

# **Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve Management Plan**

## **Restoration Plan Database: Crystal Reports of Individual Plan Summaries**

### **I. BASIC PLAN DATA**

**Plan name:**

Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve Management Plan

**Brief description of plan:**

This plan describes the resources and management of the SINERR. It includes general policies about resources and resource use. These policies will guide the staff who manage the site. The plan also tells the public what the SINERR is and how DNR will manage it. Sapelo Island is a sea island located in McIntosh County, Georgia. The Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve lies in the midst of an estuary where the currents of the Doboy Sound and the Duplin River converge. A total of 16,500 acres make up Sapelo Island, with SINERR occupying just over one-third and containing the Duplin River, the estuary, and several upland tracts.

**Region the plan is located within:**

South-Atlantic Region

**Watershed(s) included within the plan:**

S140x , S150x

**Area plan covers (in square miles):**

9.50 square miles

**Plan scale:**

County

**Plan's lead organization(s):**

Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

**Plan's Main Contact Information:**

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**On-line version of plan:**

**Date of original plan:**

1990

**Date of plan update:**

1999

**II. TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

**Plan includes restoration goals:** Y

**Level of detail of the goals:**

G

**Summary of the goals:**

Primary management goals for the SINERR include the following - (a) maintaining the integrity of the SINERR for research and educational programs, (b) protecting its lands and waters from stress and alteration, (c) promoting and encouraging improved scientific understanding of estuarine ecosystems, and (d) promoting quality public access to Sapelo Island for nature interpretation and low intensity recreation.

**Plan recommends or uses criteria for selecting restoration sites (e.g. cost benefit ratio, ecological benefits):**

Y

**Summary of the criteria:**

Key areas are the ecological units of a natural estuarine system that preserve, for research purposes, a full range of significant physical, chemical, and biological factors contributing to the diversity of fauna, flora, and natural processes occurring in the estuary. The entire western and southern sections of the Reserve, itself, are comprised almost entirely of tidal salt marshes and beaches and their attendant primary dune systems.

**Plan recommends restoration of specific project sites:**

N

**Plan includes a discussion of funding sources:**

N

**Plan addresses long-term protection of restored sites:**

Y

**Partners included in developing the plan:**

Federal  
State  
Academia  
Private landowners

**Type(s) of public outreach included during plan development:**

Distributed brochures or other materials  
Published plan in Federal Register  
Was subject to a public comment period

**Plan includes public outreach as part of plan implementation (e.g. annual public meeting, local group participation):**

Y

**Plan discusses the application of innovative approaches to restoration:**

N

**Plan make use of GIS mapping capabilities:**

N

**Plan addresses monitoring/reference sites for ecosystem level monitoring (baseline conditions) by:**

S

**Plan addresses monitoring/reference sites for project level monitoring by:**

S

**The plan discusses or coordinates with other restoration plans covering the same geographic area:**

Y

**Other plan names:**

Sapelo Island Comprehensive Plan (1998)

**Plan contains detailed information on historic and/or current habitat size, rate of loss, acres restored or protected, etc.):**

Y

**Summary of this habitat information:**

Sapelo Island has been extensively modified by the activities of man over the last two hundred years, primarily through agricultural operations, including cattle raising, and the diking and drainage of many of the island's low-lying areas. Agricultural activities have made the most impact. Native Americans were the first to utilize the area but only upon the arrival of Thomas Spalding in 1802 was there significant impact with natural prairie areas being drained and upland forests cleared for planting. Prior to the Civil War there was extensive diking marshes for rice cultivation. After the War however, a decline in agricultural practices led to deliberate or accidental breaching of many dikes resulting in the restoration of many marshes. The Georgia Sea Islands are fairly pristine in relation to other estuarine habitats in the United States.