

Potential of regulatory and voluntary carbon markets to support carbon credits for blue carbon restoration and conservation projects

Steve Emmett-Mattox, Restore America's Estuaries
CEC Joint Public Advisory Committee
November 6, 2014

sem@estuaries.org



RESTORE
AMERICA'S
ESTUARIES





**Our mission is to preserve
the nation's network of
estuaries by protecting
and restoring the lands
and waters essential to
the richness and diversity
of coastal life.**

Thanks to our major funding partners: Accenture, The Boeing Company, KBR, Commission for Environmental Cooperation, NOAA NERRS Science Collaborative, NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation, The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation, The Ocean Foundation, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Coastal Program

How Much Are We Investing in Restoration?

1. Historic Loss >> 1,496,079 acres
2. Combined Goals >> 646,800 acres (59% of loss)
3. 2009-2012 annual average restored ~6,959 acres
4. Annual restoration rate ~1.08% of total goal
5. U.S. coastal wetland loss ~80,000 acres/yr



Activities with Potential Net GHG Benefits

- Restoration of tidal wetlands and seagrasses
- Creation of tidal wetlands (e.g. beneficial use, lowering water table)
- Conservation/avoided loss of existing tidal wetlands and seagrass beds



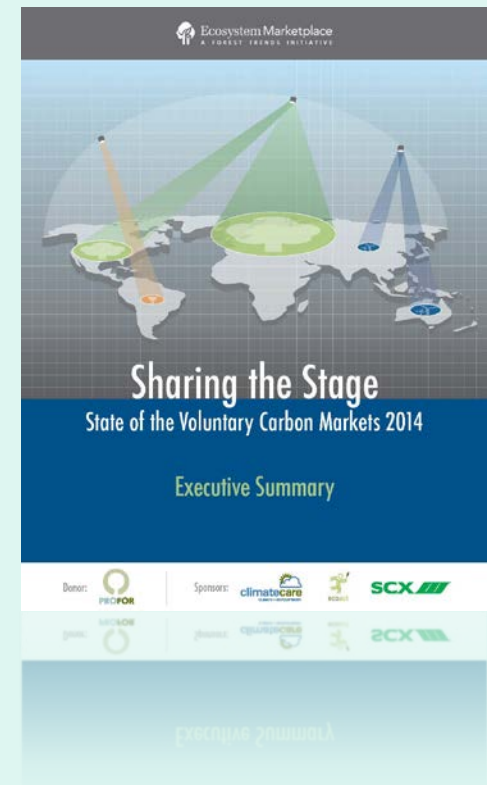
Compliance Markets in the U.S.

- California Global Warming Solutions Act
- Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative



Voluntary Markets in N. America

- \$78 million in N. America – 2013
- Anticipated growth of 300% by 2020
- 38% of offsets are from forestry/land use
- Verified Carbon Std. largest issuer – 47%
- To combat climate change and for corporate social responsibility (CSR)



Standards, Registries, & Methodologies

Standards for project activities

- Guarantee quality and integrity
- General requirements and guidance on GHG accounting
- Procedures for validation and verification



Registries ensure credits are tracked, prevent double-counting



Methodologies provide step-by-step requirements for quantifying GHG benefits following scientific good practice



Tidal Wetland and Seagrass Restoration Methodology

Goals

- Carbon finance for restoration
- Ecologically appropriate
- Scientifically credible
- Meet requirements of stringent GHG standards
- Broadly applicable to restoration
- Flexible in its use
- Practicable



Tidal Wetland Conservation Methodology

Context

- Global losses of **0.7 to 7%/yr**
- CO₂ emissions of ~ 500 million tons/yr
- Methodology to connect carbon finance to conservation
- Build on restoration methodology approaches
- Follow “Methodology Criteria” developed for CEC
- Will be applicable in Canada, Mexico and U.S.



Carbon Finance Discussion

- Price of carbon too low for full support
- Conservation more fully supported
- Cost-sharing common in land use projects
- ‘Grouping’ projects may reduce carbon accounting costs, achieve economies of scale
- Income could support typically underfunded project elements – e.g. monitoring and adaptive mgmt
- Need creative strategies to maximize carbon benefits while increasing restoration actions
- Ready for pilot projects



Blue Carbon Priorities

- Prepare a conservation methodology
- Increase regional-scale GHG data
- Support development of pilot projects
- Continue to connect regional, national, and international efforts



Thank you!