Charting the Course for Coastal Restoration and Protection

1995 COASTAL AMERICA PROGRESS REPORT

COASTAL AMERICA
A Partnership for Action

COASTAL AMERICA

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES
FOR A COASTAL AMERICA PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION
TO PROTECT, RESTORE AND MAINTAIN
THE NATION'S COASTAL LIVING RESOURCES

Background: In response to the need to protect, preserve and restore our living coastal heritage the Coastal America Partnership was established by a memorandum of understanding in 1992. This partnership for action is comprised of those Federal agencies with statutory responsibilities for coastal resources or whose operational activities affect the coastal environment. The partners are committed to a national effort which is guided by the concepts of ecosystem management and sustainable development in addressing primary coastal concerns, including habitat loss and degradation, nonpoint source pollution and contaminated sediments. The Partnership focuses on regional activities that provide direct local and watershed action.

Purpose: The purpose of Coastal America is to: (1) protect, preserve, and restore the Nation's coastal ecosystems through existing Federal capabilities and authorities; (2) collaborate and cooperate in the stewardship of coastal living resources by working in together and in partnership with other Federal programs, and by integrating Federal actions with state, local, tribal government, and non-governmental efforts; and (3) provide a framework for action that effectively focuses expertise and resources on jointly identified problems to produce demonstrable environmental and programmatic results that may serve as models for effective management of coastal living resources.

Statutory Basis: This interagency partnership operates within existing authorities and serves to link many Federal statutes that affect coastal living resources including but not limited to: Clean Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, Water Resources Development Acts and National Environmental Policy Act. This Memorandum of Understanding does not amend or abridge any existing statutory authorities.

General Scope: Coastal America provides a forum for interagency collaborative action and a mechanism to facilitate regional action plans to protect, preserve, and restore the Nation's coastal living resources. Partnership efforts will continue to emphasize the shared coastal concerns of habitat loss and degradation, nonpoint source pollution and contaminated sediments. Other priority issues will be addressed as appropriate. To facilitate program activities, the partners have established a Principals Group, a National Implementation Team (NIT), Regional Implementation Teams (RITs), and a Coastal America office. The partners ensure their organization's adequate regional and national representation and participation in these endeavors.

Responsibilities: The Principals establish overall policy for the Coastal America Partnership. The Principals are senior policy representatives of the partnership agencies at the sub-cabinet level. The Chair of the Principals Group is designated by the Partnership. The group meets semiannually at a minimum.

The NIT members represent their respective agencies at national coordinating meetings, provide advice to the Coastal America office, represent Coastal America in various forums, participate on special workgroups as necessary and explore and facilitate coordination of national, inter-regional and other large-scale projects. The members are senior national-level managers from the appropriate operating elements of the partnership agencies. The NIT is chaired by the Director of the Coastal America office. The team meets monthly at a minimum.

The RITs are the primary operating units for Coastal America and provide forums for interagency consultation and action. The RIT members identify or develop regional strategies for joint action and facilitate mechanisms for their implementation. The members are senior regional-level management staff from the appropriate operating elements of the partnership agencies. The RIT chairs are elected on a rotating basis by the respective teams. The teams meet quarterly at a minimum.

The Coastal America office serves to coordinate the activities related to the purpose of the partnership mission. The office provides the external point of contact for the partnership and facilitates the activities of the Principals, NIT and RITs. In addition, the office is a catalyst for development and facilitation of national projects and products, and education and training activities.

Funding: Each fiscal year, the partners will identify those authorities under which multi-agency, intergovernmental projects can be funded. Projects meeting Coastal America criteria are afforded priority within each partner's program, as appropriate.

Reports and Documentation: On an annual basis the Coastal America office prepares and submits a progress report to the Principals which identifies management actions undertaken and evaluates the effectiveness of program activities.

Charting the Course for Coastal Restoration and Protection

1995 Coastal America Progress Report

COASTAL AMERICA ...

A PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION

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April 1996

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Department of Transportation
Environmental Protection Agency
Executive Office of the President

"Coastal America's ability to bring agencies and organizations together to achieve common objectives in the coastal arena continues to serve as a model for effective government in this time of declining resources...We accomplish this through our partnership structure that links national policy formulation to regional planning and ultimately, to local project implementation...The partnership has demonstrated that federal, state, tribal, local and nongovernmental entities can apply their individual statutory authorities, expertise and talents to accomplish tasks that no organization could undertake alone."

Robert Perciasepe, Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. EPA, and Chair Coastal America

Coastal America Colleagues Letter October 1995

I. SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

THE PROCESS

Coastal America leverages the resources, expertise and authorities of the federal resource, infrastructure and military agencies with state, local, tribal and nongovernmental organizations to collaboratively address coastal environmental problems. This innovative action-oriented initiative is a true partnership process, not a program. The partnership was established by a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the federal partner agencies (see inside front cover). The federal partners include: the Departments of Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Navy and Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Executive Office of the President.

The partnership operates through a national, regional and local team structure that brings the stake-holders to the table at the appropriate level. This collaborative multi-agency structure enables national policy issues to be identified and resolved, regional plans to be developed and local projects to be implemented.

At the National Level

National policy issues are addressed by a Principals Group comprised of Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries from the federal partner agencies. A National Implementation Team, comprised of senior level representatives from the federal partner agencies, implements the policy directives of the Principals Group and ensures collaboration between the agencies. This multi-agency problem-solving approach ensures early identification of issues and encourages timely resolution by senior level policy-makers and program managers. For example, a policy preventing beneficial use of dredged material for wetland restoration was modified and a broader legislative solution was implemented to encourage the use of dredged material for habitat creation.

At the Regional Level

Regional strategies are developed by Regional Implementation Teams comprised of senior regional managers. These strategies serve as a framework for program implementation and project selection. This collaborative regional planning process is guided by the concepts of sustainable development and seeks to incorporate environmental objectives into regional development plans. The process of developing a comprehensive regional strategy encourages the early identification of opportunities to restore and protect the environment while moving forward with vital economic development.

At the Local Level

Local projects are implemented by partnership teams representing the stake-holders. The local teams leverage the resources and expertise of the federal, state and local agencies with nongovernmental efforts to accomplish tasks which no single organization could accomplish alone. This collaborative approach results in cost-effective and innovative solutions. Working in partnership, thousands of acres of wetlands are being restored, hundreds of miles of streams for anadromous fish are being re-established, and endangered marine mammals, birds and fish are being protected.

EVALUATING OUR PROGRESS

Over the last year, the Coastal America partnership has continued to mature. The partnership reviewed and evaluated its efforts to date and worked to improve its operational structure. This review showed that the Coastal America collaborative problem-solving structure can effectively enable national issues to be identified and resolved, regional strategies to be developed and implemented, and local environmental improvements to be realized. In 1995, the partnership addressed important education/outreach and technology transfer issues at the national level, developed and refined action-oriented strategies at the regional level, and initiated 30 new projects and completed 20 ongoing projects at the local level. To date, over 180 projects are underway or completed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Collaborative partnership process established
- 180 projects underway or completed
- 26 States participating
- 2 Territories and District of Columbia participating
- Over $48 million committed to projects
- Over 300 nonfederal partners participating
- Consensus reports on key issues published

Major accomplishments over the year included refinement of the operational structure, increased awareness of coastal issues and partnership efforts through education/outreach initiatives, the improved transfer of technologies among the regions, and the development of a national strategic plan for the partnership.

OPERATIONAL REFINEMENTS

Throughout the year, the partnership operated under the 1994 Memorandum of Understanding which committed the partners to a national effort guided by the concept of sustainable development. This emphasis on a partnership approach to ensuring the sustainable development of our coastal environment was reinforced by the Principals at their June 1995 meeting. At this meeting the Principals also discussed progress to date, approved several new initiatives and elected a new Chair, Mr. Robert Perciasepe, Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Dr. D. James Baker, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration served as the Coastal America Chair from October 1993 to October 1995. The rotation of the Chairmanship among the partner agencies is required by the 1994 Memorandum of Understanding and reinforces the collaborative nature of the partnership.

The June 1995 Coastal America Principals meeting.

The national and regional teams continued to work on improving the partnership process and increasing the involvement of state, local, tribal and nongovernmental organizations in the partnership. To evaluate the partnership process and improve the operational structure, a planning conference with national and regional representatives was held in November 1995 in Tiburon, California. At the meeting, regional team chairs presented progress reports for their regions and the national team members presented updates on their organizations. Partnership problems and issues were discussed and follow-up corrective actions were identified. An important outcome of the meeting was the realization that given reduced budgets, downsizing and potential reorganization, now more than ever, there is a need for a collaborative partnership process to address the environmental problems along the nation's coasts.

"Partnerships work like a car. Without all parts working together, the car doesn't run. The federal agencies need to work closer with the states. The states can lead a project, and the federal agencies can add funding, coordination skills and expertise. The Coastal America process makes it easier to build these partnerships and makes it easier to plan and implement comprehensive coastal restoration efforts."

Colonel Terrence Salt, Director of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

Coastal America Technology Transfer Workshop July 1995

EDUCATION/OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

To increase awareness of coastal issues and expand our outreach efforts, several informational and educational products were developed. A short video was produced that outlines the problems along the nation's coasts, describes the partnership and highlights several projects throughout the country. National and regional exhibits and displays were developed and informational brochures produced to increase awareness of Coastal America activities and to encourage people to get involved in partnership projects. To provide broader access to partnership publications and federal agency information on coastal issues, a Coastal America home page was established on the World Wide Web. Lastly, an effort was initiated to establish a network of regional coastal learning centers throughout the country.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER INITIATIVES

To further strengthen the partnership process and to encourage an increased exchange of ideas and experiences, an evaluation of the procedural and technical lessons learned from our partnership efforts was initiated. A technical report entitled "Coastal Restoration and Protection: Lessons Learned" was completed and a National Technology Transfer Workshop for Project Managers was held in July in Tampa, Florida, in concert with CZ 95, to discuss the report and encourage the exchange of ideas.

The "Lessons Learned" report summarizes information gathered during the implementation of selected Coastal America projects over the last three years. Fifty projects were examined by Coastal America's Technology Transfer Working Group and the project data were provided by regional teams and project managers. The analyzed projects were organized into six categories, based on the type of habitat restoration being conducted, whether the project's focus was endangered or threatened species, or whether the project addressed a source of pollution threatening coastal resources. The analysis of these projects identified specific lessons learned. The report includes both procedural experience gained during project development and planning, and technical information gathered during project implementation.

STRATEGIC PLAN

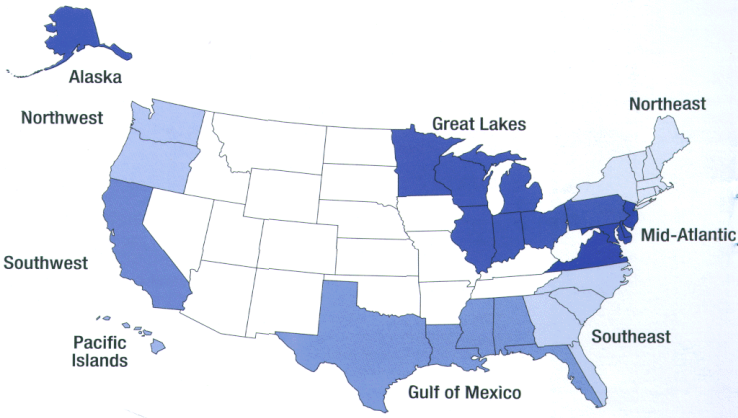
During the year, a strategic plan was developed to guide future efforts. The strategic plan focuses on the partnership process, program initiatives, and policy issues. The plan recognizes that Coastal America can be strengthened by: using the partnership process to implement the Administration's ecosystem management and sustainable development recommendations; increasing state, tribal, local, and nongovernmental involvement in developing regional priorities and implementing projects; and increasing the ability of the regional teams to function more efficiently. Program initiatives include increasing awareness of the Coastal America process; broadening education and outreach activities; developing a strategy to monitor, evaluate, and identify projects through advanced technologies; enhancing technology transfer mechanisms; and improving communication through the use of electronic bulletin boards and the Internet home page. Policy issues include expanding funding sources and mechanisms, and strengthening ties to other multi-agency initiatives, such as ecosystem management and sustainable development.

II. GUIDING REGIONAL ACTIONS

Coastal America's nine Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) are the implementing mechanism for the partnership. The RITs are composed of regional representatives from the partnership agencies who collaboratively develop site-specific, watershed-focused proposals which could be enhanced through the partnership process. RIT members examine their own agency's programs and authorities in an effort to eliminate areas of overlap with those of the other partnership agencies and, therefore, address coastal problems in a more efficient and effective manner.

The RITs develop regional action strategies designed to define major issues, special focus areas, goals and objectives within each region, and specify the processes whereby joint projects are identified and implemented. Within the framework of each regional strategy, site-specific coastal projects addressing such issues as habitat loss, nonpoint source pollution, and contaminated sediments are identified and planned. Finally, each RIT establishes priorities for project implementation.

The ability of RITs to combine program talents and resources has led to innovative solutions, a greater focus on collaborative program direction, and timely project implementation. The success of the RITs led to the initiation of more than 180 projects throughout the country involving at least 300 nonfederal sponsors of Coastal America projects. Over the years, the RITs have found that the value of Coastal America can be described along five major themes: The Partnership Process; Public Involvement/Education; Technology Transfer; A System's Approach; and, Adaptive Management and Monitoring.



Coastal America Regions

"We are facing downsizing, National Performance Review mandates, reduced budgets, reorganization, and potential legislative changes. Not all changes are bad. Out of adversity can come strength and personal growth. Look at what is happening as a challenge and a chance to grow and become stronger. Seizing the opportunities created by these new challenges is what Coastal America is all about."

James Brown,
U.S. FWS and former Southeast RIT Chair

Coastal America Annual Retreat November 1995

Coastal America Chair Robert Perciasepe, Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency meets with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Implementation Team.

- *The Partnership Process really works, allowing the agencies to combine resources and authorities to achieve common objectives and to collectively accomplish more than any single agency would be able to do alone. It also leads to the timely resolution of policy conflicts among the partnership agencies.*

- *Public Involvement/Education is a vital component of the partnership because it utilizes the public's knowledge and interest in problem identification and encourages valuable volunteer efforts. The active involvement of the public increases their environmental awareness and leads to positive action.*

- *Technology Transfer can improve the regulatory process by considering the results of testing and monitoring in one area and applying that technology to other areas. Coastal America has successfully demonstrated new proven technologies and has encouraged the utilization of these technologies among various regions of the country.*

- *A System Approach encourages a broader approach to addressing a specific problem. Conversely, the partnership has demonstrated how a broad regional issue can be addressed at a local level. For example, many of the regions have identified priority watersheds and are implementing an array of site specific projects within the watershed in a system wide approach.*

- *Adaptive Management and Monitoring can modify agency responses in a manner that allows multiple objectives to be accomplished. Through experiences, the RITs have found that evaluating what does and does not work is critical to ensuring successful efforts in the future.*

The following pages highlight the regional strategies, specific projects and some of the lessons learned from Coastal America's partnership efforts at the regional level.

NORTHEAST

There are two primary coastal problems identified for strategic action by the Northeast RIT. The first problem is to stop and reverse the conversion of temperate coastal salt marshes into monotypic stands of the common reed *Phragmites australis*. The second major issue faced by the Northeast RIT is the removal of highly toxic sediments from rivers, ports and harbors. The Northeast RIT has various efforts underway to map existing contaminated sediments, with a specific focus on Boston Harbor, Massachusetts, and Casco Bay, Maine. Although both problems are of significant concern, the Northeast RIT considers restoring salt marshes as the single most important restoration initiative in New England.

SACHUEST POINT SALT MARSH RESTORATION

The Sachuest Point salt marsh is located in the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge in Middletown, Rhode Island. The marsh is currently fed by a tidal creek that flows from the Sakonnet River through approximately 150 meters of beach to a 5.5-foot-diameter culvert. The tidal creek then flows through a relatively healthy salt marsh into an 8-foot-wide channel crossed by a road with a 20-inch culvert that is constricting the tidal flow to a 13-acre wetland. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration leads project plans to increase the tidal flow throughout the marsh and the wetland by replacing the 20-inch restriction with two 30-inch culverts. Additional work may provide freshwater marsh and a coastal grassland habitat.

These changes should increase the tidal range by one to two feet, providing the marsh greater high tide elevations and significantly lower low tide flushing elevations. Monitoring will be conducted for three years and will include rates of colonization by *Spartina alternaflora* and other beneficial salt marsh vegetation, invertebrate species, plant cover composites and height, hydrology, soil salinity and finfish use of the tidal creeks. This collaborative effort will greatly increase the final ecological outputs of this project.

Aerial view of Sachuest Point showing National Wildlife Refuge restoration site.

"The collaborative efforts of the Coastal America partnership greatly increased the final ecological outputs of the Sachuest Point Salt Marsh Restoration project...maximizing the ecological diversity of this habitat on the national refuge."

William Hubbard
U.S. Army COE and Northeast RIT Chair

MID-ATLANTIC

Several factors threaten the ecological balance of the Mid-Atlantic region of the country. Disease, over harvesting, predation and pollution have caused declines in fish and shellfish populations in the region. The Mid-Atlantic RIT is targeting these issues in their effort to clean up and improve their coastal ecosystem.

LITTLE FALLS DAM PROJECT

The Little Falls dam is located on the Maryland side of the Potomac River just west of the Washington, D.C., line. The 1,400-foot dam is used to divert water from the Potomac River into the Little Falls pumping station which supplies water to the Washington, D.C., area. When the dam was constructed in 1959, a fish ladder was built to allow for the passage of anadromous fish. The device was never successful, and soon after construction, maintenance of the fish ladder ceased.

The dam and the dysfunctional fish ladder have almost completely eliminated anadromous fish species from this upstream stretch of the Potomac River. The continual decline in numbers of anadromous fish in the Potomac River has renewed interest in an effective fish passage to allow those species to use the historic spawning and rearing areas upstream of the Little Falls dam. The Little Falls Task Group was formed by representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Park Service, National Biological Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Maryland Department of Environmental Regulatory Administration, Montgomery County government and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. The group plans to select alternative methods to allow the passage of American shad, striped bass, and blueback herring, up the river while maintaining the required water supply for the Washington area.

Little Falls Dam and pumping station on the Potomac River in Maryland.

SOUTHEAST

The Southeast RIT has been focusing considerable effort on projects that remove obstructions to anadromous fish migration along the North Carolina coast. For example, a number of projects are being initiated in the Albermarle-Pamlico Sound System in North Carolina, where the removal of obstructions, such as Quaker Neck and Cherry Hospital dams, will open approximately 160 river miles for historic striped bass, shad and sturgeon habitat. In addition, the Southeast RIT has undertaken projects to restore wetlands, seagrass beds and mangroves in Florida, and projects to help protect endangered species, including a project to protect the right whale off the coasts of Georgia and Florida.

MUNYON ISLAND RESTORATION

Munyon Island lies within the John D. MacArthur State Park located in the northeastern section of Lake Worth Lagoon, near Palm Beach, Florida. Historically, the island was part of a wetland system connecting other portions of MacArthur State Park. During the construction of the Intercoastal Waterway the area was used as a dredged sediment placement site resulting in the loss of approximately 30 acres of productive mangrove, *Spartina* grass wetlands, and seagrass beds. The proposed project will restore and enhance an additional 11-acre site adjacent to a companion project undertaken by Palm Beach County. The Coastal America project will also include upland restoration with a 4-acre protective berm and a 3.7-acre vegetative buffer to provide shoreline stabilization on Munyon Island. A related activity will involve placing approximately 110,000 cubic yards of dredged sediments from the Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway into an anoxic hole north of Munyon Island to restore 9 acres of submerged aquatic habitat.

The Munyon Island restoration activities will include shoreline grading to wetlands elevations, and the removal of exotic vegetation and some of the excess dredged sediments to establish necessary elevations prior to planting. Tidal pools and channels will be created to increase habitat diversity and permit more efficient tidal flushing. Finally, the shoreline will be fortified with limestone boulder rip-rap to protect the newly planted salt marsh vegetation from boat wakes and wind driven waves.

Aerial photo of Munyon Island showing restoration site.

"There are a wonderful group of partners in this project—everybody from Ducks Unlimited to local institutions here, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Corps and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. All too often in the past, many of the partners have been at odds on various issues and it is tremendously uplifting, here at the end of 1995, to see us working together so well."

Andrew Sansom, Executive Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Salt Bayou Project Dedication Ceremony December 1995

GULF OF MEXICO

Each of the five Gulf Coast states has its own unique array of environmental problems. This diversity is reflected in the wide variety of projects included on the regions Endorsed Projects List. However, each of the states also exhibits ecological systems and associated problems that are common to others. Coastal habitat restoration throughout the region has been the primary emphasis of Gulf of Mexico RIT projects to date, ranging from shoreline protection of critical whooping crane habitat in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, Texas, to planting mangroves at Cockroach Bay, Florida, to dune restoration at Shell Island, Florida. The Salt Bayou Project is an important Coastal America partnership habitat restoration project in the region.

SALT BAYOU PROJECT

The Salt Bayou marsh restoration project was declared complete and operational during ribbon cutting ceremonies in December 1995. The project involves about 60,000 acres of publicly owned wetlands located within the McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge, the Sea Rim State Park and the Murphree Wildlife Management Area, near Port Arthur, Texas. The restoration involved construction of a water control structure to both prevent salinity intrusion from the Sabine-Naches and Gulf Intercoastal Waterways and to provide fish and wildlife management capabilities. The project, coordinated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has been described as "the marriage of environmental restoration with engineering." It is a model of the Coastal America partnership process since it successfully combined the resources of the federal partners with a state agency, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and a nongovernmental organization, Ducks Unlimited. The project was hailed as the start of a new era of cooperation between federal and state agencies, and public and private organizations; and signaled a major step in wetlands restoration in the Gulf of Mexico region.

Representatives from Ducks Unlimited, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Coastal America, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Salt Bayou Project Dedication Ceremony.

SOUTHWEST

California has lost nearly 90 percent of its wetlands. The Southwest RIT's number one priority is the preservation and restoration of the remaining 10 percent of wetlands habitat found in the region. Bays and harbors, both estuarine and marine, tend to be in highly urbanized regions, but also represent the most tangible natural resource assets of the state. There is a great need for protecting and restoring the multiple uses of these bays through effective environmental management plans, monitoring and reducing nonpoint source pollution.

SONOMA BAYLANDS WETLAND DEMONSTRATION

The $8-million Sonoma Baylands restoration project was initiated by the California State Coastal Conservancy and the Sonoma Land Trust to preserve open space and restore wetlands. Coastal America's involvement began in 1992 when the Southwest RIT initiated activities to use dredged sediments from the maintenance of nearby navigation channels to restore the converted tidal wetlands.

Aerial view of Sonoma Baylands showing the 348-acre restoration site.

In 1994, a pilot area received 207,000 cubic yards of maintenance dredged material from the adjacent Petaluma River channel. In 1995, the 309-acre main unit received 1,712,900 cubic yards of dredged material from the deepening of Oakland Harbor channels. Recently, a levee was opened on the 39-acre pilot unit which allowed natural tidal flow into the area, thus initiating its return to a salt marsh environment. Full restoration of tidal action to the 309-acre unit is scheduled for September 1996, a full year earlier than anticipated.

HAMILTON AIR FIELD PROJECT

The Southwest RIT has endorsed a project to restore tidal wetlands at the Hamilton Army Airfield Base. The base is located approximately 25 miles north of San Francisco on San Pablo Bay in the city of Novato. The base is being disposed of by the Department of the Army under the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1988. The airfield parcel includes approximately 700 acres of diked historic tidal salt marsh. The Coastal America agencies are pooling efforts to have the property transferred and restored to wetlands. A state resource agency has stepped forward to serve as the landowner. In addition, the Army has agreed to examine the feasibility of linking their contamination cleanup responsibilities to the wetland restoration effort. The state and federal agencies have agreed in principal on a set of fish and wildlife restoration goals and objectives. Efforts by the region are now focused on resolving flood control issues between the Army and the potential new landowner by proposing the Army use clean dredge spoils to isolate contamination on the parcel and transfer funds originally designated for contamination cleanup to flood control.

"We are reversing the historical trend of the Bay being diked and reduced in size. We are not building an instant marsh, but a project that will evolve into a marsh over a relatively short time period."

Lt. Colonel Michael Walsh, District Engineer, U.S. Army COE

Sonoma Baylands Project Event January 1995

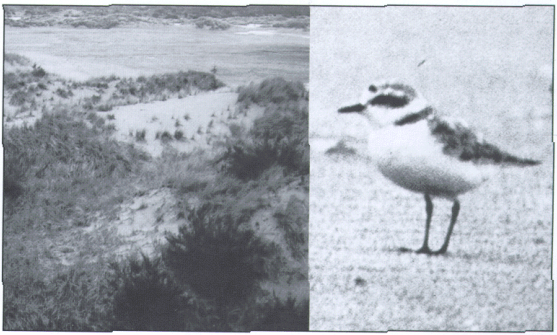
NORTHWEST

The Northwest RIT is currently struggling with a multitude of complex environmental issues covering a broad geographic area that encompasses very large and ecologically diverse watersheds that extend from the crests of high mountains to the sea. In particular, the Columbia River Basin presents many challenges. The primary strategy of the RIT is to focus efforts on protecting and restoring critical species within watersheds and ecosystems in the region.

SNOWY PLOVER HABITAT AND WETLAND CREATION

The snowy plover has been listed as a threatened bird species by the state of Oregon since 1975. In 1990, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the bird as a threatened species. Its decline has been attributed primarily to habitat loss caused by the establishment of European beachgrass along the northwest Pacific coast. This project concentrates on land along the Umpqua River North Spit within the Oregon Dune National Recreation Area near Reedport, Oregon, where European beachgrass has been used to stabilize the dunes and lessen the effects of wind erosion. However, the grass has eliminated flat, open, sand beaches required for nesting by the snowy plover and resulted in their numbers dropping drastically.

The habitat restoration has created approximately 10 acres of suitable nesting habitat for snowy plover as well as a one to two acre wetland area. Habitat expansion was accomplished by placing clean dredged sediments, removed from the Winchester Bay Federal Navigation Project, on the beach. The project was completed in 1995. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to monitor the restored area for the return of snowy plovers.



A snowy plover and the inhospitable grass covered dunes that were once productive nesting area.

GREAT LAKES

Regional habitat restoration and nonpoint source pollution prevention have been a high priority of the Great Lakes RIT. Also, toxic pollutants in the bottom sediments of numerous areas of the Great Lakes, especially in areas adjacent to harbors, industrial areas, and urban centers are major concerns. Another priority issue for the Great Lakes RIT is the control of "exotic" nonindigenous organisms in waters of the Great Lakes. Foreign species, including the sea lamprey, zebra mussels, the alewife, Asian clam, and various plant species, have invaded the Great Lakes system since the early 1800's and have competed aggressively with native biota.

SAULT ST. MARIE, MICHIGAN, SEA LAMPREY TRAPS

Sea Lampreys, native to the Atlantic Ocean, gained entry to Lake Ontario through the Erie Canal in the late 1800's. They moved into Lake Erie in the 1920's and eventually spread into the rest of the Great Lakes. Adult lampreys spawn in feeder streams and rivers. The offspring spend 3-18 years burrowed in stream bottoms. The young lamprey transform into adults and migrate down stream to open waters where they live as parasites capable of killing up to 40 pounds of fish each before returning upstream to spawn and die.

The parasitic sea lamprey has devastated fish stocks in some of the Great Lakes. The problem is particularly severe in Lake Huron, which has more sea lamprey than the other Great Lakes combined. Parasitic lampreys attach to salmon and other large fish found in the lake. The commercial and sport fishing industries on the lakes have been severely affected by the sea lamprey. The Lake Huron fishing industry alone loses an estimated $2.5 million annually due to lampreys.

The proposed project is to reduce the number of sea lampreys by placing up to six traps at the Soo Lock Complex, near Sault St. Marie, Michigan. The site is ideal because it is on the St. Mary's River, a known sea lamprey spawning area between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. Each trap consists of a wire mesh basket which allows the lampreys to enter the trap, but not exit. The female lamprey caught will be destroyed. The males will be sterilized and released to disrupt and halt the breeding cycle. The traps would be installed at the U.S. Hydroelectric Power House which is owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Two parasitic sea lampreys attached to a fish.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission, which is the local sponsor, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been collaboratively working with the Corps to develop the best trap design. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Canada Lamprey Control have expressed support for the project, and Corps is reviewing the entire project proposal.

"During September 1995, heavy rains resulted in a 100-year flood event on the Kenai River. While numerous bulkheads and other artificial bank protection structures washed away or were heavily damaged, all recent habitat restoration efforts involving bioengineering and revegetation survived intact. The Service is proud to have been a partner in Coastal America's project."

Dave Allen,
Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Anchorage, Alaska

ALASKA

The current focus of the Alaska RIT's strategy is the restoration of freshwater anadromous fish habitats, nearshore marine habitats, and the protection of migratory bird and marine mammal populations. In general, the Alaska RIT limits their activities to coastal areas within the existing Coastal Zone Management program.

Kenai River Resource Protection

The Kenai River drains more than 2,000 square miles of diverse landscape on the Kenai Peninsula of Alaska. This river provides important spawning, rearing and migratory habitat for several species of Pacific salmon; including multiple runs of Chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon. The watershed is experiencing rapid development and increased pressure from recreational fishermen and boaters. These pressures have resulted in bank erosion and the loss of natural habitat.

Kenai River sites after flooding. Vegetated project sites on left. Eroded site on right.

The Coastal America Kenai River project demonstrates techniques used to restore riverbanks and provide fisheries habitat. The demonstration project includes a combination of shoreline cribwall support structures, revegetation with grasses and willows, and construction of elevated boardwalks along the riverbank that have wooden stairways to access the river. During the 100-year flood event in 1995, minimal damage occurred to the vegetated riverbanks established with funds from Coastal America, while traditional protection devices, such as bulkheads and groins, were severely impacted and damaged.

Historical Biodiversity at Remote Air Force Sites

The project inventoried present and past biotic communities at two Air Force remote sites in the arctic coastal tundra to create a basis for establishing guidelines for mitigation and restoration. Core samples were collected from the surface to a depth in the permafrost and a view of the history of biological communities and their responses to environmental change over the last 10,000 years was created. The study found significant differences in both ancient and modern environments between eastern and western regions along the arctic coast of Alaska. These difference were most likely caused by varying substrates and different climate conditions. The study also identified a group of plant species that may be suitable for revegetation efforts at arctic coastal sites.

III. A PROCESS FOR THE FUTURE

The sustainability of coastal resources will continue to be a very significant national, state and local issue. If the existing trend of population movements to coastal regions continues, pressures from major development initiatives will increasingly tax coastal living resources. The Coastal America partnership believes that over the coming years, the United States will need to strengthen its resolve to address significant environmental problems in a collaborative manner that balances environmental and economic goals. This belief is also expressed in the recent report of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, entitled "Sustainable America: A New Consensus."

The Coastal America partnership is already beginning to respond to the anticipated evolution in coastal resource management. It is doing so by demonstrating that partnerships are the key to addressing many of our nation's problems. Coastal America is aggressively recruiting more federal and nonfederal partners to demonstrate the value added by Coastal America's approach. Education and outreach programs are being designed and implemented by the partnership to help prevent future coastal environmental problems. And, Coastal America is strengthening and empowering the regional and local teams to collaboratively address critical issues.

Coastal America will continue to integrate the expertise and resources of federal resource agencies, infrastructure agencies and defense departments with state and local agencies, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to address environmental problems along our nation's coast. This national, regional and local partnership process ensures the effective and efficient use of limited resources and provides an important consensus building mechanism that cuts across institutional boundaries. The partnership's organizational process enables national policy issues to be identified and resolved, regional strategies to be implemented and local environmental improvements to be realized.

The partnership's shared vision encompasses the conservation of the nation's coastal resources and the sustainable development of these resources. To achieve this vision, we believe that projects must be initiated at the state and local level. Coastal America's regional teams can then advise and assist state and local governments, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector in implementing projects that address critical coastal problems. This process ensures that all stake-holders are brought to the policy table with an equal standing, and that issues are addressed on a watershed basis.

National and regional team members at the 1995 Coastal America Conference.

The Coastal America partners are committed to a national effort which is guided by the concepts of ecosystem management and sustainable development in confronting key coastal concerns. This vision embraces an integrated system

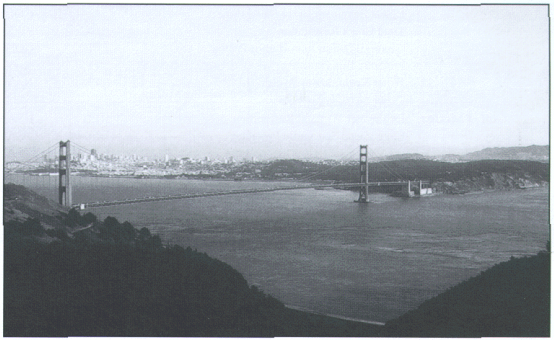
"Today, almost half of the U.S. population lives along the coast. Each year we spend billions of dollars to manage our coasts, to provide food, recreational opportunities and jobs. Coastal America is a partnership between federal, state and local organizations that is working to protect and restore our coastal environments. Coastal America has made real strides in ensuring that we use our resources efficiently to promote sustainable development."

Dr. D. James Baker, Under Secretary of Commerce and former Chair of Coastal America 93-95

of social, economic, and environmental values that reinforce each other. This is a major Coastal America objective in the transfer of technologies that protect and support clean, abundant habitats and water resources, healthy ecosystems, and continued use of waterways for the nation's economic and environmental benefit.

This holistic approach to solving coastal ecosystem problems will require an increased commitment of financial and human resources from state and local governments, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. A collaborative process is particularly important given the continuing decrease in federal human and financial resources. Encouraging this pooling of resources will require a strengthening of the partnership's organizational structure. Initially, to this end, Coastal America is establishing Regional Principals Groups, which will be comprised of regional federal leaders and appropriate state representatives. The ultimate goal is to formally include in the Coastal America partnership, members from nongovernmental organizations and the private sector.

Coastal America will continue to provide an effective forum that can address conflicting objectives and ensure that both the environment and the economy are well served. By leveraging resources, expertise and authorities, the partnership's collaborative process reduces costs and makes government work better.



Ensuring the sustainable development of our coastal environment is a guiding principle of the partnership.

APPENDICES

1995 PROJECT STATUS

Region	Project Name	State	Lead	Status
Northeast	Faulkners Island Project	CT	COE/FWS	Underway
	Milford Beach Dune Restoration	CT	FWS	Underway
	Stratford Salt Marsh Restoration	CT	FWS	Underway
	Long Island Sound Habitat Restoration	CT/NY	EPA	Underway
	Boston Harbor Eelgrass Restoration	MA	EPA	Underway
	Ballard Street Salt Marsh Restoration	MA	EPA	Underway
	Navy Eelgrass Mapping	MA/RI	USN	Underway
	Little River Salt Marsh Restoration	NH	USDA/NRCS	Underway
	Boyd's Marsh Restoration	RI	COE	Underway
	Blackstone River Project	RI/MA	COE/NPS	Underway
Mid-Atlantic	Little Falls Dam Project	MD	COE	Endorsed
	Biological and Water Quality Improvements	VA	USAF	Underway
	Fish Habitat Improvement	VA	USAF	Endorsed
	Runoff Mitigation and Pond Management	VA	USAF	Endorsed
Southeast	Wetlands Restoration	FL	USAF	Endorsed
	Lower Savannah River Basin Project	GA	COE	Endorsed
	Tidal Creek Restoration	NC	FWS	Endorsed
	Catano Bay/San Juan Harbor Project	PR	COE	Endorsed
	Endemic Boa Project	PR	NAVY	Underway
	Water Reclamation Project	PR	NAVY	Underway
Gulf of Mexico	Freshwater Wetland Restoration	FL	USAF	Endorsed
	Loggerhead Sea Turtle Project	FL	USAF	Endorsed
	Longleaf Pine Forest Restoration	FL	USAF	Endorsed
	Coastal Pine Ecosystem Restoration	FL	USAF	Endorsed
	Oso Bay Soil Stabilization	FL	USAF	Endorsed
Southwest	Hamilton Army Airfield Project	CA	ARMY	Endorsed
Northwest	Salmon Habitat Enhancement	WA	USN	Underway
	Fresh Water Well Access for Salmon Rearing	WA	USN	Underway
	Neotropical Bird & Turtle Habitat Improvement	WA	USN	Underway
	Snowy Plover Habitat and Wetlands Creation	OR	FWS	Completed
Great Lakes	Hennepin Marsh Wetland Restoration	MI	COE	Endorsed
Alaska	Historic Biodiversity at Remote Air Force Sites	AK	USAF	Underway

1995 PROJECT SUMMARIES

NORTHEAST

Faulkners Island Project, Connecticut - Prevent further erosion of historic light house site and endangered roseate tern habitat.

Milford Beach Dune Restoration, Connecticut - Restore a portion of the McKinney Wildlife Refuge to a coastal dune habitat.

Stratford Salt Marsh Restoration, Connecticut - Restore various habitats in the Great Meadows Salt Marsh.

Long Island Sound Habitat Restoration, New York - Identify degraded coastal resources using planes and helicopters. Interpret the data and identify areas where restoration is needed.

Boston Harbor Eelgrass Restoration, Massachusetts - Implement a major reintroduction of eelgrass by having Navy divers conduct the plantings as a training exercise.

Ballard Street Salt Marsh Restoration, Massachusetts - Restore tidal flows in balance with flood protection.

Navy Eelgrass Mapping, Massachusetts and Rhode Island - Develop remote sensing technology for submerged eelgrass and algae beds.

Little River Salt Marsh Restoration, New Hampshire - Restore this salt marsh site based on USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service's regional overview of salt marsh restoration in New Hampshire.

Boyd's Marsh Restoration, Rhode Island - Evaluate the potential of Boyd's Marsh for a salt marsh restoration project.

Blackstone River Project, Rhode Island and Massachusetts - Restore anadromous fisheries migration, mitigate contaminated sediments and restore wetlands and water fowl habitat along the Blackstone River National Heritage Corridor.

MID-ATLANTIC

Little Falls Dam Project, Maryland - Establish an effective fish passage to allow anadromous fish to use the historic spawning and rearing areas upstream of the dam, while at the same time maintaining the required water supply for the Washington metropolitan area.

Biological and Water Quality Improvement, Virginia - Determine water quality and sedimentation in the Black River relative to species diversity and abundance of aquatic life. Implement appropriate survey recommendations on habitat degradation and loss.

Fish Habitat Improvement, Virginia - Analyze the water and fishery quality of Big Berthal Reservoir relative to species diversity and abundance. Implement appropriate follow-up actions to prevent habitat degradation and loss, and to preserve diversity.

MID-ATLANTIC (CONTINUED)

Runoff Mitigation and Pond Management, Virginia - Develop and implement erosion and sedimentation control measures based on biological survey recommendations in order to establish a self-sustaining balanced fish and aquatic pond population. Prevent habitat degradation and loss and reduce nonpoint source pollution.

SOUTHEAST

Wetlands Restoration, Florida - Restore a unique and imperiled ecological community, the interdunal swale marsh system at a former air force missile launch site. This action will re-establish the historic interspersion of wetlands within the coastal uplands and enhance biological diversity at Cape Canaveral.

Lower Savannah River Basin Project, Georgia - Determine if modifications should be made to the Savannah River below Augusta Navigation Project to improve the habitat of the fish and wildlife in the surrounding area.

Tidal Creek Restoration, North Carolina - Remove portions of tidal bars comprised of sand and shell formed parallel to the Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway across the mouths of tidal creeks. This action will restore estuarine circulation and shellfish harvest.

Catano Bay, San Jaun Harbor Project, Puerto Rico - Remove dredged material to restore tidal circulation to San Juan Harbor.

Endemic Boa Project, Puerto Rico - Survey and study the endangered boa constrictor population at the Sabana Seca Naval Installation and develop a conservation management plan.

Water Reclamation Project, Puerto Rico - Develop an alternative pollution treatment plan for Vieques, Puerto Rico to better protect the area's fragile coastal waters from nonpoint source pollution and effluent dumping.

GULF OF MEXICO

Freshwater Wetland Restoration, Florida - Destroy and control exotic noxious weed growth to restore native aquatic vegetation in 125 acres of wetlands.

Loggerhead Sea Turtle Project, Florida - Determine and develop the optimum lighting environment to prevent sea turtle hatchlings disorientation.

Longleaf Pine Forest Restoration, Florida - Restore approximately 300 acres of longleaf pine and sand pine ecosystems.

Coastal Pine Ecosystems Restoration, Florida - Manage ecosystem through helicopter controlled burning of 9,000 selected acres. This will support species composition and diversity.

Oso Bay Soil Stabilization, Texas - Restore 5,000 feet of shoreline to prevent natural undercutting by wind and wave action.

1995 PROJECT SUMMARIES (CONTINUED)

SOUTHWEST

Hamilton Air Field Project, California - Restore 700 acres of diked historic tidal salt marsh, and possibly link air field contamination cleanup responsibilities to the wetland restoration effort.

NORTHWEST

Salmon Habitat Enhancement, Washington - Build a water course for a newly constructed freshwater wetland pond so salmon can gain access for spawning.

Fresh Water Well Access for Salmon Rearing, Washington - Facilitate hatching eggs from fresh well water by piping water to endangered sockey salmon obtained from the Snake River.

Neotropical Bird and Turtle Habitat Improvement, Washington - Improve wildlife habitat by removing invasive exotic plant species, replacing it with native plant species that will provide food and homes for migratory songbirds, small mammals and deer.

Snowy Plover Habitat and Wetlands Creation, Oregon - Create approximately 10 acres of suitable nesting habitat along the Umpqua River North Spit for the threatened snowy plover.

GREAT LAKES

Hennepin Marsh Wetland Restoration, Michigan - Restore wetland habitat in Detroit River.

ALASKA

Historic Biodiversity at Remote Air Force Sites, Alaska - Inventory present and past biotic communities at two Air Force remote sites to create a basis for establishing guidelines for mitigation and restoration.

The Departments of the Air Force and Navy, initiated projects in 1995 in addition to the projects discussed above. A detailed summary of these innovative projects is available from:

Coastal America Initiative
HQ USAF/CEV
1260 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1260

Coastal America Initiative
Department of the Navy
(Installations & Environment)
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Coastal America puts the federal agencies on the same team . . .

FEDERAL PARTNERS

Executive Office of the President
- Council on Environmental Quality

Department of Agriculture
- Farm Services Administration
- Forest Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

Department of the Air Force

Department of the Army
- Corps of Engineers

Department of Commerce
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
  - National Marine Fisheries Service
  - National Ocean Service (Coastal Zone Management)
  - Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (Sea Grant)

Department of Defense

Department of Energy

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of the Interior
- Bureau of Land Management
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Minerals Management Service
- National Park Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

Department of the Navy
- Navy
- Marine Corps

Department of Transportation
- Coast Guard
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Maritime Administration

Environmental Protection Agency

General Services Administration

Marine Mammal Commission

National Science Foundation

NONFEDERAL PARTNERS

. . . working with state agencies, local organizations private industry and public interest groups.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Alaska Science and Technology Foundation
AMTRAK
Associated Scientists of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Associated Scientists of Woods Hole
Association of Fishery Guides, FL
B J Services, TX
Brevard County Mosquito Control District, FL
California Environmental Protection Agency
California Wildlife Conservation Board
California Coastal Conservancy
California State Parks
California Department of Fish and Game
Canadian Lamprey Control
Center for Marine Conservation
Chesapeake Bay Commission
City of Hampton Wetlands Board
City of Savannah, GA
City of Soldotna, AK
City of Toledo, OH
Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society and Volunteers
Connecticut Department of Transportation
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Conoco, Inc., Corpus Christi District, TX
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association
Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory
Ducks Unlimited
East Harris County Manufacturing Association, TX
Florida-Gulf County, Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve
Florida Marine Resources Council
Florida Parks Department
Florida Department of Natural Resources
Florida Marine Patrol
Florida Department of Education
Florida Department of Environmental Protection Office of Coastal Zone Management
Florida Department of Forestry
Florida Game and Freshwater Fisheries
Florida St. Johns Water Management District
Friends of Saint Andrew State Park
Galveston Bay Foundation, TX
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Georgia Department of Transportation
Great Lakes Power
Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Gulf Coast Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), TX
Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission, FL
Houston Port Authority, TX
Houston Lighting and Power, TX
Houston Power and Light Company, TX
Houston Concrete Products, TX
Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, FL
Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin
Izaak Walton League
Jekyll Island Authority
Kenai Peninsula Groundwater Task Force
Long Island Sound Program
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
Maine Department of Marine Resources
Maine Atlantic Sea Run Salmon Commission
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries
Maryland Department of Environmental Regulatory Administration
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Massachusetts Bays Program
Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Massachusetts Wetland Banking Program
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Mississippi Bureau of Marine Resources
Mobile County, AL
Mohegan Tribe, CT
Monroe County, NY
Monterey Parks Department
Montgomery County Government
Narraganset Bay Program
National Audubon Society
National Fish and Wildlife Administration
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Audubon Society
New Hanover Conservancy
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
New Hampshire Jackson Estuarine Laboratory
New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, Urban Forestry Center
New Hampshire Coastal Zone Management
New Hanover County
New England Aquarium
Ninigret Tribe, RI
North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources
North Carolina Department of Transportation
North Carolina Department of Environment
North Carolina Department of Environmental Protection
North Carolina Division of Water Resources
North Carolina Division of Forest Resources
Odyssey Contemporary Maritime Museum Foundation
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon State Department of Fish and Game
Oregon State Department of Parks
Port of Umpqua, OR
Port of Corpus Christi Authority, TX
Potomac River Fisheries Commission
Puerto Rico Trust
Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources
Puget Sound Water Quality Authority, WA
Rhode Island Department of Transportation
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife
Saint Johns River Water Management District, FL
Saint Andrew State Recreation Area, FL
Saint Andrew Bay Resource Management Association, FL
San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, CA
San Francisco Water Quality Control Board
Sea World
Shell Oil Spill Litigation Settlement Trustee Committee
Sonoma Land Trust, CA
South Florida Water Management District
Southwest Florida Water Management District
State Lands Commission
Stilliguamish Tribe, WA
Stilly-Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force
Texas General Land Office
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Texas Waterway Operators Association
Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife
Texas Soil and Water Conservation District
Texas Department of Public Transportation and Highways
The Nature Conservancy
The Student Conservation Association, Inc.
Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority
Town of North Hampton
Trout Unlimited
University of Puerto Rico
University of Rhode Island
University of Colorado, Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research
University of Maryland
University of Rhode Island
Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences
Washington Department of Fisheries
Washington State Department of Wildlife
Weyerhaeuser Corporation
Wilderness Society
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service

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