

❖ Opportunities for continued funding for oyster restoration

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Despite the trend toward larger scale restoration, funding for restoration projects continues to be difficult to secure as federal budgets designated for habitat restoration have decreased, and competition for funding has increased. In light of this, The Nature Conservancy has been working to develop new partnerships and innovative avenues for funding, such as developing a Cooperative Agreement with NOAA to be involved with Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) projects; working with The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to invest in oyster restoration through their Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); and using the targeting of ecosystem services derived from oyster restoration as a strategy to increase local funding opportunities. Additionally, TNC has continued to foster long-standing, highly successful relationships such as the partnership with NOAA's Restoration Center which has been funding habitat restoration for over a decade. This presentation will briefly outline these examples, and provide information on how to pursue these opportunities further.