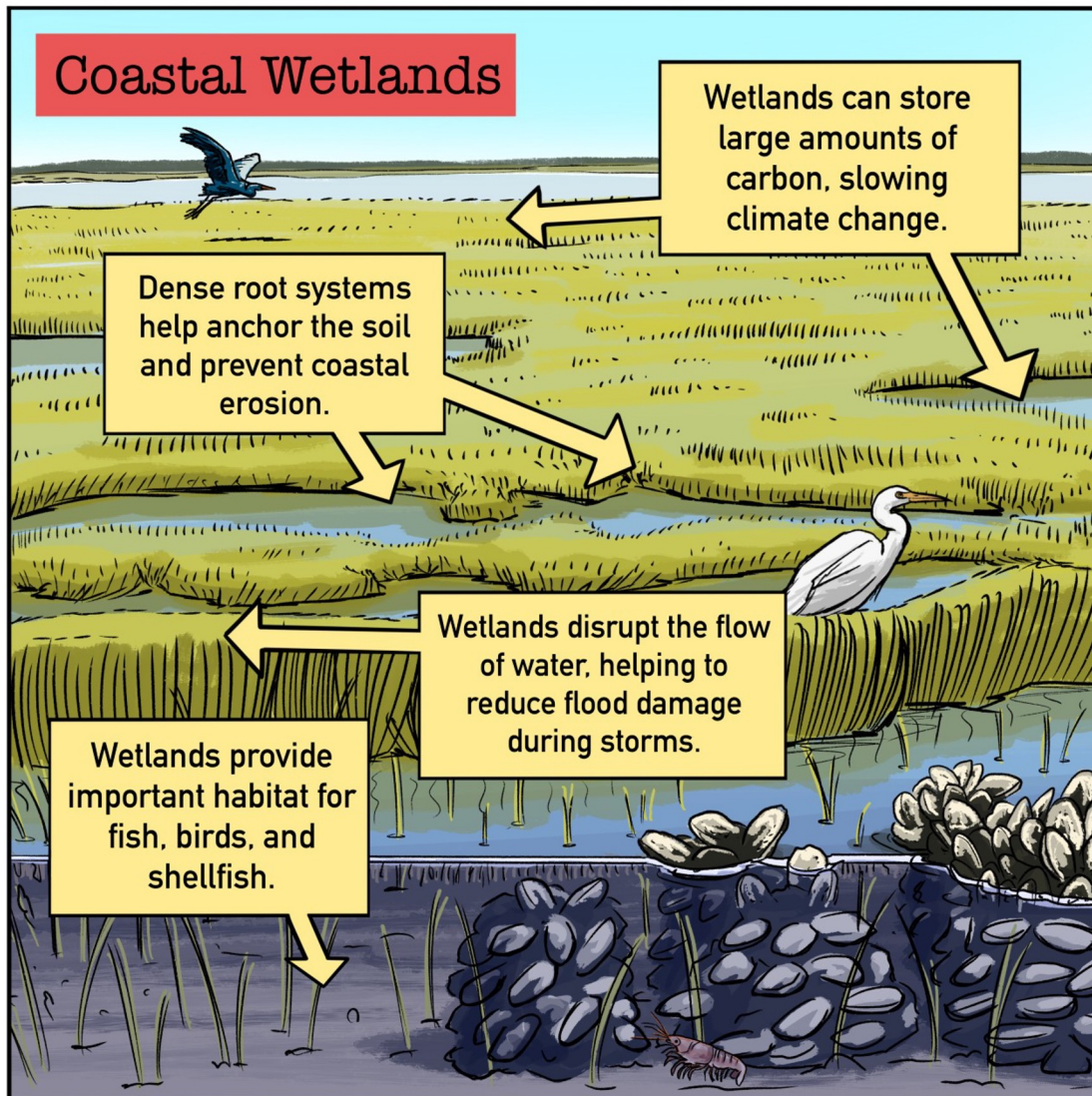
*"As some of the most productive ecosystems on earth, salt marshes and their complex, interdependent habitats serve many purposes, only one of which is to delight our senses."*

— EPA 'Marshing Forward'





# Valuing Nature's Benefits



Ben Slyngstad, USGS

- Ecologist [?] Value of nature is infinite but can't put that in a calculation
- Came to realize we must value benefits from nature, otherwise they are **zero** in cost-benefit analyses and people's spreadsheets/decisions
- Huge market failures for these **communal goods and services** [?] one potential solution is environmental markets



# Three Benefits I Study

1. Natural Infrastructure (Nature-based solutions)



2. Coastal Blue Carbon (Natural climate solutions)



3. Nature and Human Health







# 1. Natural Infrastructure

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# Gray (Built) Infrastructure

Sea Wall



Sea Wall and Riprap



Levee



Dike



# Natural Infrastructure

Salt Marsh



Coral



Mangrove



Oyster

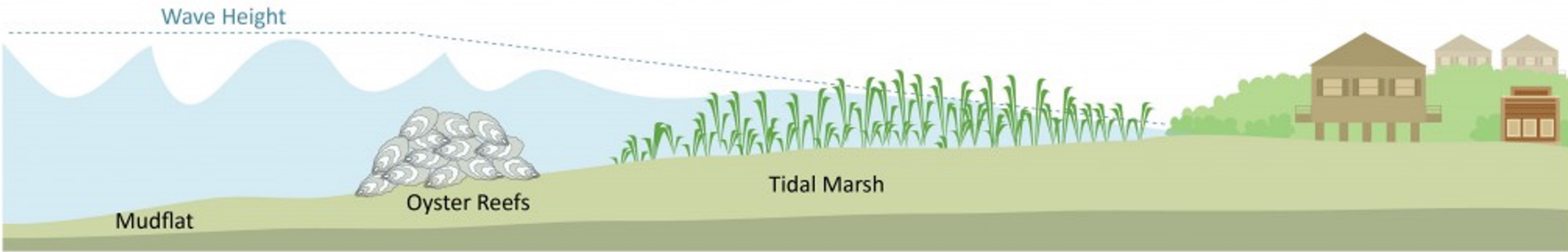


Dunes





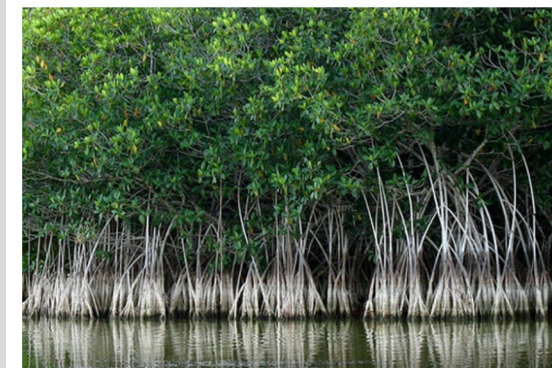
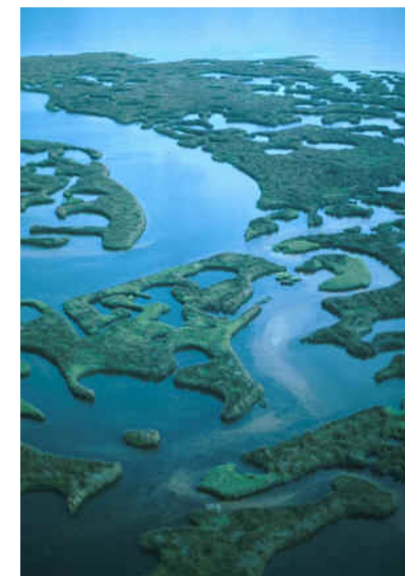
Waves decreased with healthy coastal habitats.



© 2013 Copyright The Nature Conservancy

Natural infrastructure slows waves and reduces height

# Many Factors Influence Amount of Coastal Protection Provided

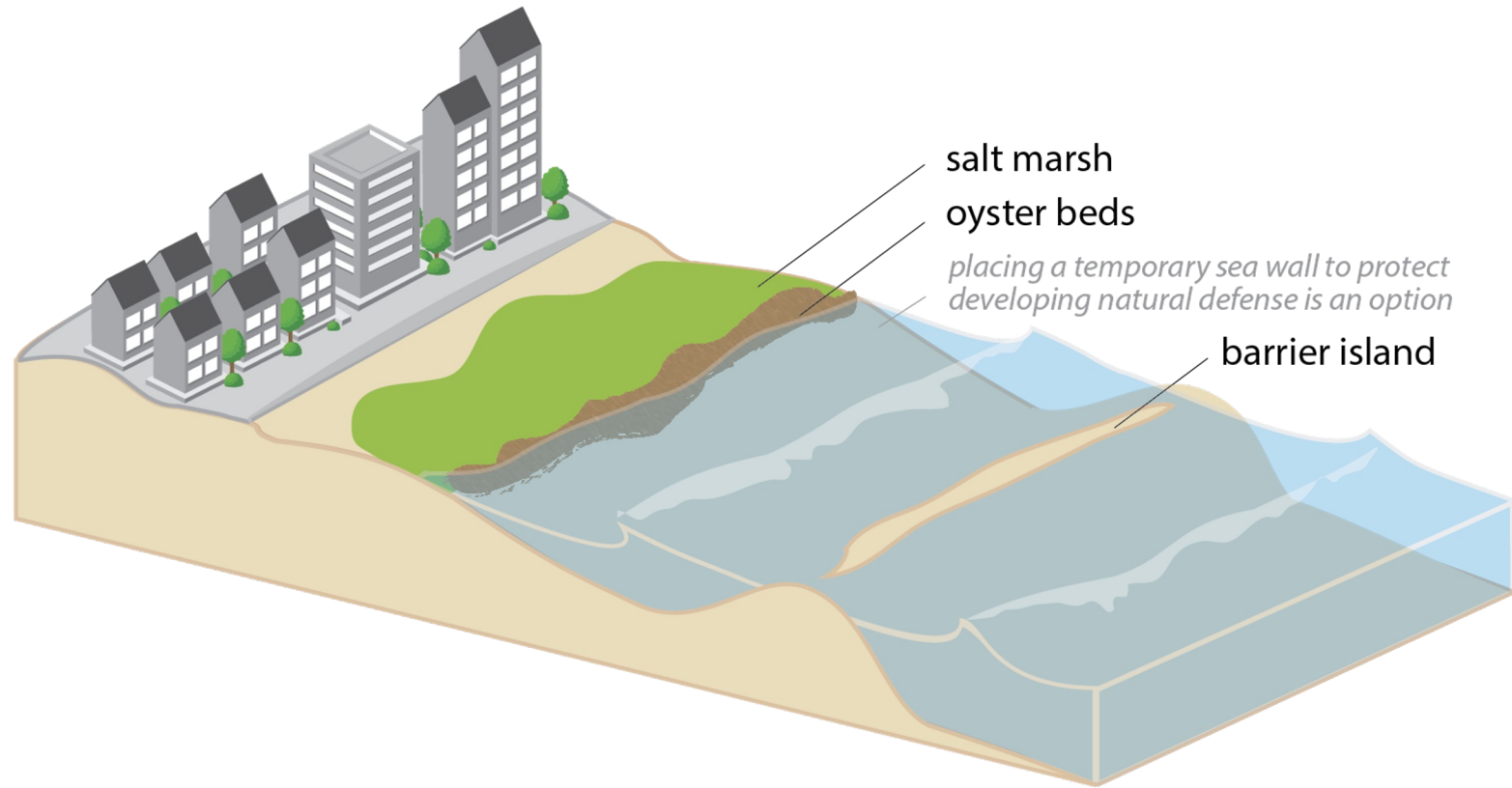


Sutton-Grier et al. 2015



# Natural Infrastructure

- Benefits of Natural Infrastructure:
- Can strengthen with time
- Can be self-maintaining and has the potential for self-repair after storms
- Can grow and keep pace with sea level rise
- Can be more cost-effective
- **Provides benefits all the time**



Sutton-Grier et al. 2015

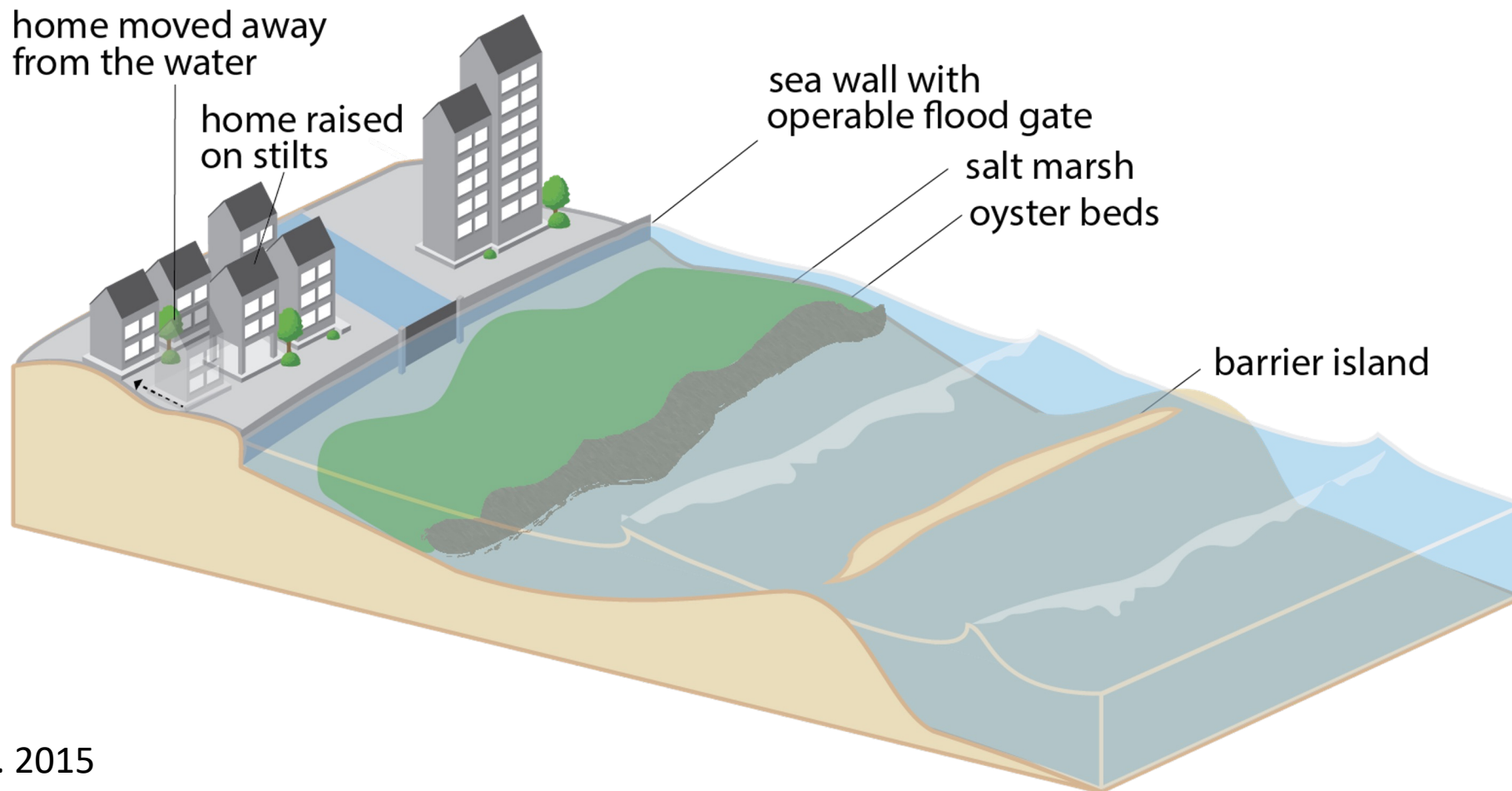
# Additional Coastal Ecosystem Services

Examples of additional benefits:

1. Fisheries (recreational and commercial)
2. Carbon storage
3. Recreation & tourism
4. Water filtration
5. Cultural services
6. Habitat for other species







Sutton-Grier et al. 2015

## Hybrid Approach

### Hybrid Infrastructure (green + gray)

- Can combine strengths of green and gray
- Can use gray to protect green as it establishes
- Can use green to protect gray to extend the lifetime or reduce costs



# Hybrid: Living Shorelines

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- Living shorelines: Use a combination of habitat restoration and built features to provide protection from erosion and storms
- Provides many of the benefits of natural habitats
- Restored marsh with oyster sill, Pivers Island, NC





# FLUVIAL PARK ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

**PERMEABLE PAVING**  
Gravel paving absorbs storm water

**BIOSWALES**  
Filters 60-90% of suspended solids and prevents water from overflowing sewer systems

**BIORETENTION**  
Filters 80-90% of suspended solids and slows flow of storm water into sewer systems

**WETLAND CREATION**  
Native ecological habitat and storm water infiltration



REBUILD BY DESIGN MEADOWLANDS

**AECOM**

# Hybrid Innovation in Coastal Urban Landscapes



# Hybrid Solutions Function Better Under Extreme Conditions: Bulkheads



76% of bulkheads damaged or destroyed; no living shorelines damaged.

Images: Gittman et al. 2014 and Sutton-Grier & Gittman 2018



# Hybrid Solutions Function Better Under Extreme Conditions: Culverts



Hurricane Irene: 1000 traditional culverts damaged, none of the stream simulation ones were

Images: Sutton-Grier & Gittman et al. 2018



# International Natural and Nature-Based Features (NNBF) Guidance



**EWN**  
Engineering With Nature

EWN Initiative + EWN Podcasts Proving Grounds Projects + Resources + NNBF +

## International NNBF Guidelines Project

Natural and Nature-based Features have been used for decades to support a variety of objectives in coastal and fluvial systems. Beach, dune and river and lake restoration projects have been a longstanding part of flood risk reduction strategies in Europe, the United States and elsewhere. Restoration projects supporting floodplain, wetlands, seagrass, oysters and other habitats and communities have been undertaken around the world to restore ecosystem functions. In more recent years, there has been a growing interest in developing a technically sound engineering approach for integrating NNBF, in combination with conventional flood defense systems (e.g., levees, seawalls, etc.), for more comprehensive and sustainable flood defense. This interest was further stimulated by the outcomes of recent storm and flood events, including Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy in the United States as well as England's floods in Somerset and Cumbria, which have given rise to a range of studies and projects focused on the role of landscape features in flood risk management. The global dialogue that has been underway for several years, including within the Engineering with Nature (EWN) Program in the United States and the Building with Nature (BwN) approach in The Netherlands. Ultimately, these communications have revealed a demand for authoritative guidance on the use of Natural and Nature-Based Features in support of Integrated Water Resources Management.



In order to address the need for guidelines, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) initiated a collaborative project to develop and publish international guidelines on the development and implementation of Natural and Nature-Based

<https://ewn.el.erdc.dren.mil/nnbf-guidelines.html>



# “Meet the multimillion-dollar building deliberately built to drown” (Washington Post, Oct 2022)

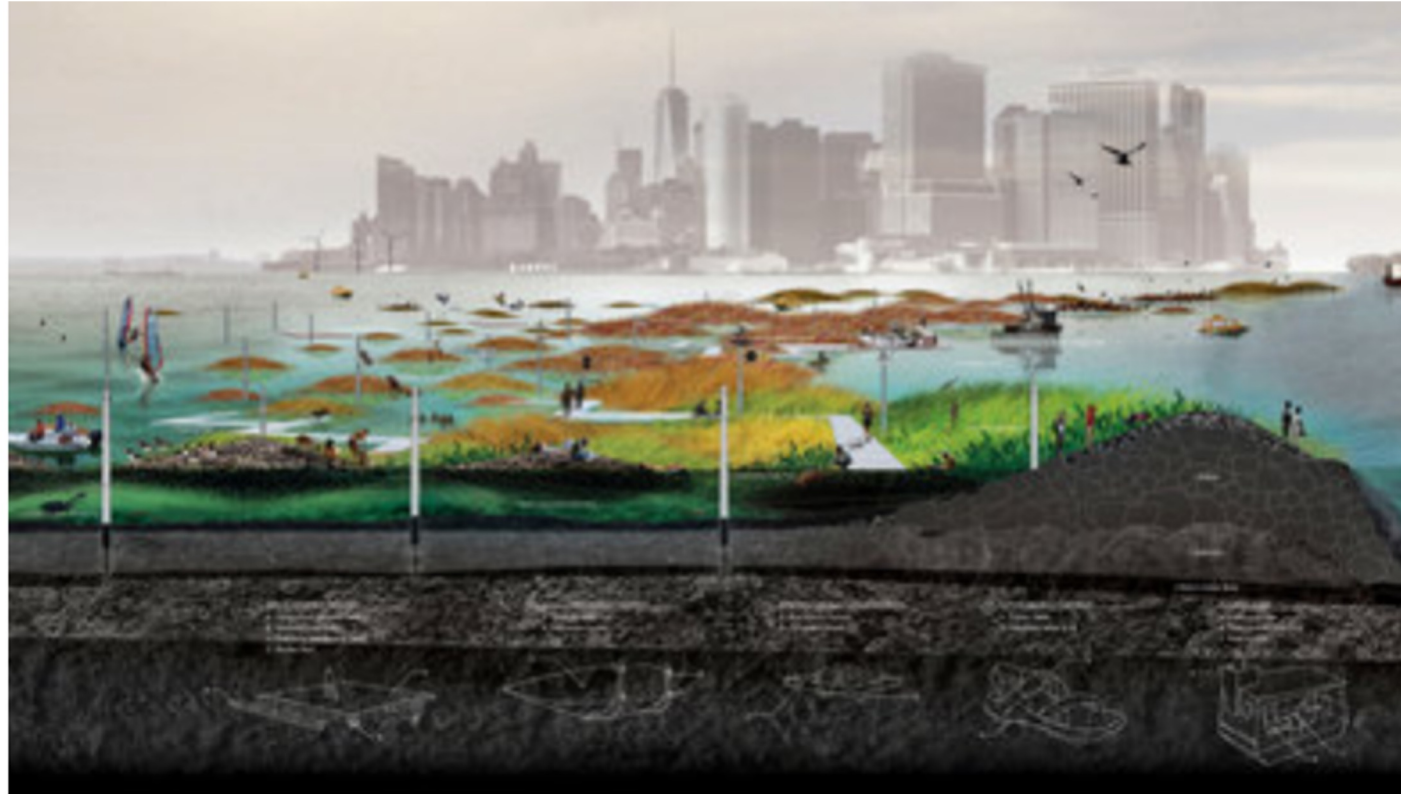
- Different approach to building in resilience
- Norfolk, VA
- Elizabeth River Project’s \$8.1 million headquarters
- First time a U.S. private property owner has agreed to a rolling conservation easement? when water gets too high they will demolish building and abandon the site



A rendering of the Elizabeth River Project’s boardwalk in Norfolk. (Work Program Architects)

Image: Washington Post

# Additional Coastal Hybrid Innovation

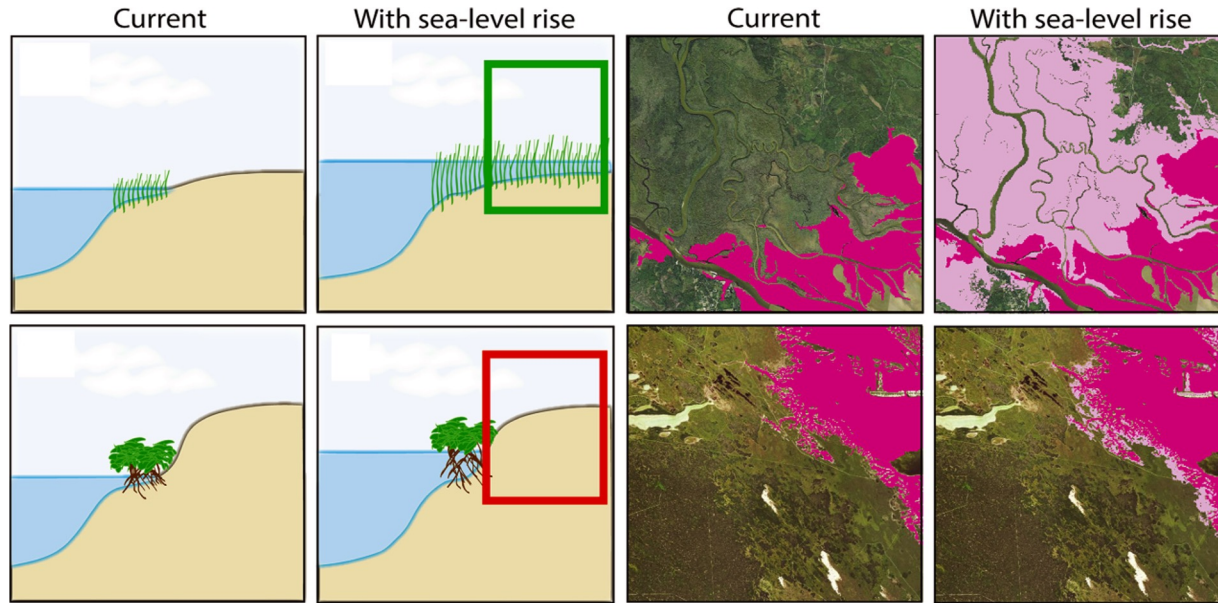


URBAN WETLANDS A rendering of Lower Manhattan that shows tidal marshes to absorb waves. Architecture Research Office and dlandstudio

Innovation and nature-based strategies are possible even in major urban areas



# Research and Planning for future: Adaptation



- Wetlands adapt to sea level rise
  - Accumulate sediment and organic matter to keep pace OR
  - Migrate inland as waters rise
- Study examined where inland migration would like be possible or blocked
  - Naturally
  - Based on human infrastructure
- Important opportunity to plan now NOT to build in important wetland migration corridors

Opportunity:  
Incorporate More  
Natural Infrastructure  
into Urban Landscape  
Planning and Coastal  
Resilience Efforts

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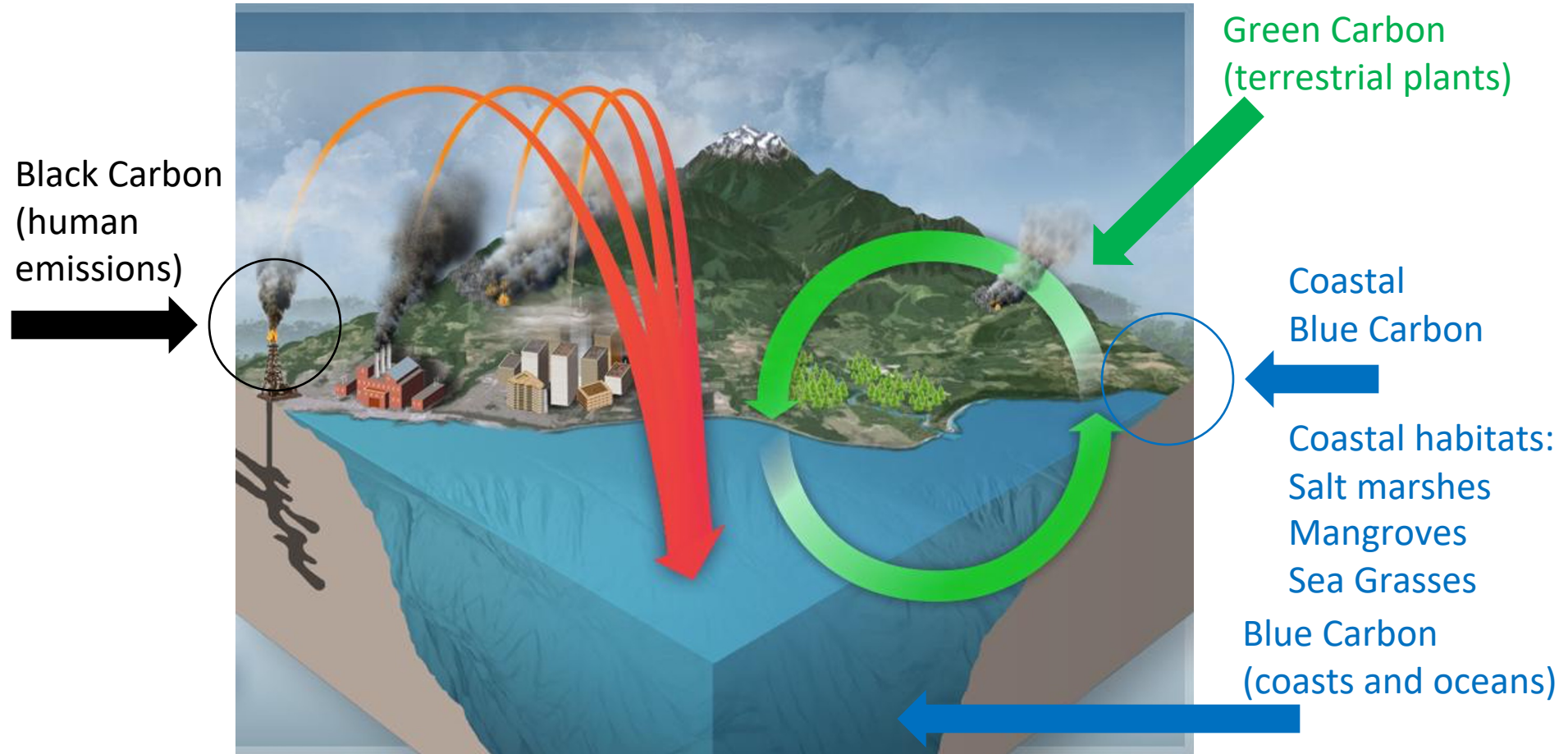


## 2. Coastal Blue Carbon

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# Carbon "Colors"



[www.pmel.noaa.gov/co2/story/Research](http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/co2/story/Research)



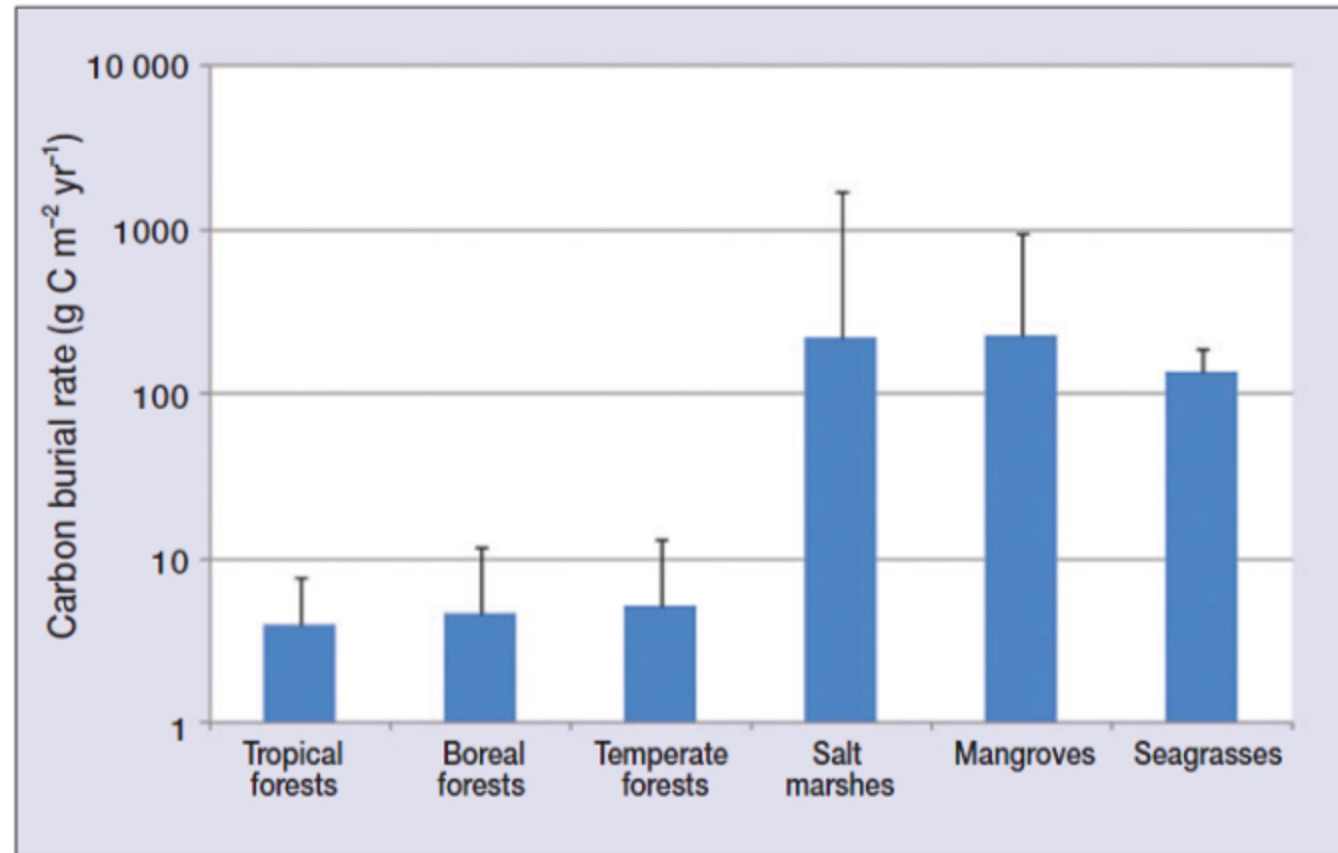
What does “coastal blue carbon” look like? It’s actually **BROWN**.





# Coastal Habitats Sequester Carbon

- Smaller total area, but much greater sequestration in coastal blue carbon habitats  $\square$  important natural carbon sink

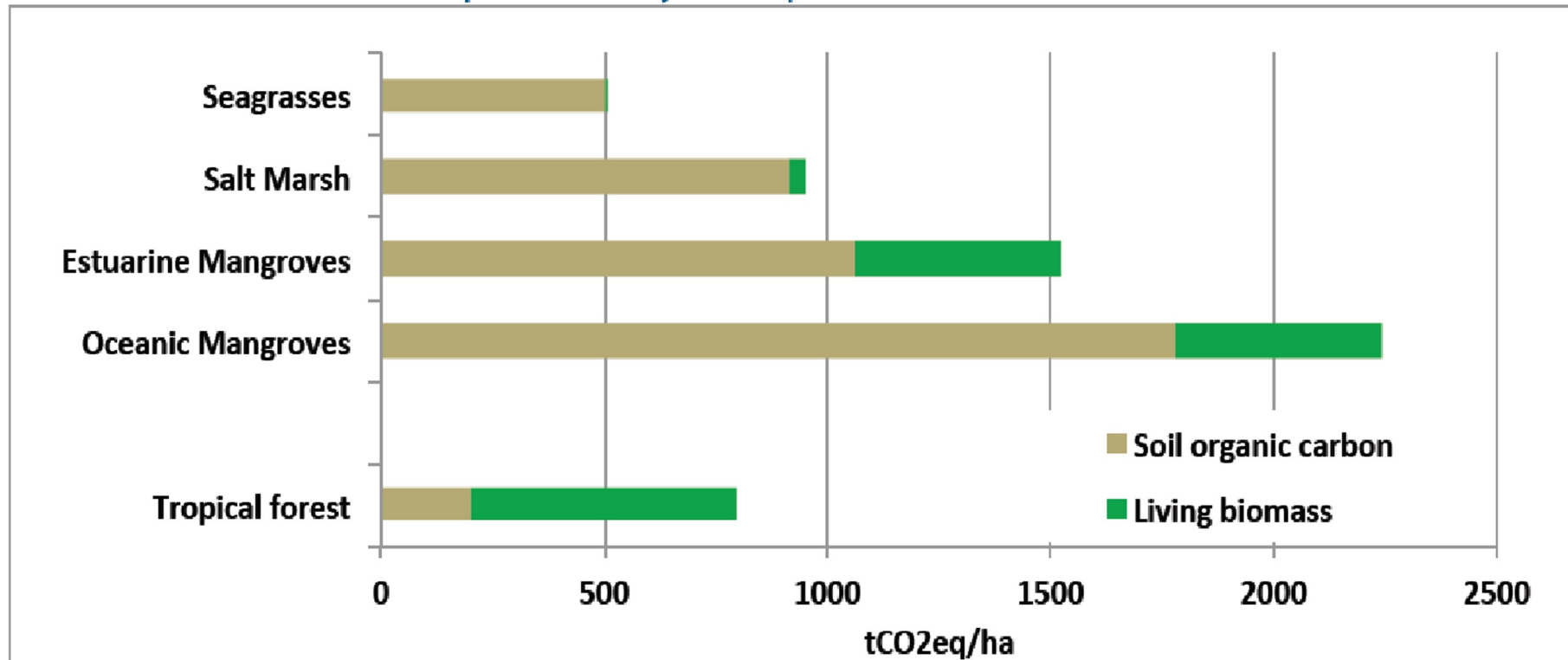


McLeod et al. 2011. *Frontiers in Ecology and Environment*



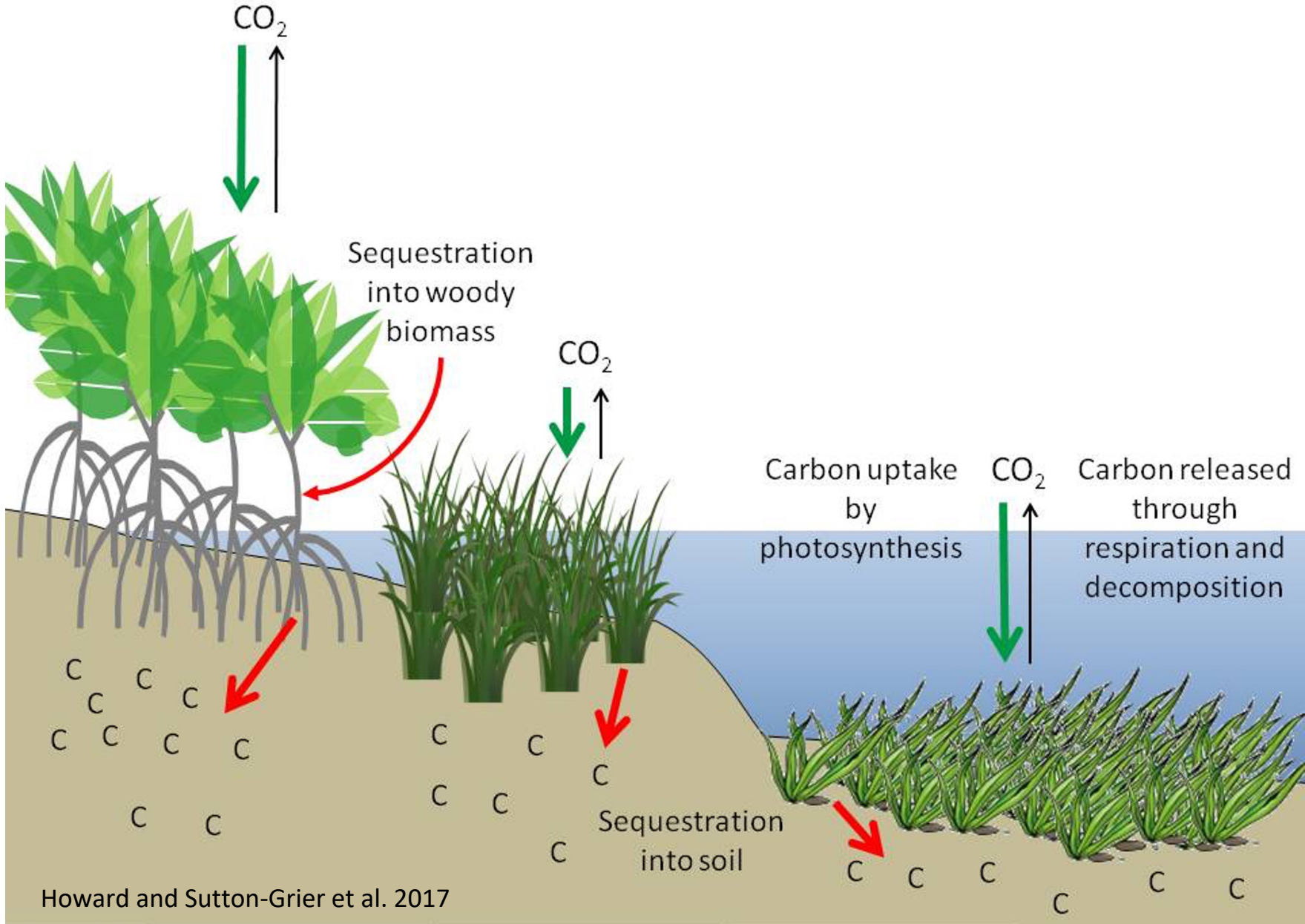
# Coastal Habitats Store Carbon

In coastal habitats, most carbon is stored in sediments and less in biomass



Source: Murray, Brian, Linwood Pendleton, W. Aaron Jenkins, and Samantha Sifleet. 2011. Green Payments for Blue Carbon: Economic Incentives for Protecting Threatened Coastal Habitats. Nicholas Institute Report. NI R 11-04.

# Healthy Coastal Wetlands: Sinks for CO<sub>2</sub>

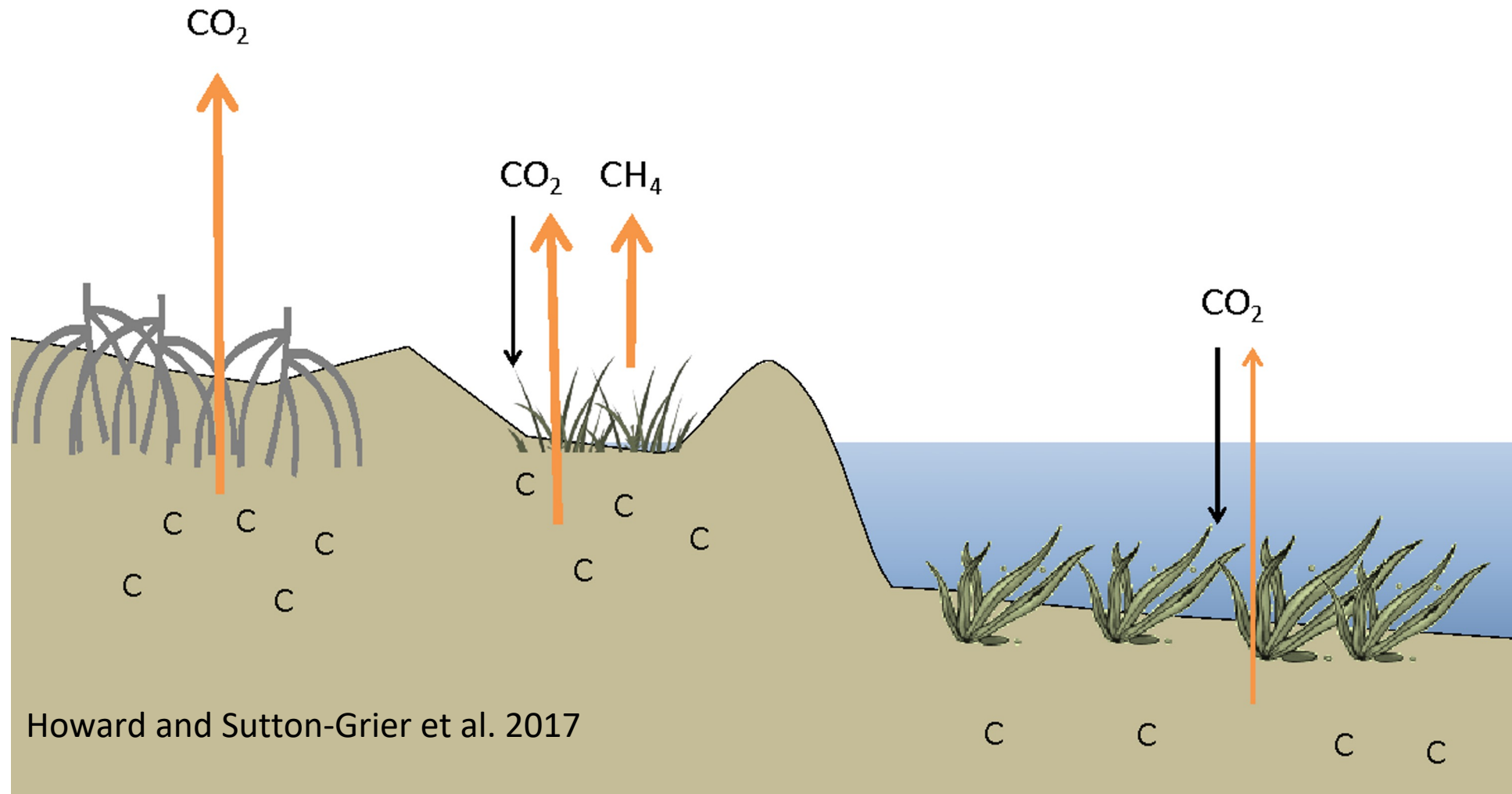


Howard and Sutton-Grier et al. 2017



# Degraded Coastal Wetlands: Sources of Greenhouse Gases

Anthropogenic GHG emissions



Howard and Sutton-Grier et al. 2017



# Rapid Loss of Coastal Carbon Services

- Global rates of loss range from 0.4-3.0% (Howard and Sutton-Grier et al., 2017)
- Impressive sinks become sources when destroyed
  - Loss of Blue Carbon Coastal Wetlands has the annual emissions of the U.K.
- How to incorporate this benefit into science and policy opportunities



# U.S. Policy: Federal Policies

- Incorporate coastal wetland carbon benefits into federal policy implementation
- Coastal Wetlands in U.S. greenhouse gas inventory for the *first time* in Spring 2017

The screenshot shows the EPA website's 'Greenhouse Gas Emissions' page. At the top is the EPA logo and navigation links for 'Environmental Topics', 'Laws & Regulations', and 'About EPA'. A search bar is on the right. Below the navigation is a 'CONTACT US' link and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Email. The main heading is 'Greenhouse Gas Emissions'. A sidebar on the left lists: 'Greenhouse Gas Emissions', 'Overview of Greenhouse Gases', 'Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions', 'Global Emissions', 'National Emissions', 'Facility-Level Emissions', 'Carbon Footprint Calculator', and 'GHG Equivalencies Calculator'. The main content area features the title 'Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990–2015'. Below the title is a paragraph: 'View the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990–2015* (published 2017), developed by the U.S. Government to meet U.S. commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'. This is followed by another paragraph: 'This report was published in 2017. For a list of all archived reports, view the [U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report Archive](#).' Below that is: 'For the most recent report, view [EPA's Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks](#).' The section 'Download the Report Tables' contains two bullet points: '• [2017 Main Report Tables \(ZIP\)](#) (1 pg, 326 K)' and '• [2017 Annex Tables \(ZIP\)](#) (1 pg, 324 K)'.

# Other Policy Opportunities

Include coastal wetlands in voluntary carbon markets

- Verified Carbon Standard method to get carbon credits for coastal wetland restoration anywhere in the world (VM0033, November 2015)
- September 2020 new VCS methodology for wetland protection: “REDD+ VCS Methodology Framework (VM0007)”



## First Blue Carbon Conservation Methodology Expected to Scale Up Finance for Coastal Restoration & Conservation Activities

9 September 2020

Verra just released the first blue carbon conservation methodology approved under any major GHG program. The methodology, which is a revision to the [VCS REDD+ Methodology Framework \(VM0007\)](#), adds blue carbon conservation and restoration activities as an eligible project type and is expected to unlock new sources of finance for tidal wetland conservation and restoration activities.



Coastal wetlands, including mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes, sequester and store





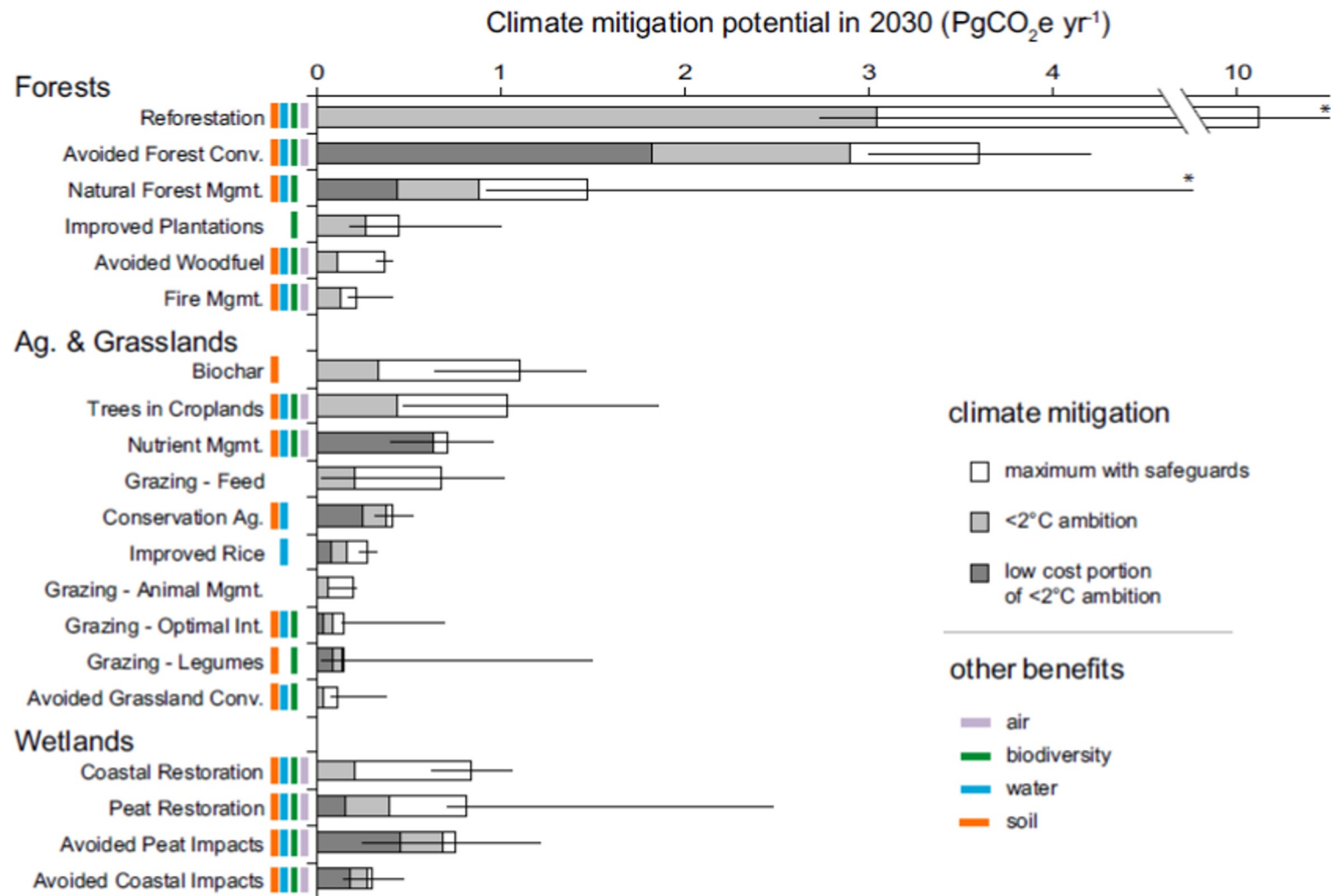
# International Blue Carbon Projects: Kenya- Mikoko Pamoja

- Mangrove restoration and conservation
  - 117 ha
- Alternative livelihoods
  - Eco-Tourism



- Images: Wylie et al. 2016 Marine Policy





# Global Climate Mitigation Potential

Fig. 1. Climate mitigation potential of 20 natural pathways. We estimate maximum climate mitigation potential with safeguards for reference year 2030. Light gray portions of bars represent cost-effective mitigation levels assuming a global ambition to hold warming to <2 °C (<100 USD MgCO<sub>2</sub>e<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>). Dark gray portions of bars indicate low cost (<10 USD MgCO<sub>2</sub>e<sup>-1</sup> y<sup>-1</sup>) portions of <2 °C levels. Wider error bars indicate empirical estimates of 95% confidence intervals, while narrower error bars indicate estimates derived from expert elicitation. Ecosystem service benefits linked with each pathway are indicated by colored bars for biodiversity, water (filtration and flood control), soil (enrichment), and air (filtration). Asterisks indicate truncated error bars. See [SI Appendix, Tables S1, S2, S4, and S5](#) for detailed findings and sources.



Opportunity:  
Protect blue carbon  
and one also  
protect many other  
benefits we value

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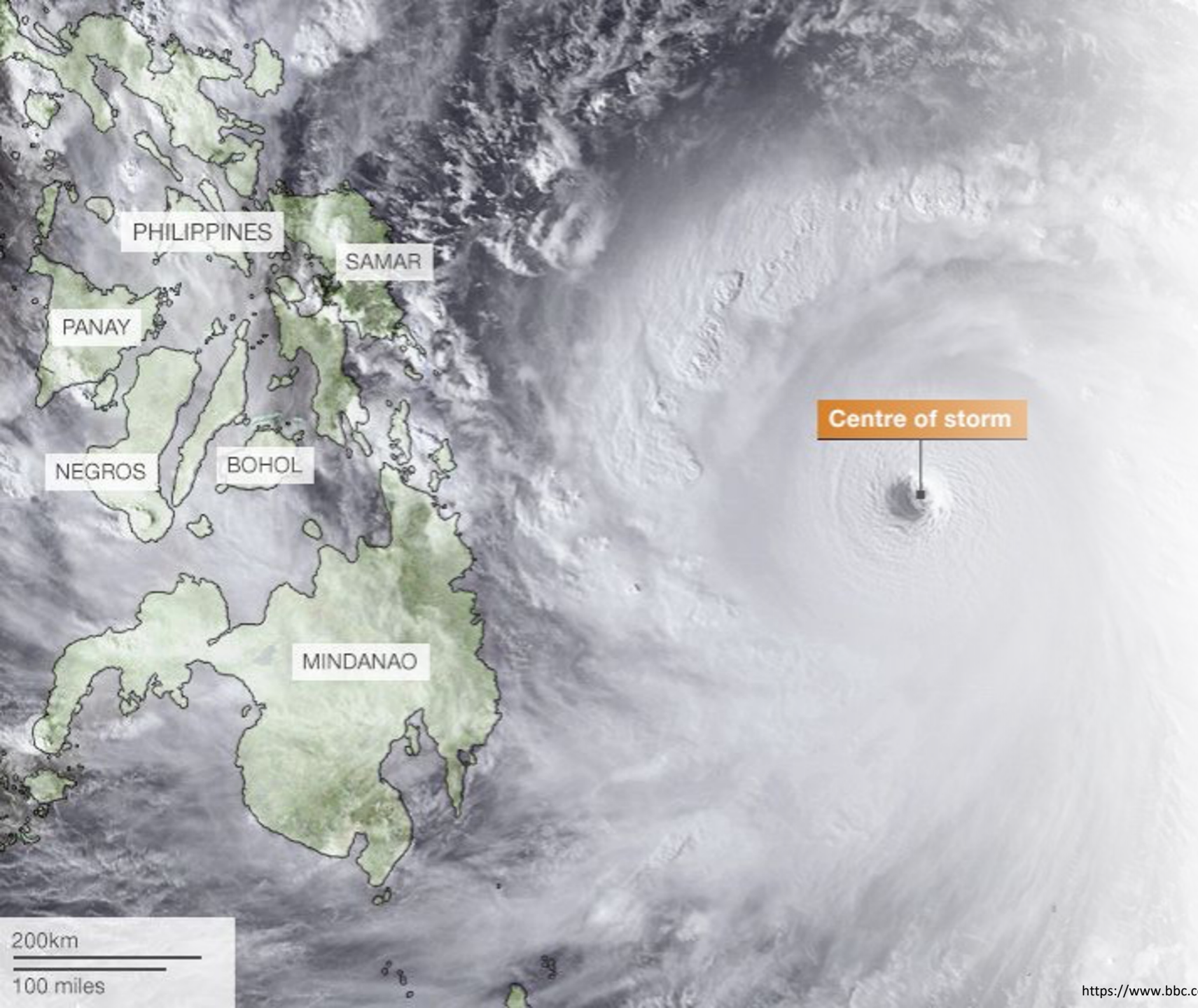
# Coastal Blue Carbon “Triple Win”: Mitigation, Adaptation, and Conservation

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# Applying this in the Philippines



- Philippines among most vulnerable countries to flood damage from typhoons and extreme events
  - Typhoon Haiyan (2013) caused more than 6,000 deaths and over US \$2 billion in damages
  - Between 2005 to 2015, 56% property damage due to typhoons and storms, another 29% due to floods
- Need effective and cost-effective approaches for flood risk reduction



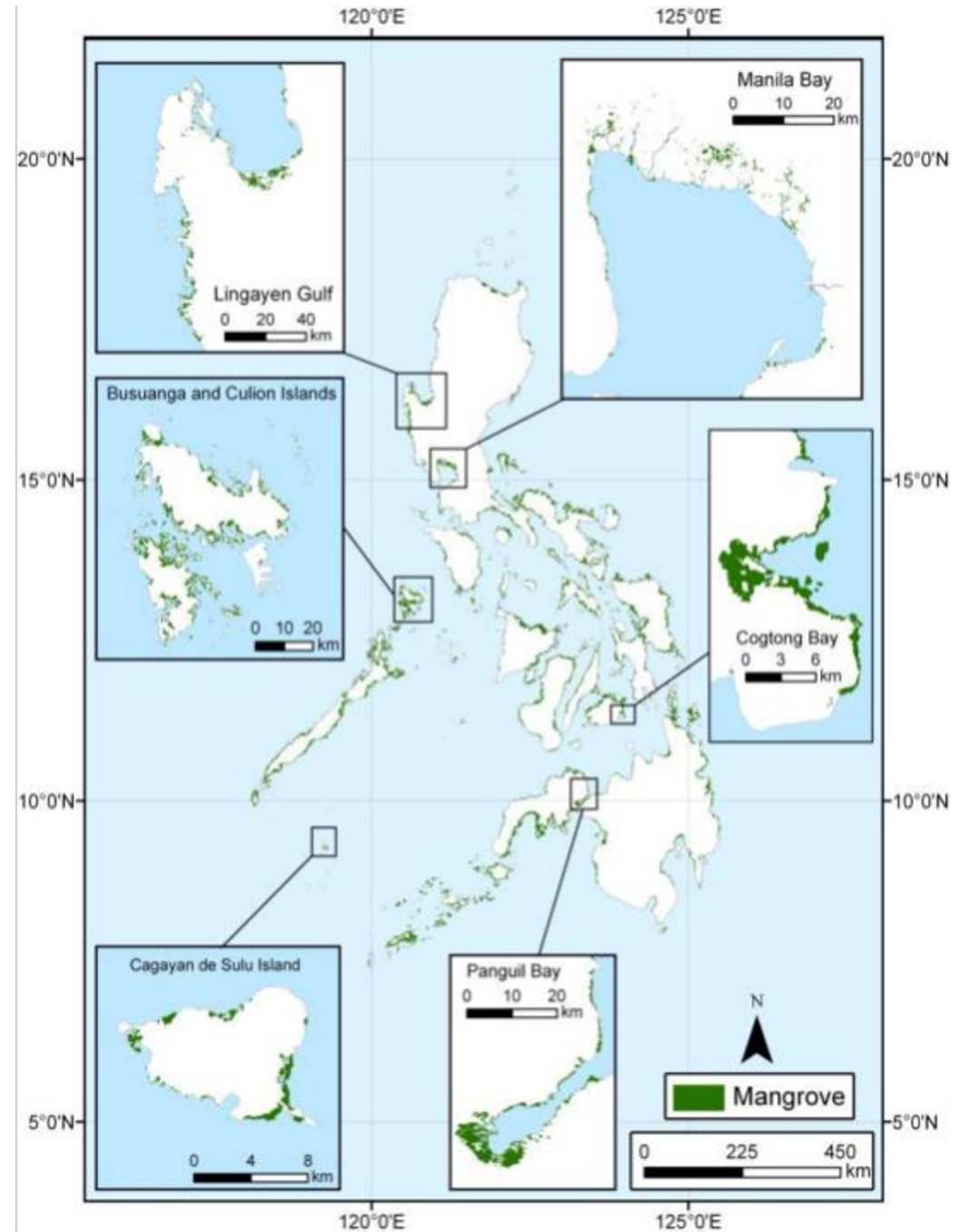
# Mangrove wetlands can help

- One hectare of mangroves in Philippines provides on average more than US \$3200/year of direct flood reduction benefits
- Across Philippines, mangroves reduce flooding to 613,000 people annually
  - 23% live below poverty
  - Avert more than US \$1 billion in damages to residential and industrial property
- If mangroves were restored to 1950 distribution, additional benefits:
  - 267,000 people annually, including 61,000 people below poverty
  - US \$450 million in annual averted damages
- If current mangroves (data from 2010) were lost, 24% more people would be flooded annually
  - Additional 613,000 more people, many of whom live in poverty
  - Damages to residential and industrial property increase by 28% to more than US \$1 billion annually; and 766 km of roads would be flooded
- From: Valuing Protective Services of Mangroves in the Philippines: Technical report (World Bank, 2017)



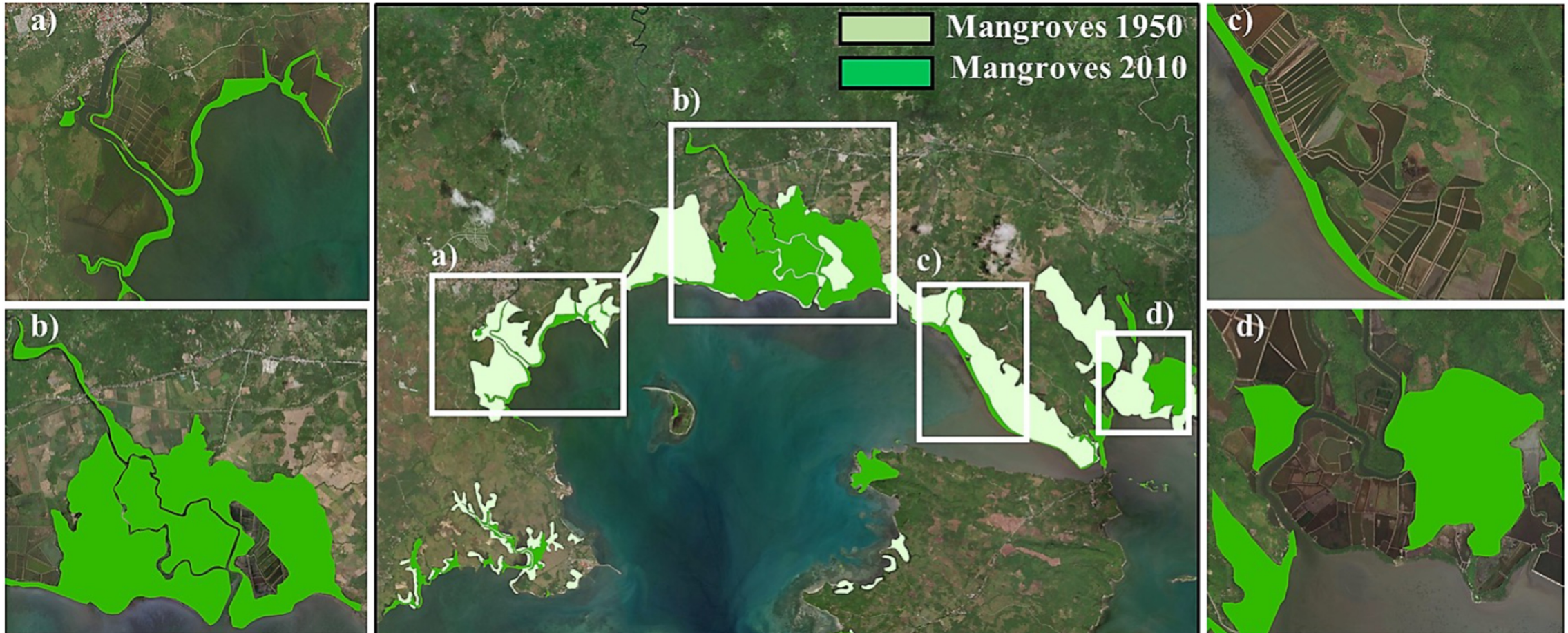
# Mangroves in Philippines

- Spatial distribution of mangroves circa 2000  
256,185 ha (19% protected)
- As high as 60% loss of Philippine mangroves lost since 1920s (Garcia et al. 2014) and may be 70% today
- Between 1985-2005, Southeast Asia lost 26.5% of mangroves (Soc. for Mangrove Ecosystems)



# Mangrove Loss in Philippines

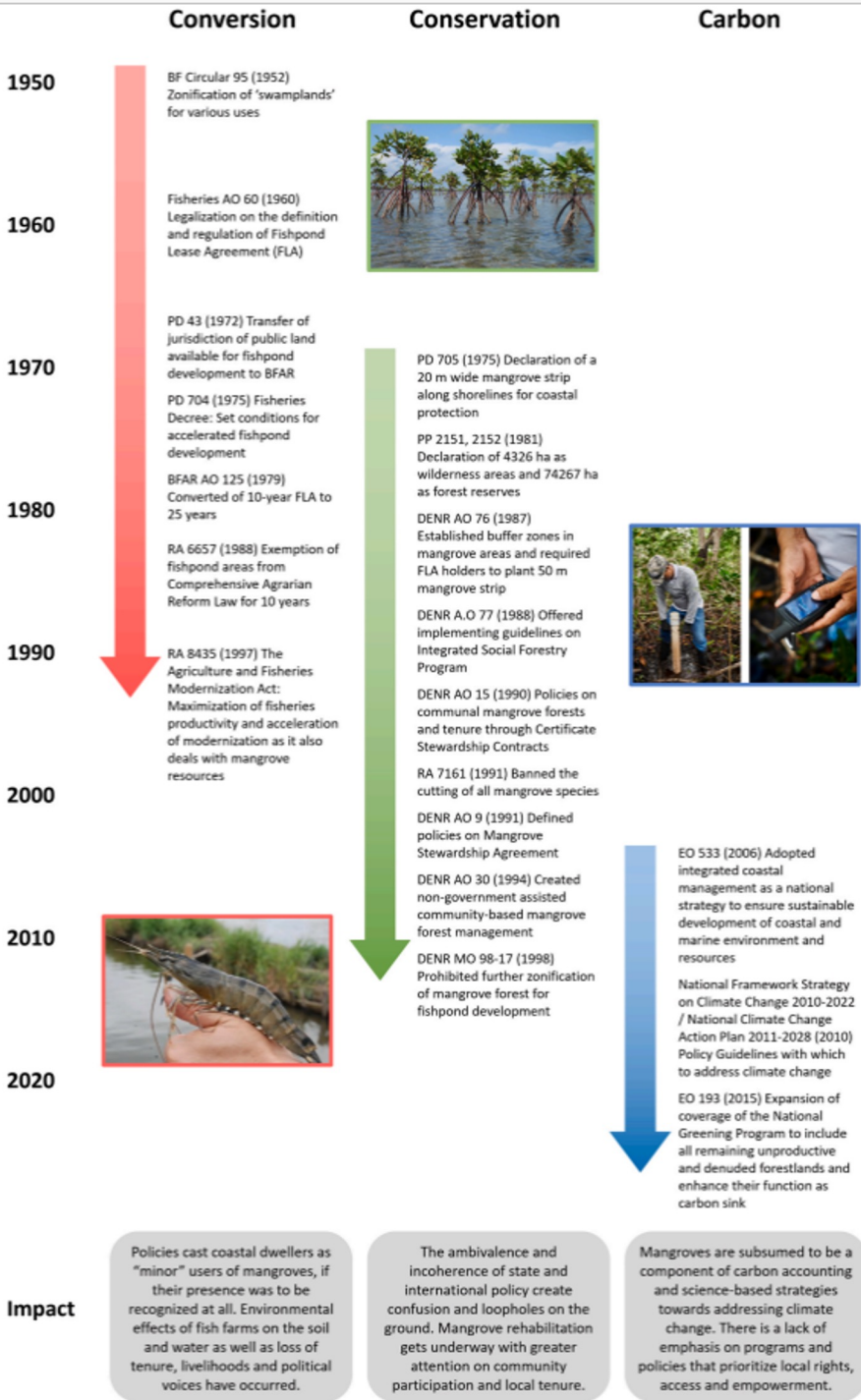
- Cause: Destruction for fishponds, development, and charcoal fuel
- **Opportunity:** Protect existing mangroves
  - Restore degraded or destroyed mangroves





# Good News: Mangrove Loss has slowed

- Switch from loss to conservation in last decade (Song et al. 2021)
- Mangroves included in National Greening Initiative



# Conservation International Project: Silonay Mangrove Conservation Area

- Villages protected by mangroves fared better in Typhoon Haiyan
- Silonay Mangrove Conservation in Oriental Mindoro area is CI project to help restore mangroves and protect communities






# Mangrove Planting App

## Want to Plant Mangroves in the Philippines? There's a Partnership and an App for That

August 17, 2022

 5 minute read



By Katherine Labombarde



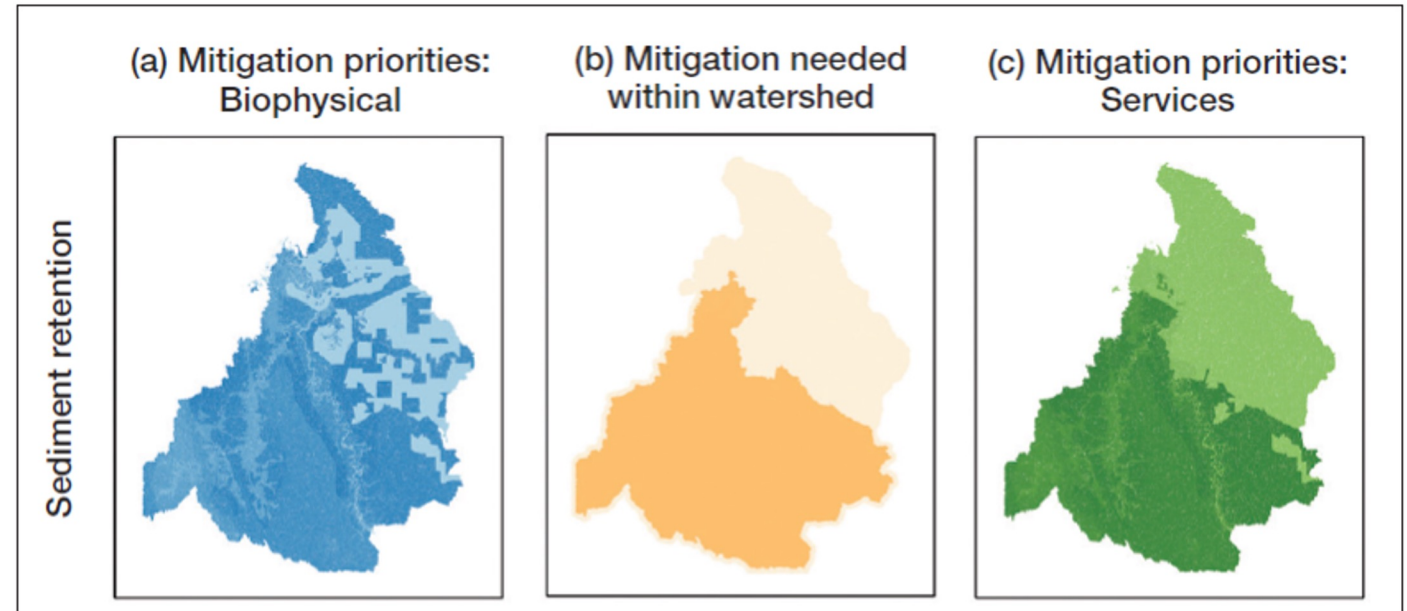
Coinciding with International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, the mobile wallet app company [GCash](#) announced on July 26 its [expanded GForest environmental sustainability feature](#), giving its more than 5 million users the ability to virtually plant mangroves in the Philippines.

The GForest Mangrove Rehabilitation Project represents an allied effort with the [Culion Foundation](#) and the [USAID Fish Right Program](#), an existing partnership between the Government of the Philippines and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as the [University of Rhode Island \(URI\) Coastal Resources Center](#), Resonance Global, and other local foundations and NGOs engaged in sustainable fisheries.

The aim of the initiative is to plant 125,000 mangrove trees in Culion, Palawan as part of the company's ambitious goals to integrate sustainability into its core business.

# Equity and Ecosystem Services

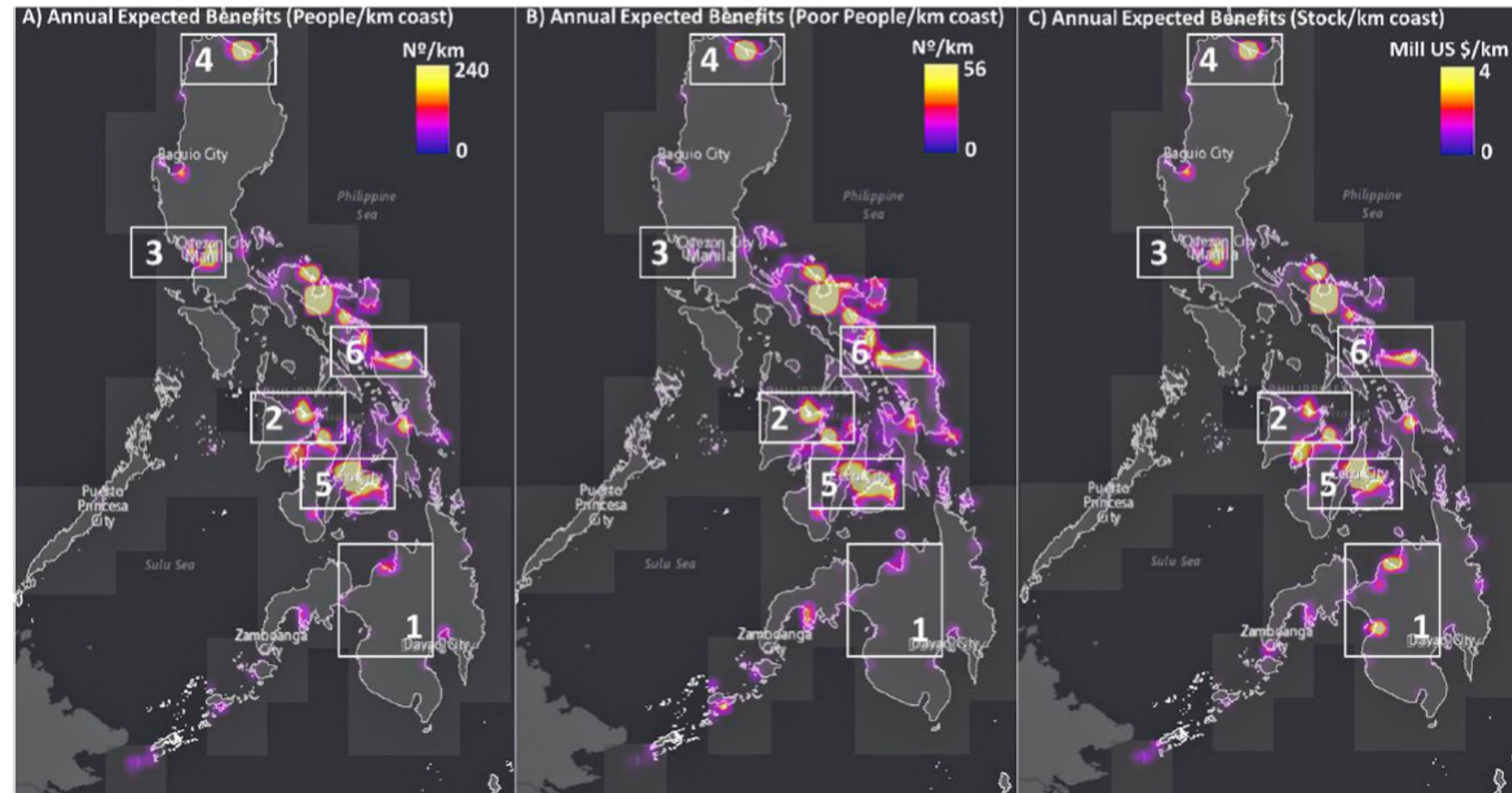
- Spatial nature of many ecosystem services (except carbon which is globally mixed)
- Want to consider more than ecological factors when choosing sites; consider beneficiaries (serviceshed) as well
- Mandle et al. 2015





# Consider Mangrove Benefits for People and Property

- Do not make decisions just on property value
- Highly populated areas provide benefits to people and property (3 (Manila), 4, and 5)
- But some places the benefits to people are much higher than to property (6, Coast of Samar Island)



Menendez et al. 2018

# Funding Projects: Environmental Markets and PES

- Environmental Markets
  - Lack of compliance markets
  - Voluntary carbon market (VCS methodologies)
  - Sundarbans project in India
- Payment for Ecosystem Services
- Sustainable Shrimp prices
  - Vietnam Mekong Delta case study
  - Wylie et al. 2016





# Funding Projects: Debt-for-Nature-Swap

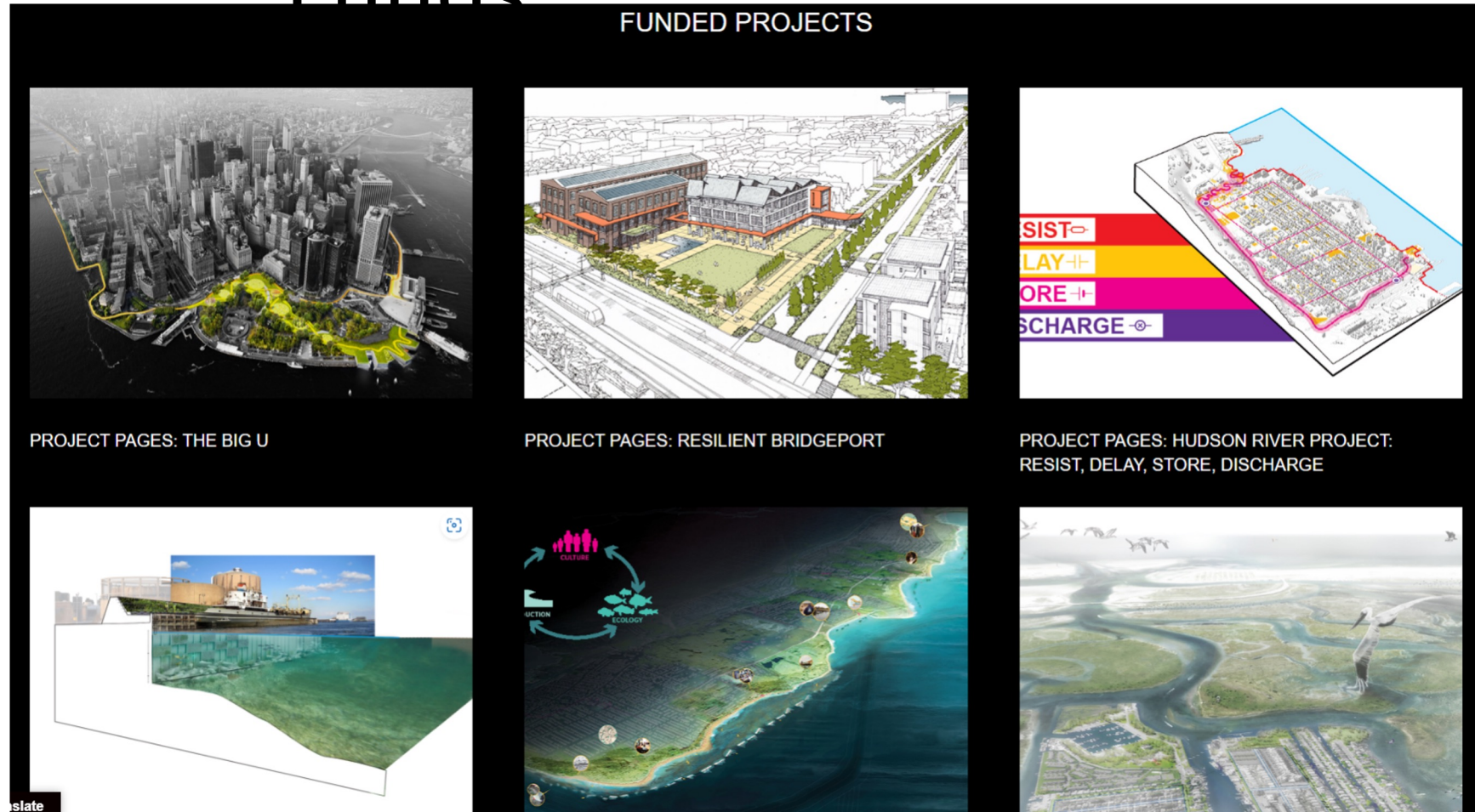
- Debt for Nature Swaps: Ecuador example
  - Like refinancing a mortgage, only for government bonds
  - Ecuador bonds sold cheaply to Credit Suisse
  - Bank then converted them to \$656 million Galápagos Marine Bond, which it used to finance a loan that will help Ecuador fund conservation
  - Biggest debt-for-nature swap in history
  - Ecuador committed to spend more than \$323 million over 18 years on conservation in the Galápagos region
  - Manage and monitor the Hermandad Marine Reserve, a newer 2021 protected area
  - Money from transaction will also help create an endowment intended to fund such activities in perpetuity



<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/09/climate/galapagos-ecuador-debt-nature.html>

# Funding Projects: Disaster Recovery & Federal Funds

- Disaster funding: “blue skies planning” if possible to be shovel ready when disaster funding becomes available (learned from Superstorm Sandy)
- Innovation competition like **Rebuild by Design** Rockefeller opportunity in NE US
- Nature-based solutions: now incorporated into Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding in US
  - Congressional funding
- Bond Options: Catastrophic hazard bonds, resilience bonds, and blue bonds





# Philippines' National Greening Program

- Malampaya Sound in the Philippines' Palawan province  
Mangrove restoration: Lessons Learned
  - Involve local community
  - Understand indigenous knowledge and cultural practices
  - Help people understand mangroves provide fish and storm risk reduction
  - Recruit locals to help with planting and protecting mangroves
- Government extended program until 2028
  - 7.1 million hectares (17.5 million acres) of degraded forestlands



<https://www.eco-business.com/news/indigenous-belief-systems-bolster-mangrove-reforestation-in-palawan/>



# Involve Local Communities

- Indigenous Filipino women in Busanga region working to protect their community by restoring mangroves
- Passage of an ordinance banning mangrove forest clearing, and the mobilization of Indigenous men and women as volunteer coastal guards who enforce the policy
- Busuanga's Indigenous women have volunteered as citizen scientists to monitor restored mangroves





# Lots of Opportunities to Leverage Ecosystem Services to Create Support for Wetlands Protection and Restoration and Support Livelihoods, Communities, and Cultures







## Discussion Prompts

- “What benefits from wetlands do you think will be most of value to your community?”
- “What questions do you still have about ecosystem services provided by wetlands after the talk?”
- “What information do you see needing in order to measure and value the benefits of wetlands in your community?”
- “Are certain wetland values important to some stakeholders while other benefits are more of interest to others (in other words, will different stakeholder groups have different thoughts on which benefits are of most value?)?”

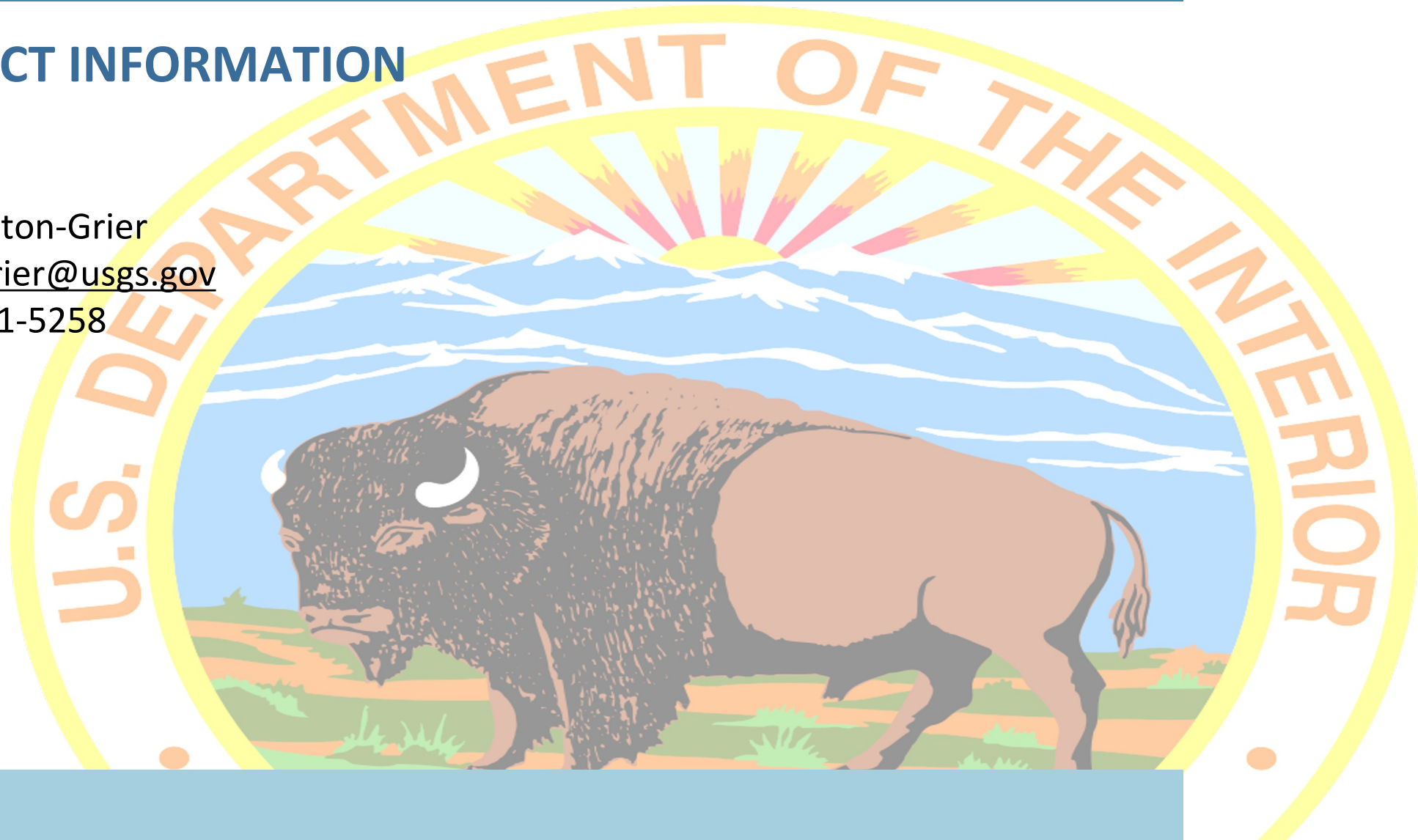




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# REGIONAL FLYWAY INITIATIVE TRAINING SERIES: From Wetland Ecosystem Services to Nature-based Solutions

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