

## Talking points for Communicating Blue Carbon:

*Remember to connect these points to your local/regional priorities.*

Why: Coastal habitats are some of the most productive ecosystems on the planet, providing key fisheries habitat, recreation and tourism, improved water quality, and coastal protection from storms and flooding.

Quick facts:

- Estuaries produce more food per acre than most mid-western farms
- Estuaries supply key habitat for over 75% of commercial fish catch and 80-90% of recreational fish catch
- Supports more than 69 million jobs
- Generates half the nation's GDP
- Protect almost \$2 trillion in trade each year
- 180 million Americans visit estuary and coastal waters each year, supporting \$214 billion annually in leisure and hospitality jobs
- Naturally remove and store large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere into the ground

What: Blue carbon refers to the carbon captured by, stored in and released by coastal wetlands – salt marsh, mangroves, seagrass and other tidal wetland habitats.

Quick facts:

- Coastal wetlands remove and store up to 30 times more carbon in the ground than forest on a per acre basis
- When these habitats are degraded or destroyed, the stored carbon can be released back into the atmosphere, often releasing hundreds of years of stored carbon in a matter of years

Opportunities: Blue carbon ecosystem services can attract more diverse funders interested in both the local community benefits and global climate benefits of coastal restoration activities, thus stimulating new projects that provide numerous ecological and economic benefits

- Policy: blue carbon ecosystem services can influence policy to prioritize the protection and restoration of coastal wetlands as a natural way to increase coastal resiliency
- Market: there is a market for carbon! Projects that reduce carbon and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere can generate carbon finance on the voluntary carbon market. Corporations, governments or individuals can purchase carbon offsets, and the sale from these purchases is reinvested back to support project activities (e.g. restoration efforts, land management, etc.)
- Research: improving our understanding of ALL of the ecosystem services provided by coastal wetlands will ultimately enable better management of our coast. Healthy coastal ecosystems will be more resilient to storms, sea-level rise and flooding, leading to more resilient coastal communities
- Management: incorporating blue carbon ecosystem services into management plans can lead to improved practices for land management to reduce GHG emissions.