

The Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership

Supporting the Department of Agriculture



The Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP) is an innovative private-public initiative aimed at preserving, restoring, enhancing and protecting aquatic habitats throughout the United States. Bringing together corporations, federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations and academia, the CWRP allows members to contribute in a fundamental way to crucial projects involving America's coastal and inland aquatic resources and support related education programs.

More than 300 corporate partners have contributed time and money to facilitate environmental projects. Since its inception in 2000, CWRP has aided in the restoration of more than 20,000 acres of wetlands and 7,000 stream miles through the monetary donations and in-kind services of its corporate partners.

The CWRP has supported the mission of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) since its inception in 1990. USDA services, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service have implemented their habitat restoration programs in part through CWRP. Using restoration programs such as Wetlands Reserve Program, thousands of acres of important coastal and aquatic habitat have been restored. In addition, the unique outreach opportunities afforded by CWRP through the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELC), such as the The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, The National Aquarium in Baltimore and Monterey Bay Aquarium, have been invaluable to reach the more than 20 million visitors that pass through CELC doors. CWRP is also a key link for USDA to implement the President's National Ocean Policy.

Bahia Grande Restoration Project

The Bahia Grande is an 11,000 acre complex of three estuarine basins between Brownsville and Port Isabel in Cameron County, Texas. Once a highly productive shallow water system, it became a massive, salty sand flat in the 1930's when the Port of Brownsville dredged the Brownsville ship channel and the resulting spoil banks cut off the water supply for this tidal system. The Bahia Grande dried up, and its drifting sands became the source of numerous health and industrial problems in the Brownsville area.

USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service was critical in the acquisition of Bahia Grande property and its transfer into federally protected land. USDA also helped sponsor the baseline ecological monitoring in Bahia Grande and built the water control structures and permanent channel crossings to re-flood this estuary, returning it to its natural state and relieving local communities of blowing dust. In July of 2005, a pilot channel connecting the Brownsville Ship Channel to the Bahia Grande was opened, allowing limited tidal exchange for the purpose of relieving the problems associated with the dust. In the end over sixty partnering organizations committed funding or in-kind contributions to the Bahia Grande project.

Partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, NOAA Restoration Center, Texas CWRP, US Fish and Wildlife Service – Laguna Atascosa NWR and Coastal Program, City of Brownsville, Town of South Padre Island, Chase Bank, Ocean Trust, University of Texas, Brownsville, Gulf of Mexico Foundation, American Electric and Power, Texas Sea Grant, Girls Scouts, Texas General Lands Office.



NOAA



NOAA

Bahia Grande Restoration Project, before and after re-flooding

Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area, Scarborough, Maine

The 3,100 acre Scarborough Marsh Wildlife Management Area is owned and managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and includes nearly all 2,700 acres of Scarborough Marsh, Maine's largest and best known salt marsh. Recognized for its tremendous biological productivity, Scarborough Marsh supports seven state or federally listed threatened or endangered species and holds the distinction as the salt marsh with the greatest diversity of water dependent birds statewide. However, barriers to tidal flow, undersized culverts, invasive plants, fill material and ditching have compromised the Marsh's biological vitality. Man-made ditches have excessively drained the Seavey Landing section of the marsh, lowering the natural water table and destroying permanent pool habitat that once supported a suite

of species – aquatic plants, invertebrates, fish, shorebirds, wading birds and waterfowl. By installing ditch plugs in strategic locations, water will no longer drain through the ditches, allowing the water table on the marsh to rise and permitting the re-establishment of permanent pool habitat. The restoration project included installation of 16 ditch plugs and the removal of 32 sumps to raise the water table on the marsh and re-establish permanent pool habitats.

Partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetland Reserve Program, USFWS/Gulf of ME Program, Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership, Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Scarborough Marsh.



Scarborough Marsh

USFWS



Franklin Parker Preserve

USDA

Franklin Parker Preserve

The Parker Preserve encompasses almost 14 square miles in the heart of the New Jersey Pine Barrens and is the site of USDA's largest Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Project in Northeast. With over 5,000 acres of wetlands habitat, the property is a rare ecological treasure for the East Coast of the United States, containing some of the most beautiful wetlands in the Pine Barrens and providing critical habitat to more than 50 rare, threatened, or endangered species. New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) partnered with USDA's NRCS to protect and restore 2,200 acres of wetland habitat on the Preserve through the WRP. NRCS purchased an easement on the Preserve for \$4.4 million that forever protects the land for conservation purposes. NRCS also provided financial and technical assistance in the amount of \$1 million to restore the disturbed wetland habitats.

The NJCWRP chapter partnered with USDA to support this vital re-forestation project with deer fencing, native seed collection, seedling germination, and staffing volunteer planting crews engaged in planting over 30,000 seedlings. In particular, NJCWRP provided key funding for pilot reforestation plots designed to examine which re-planting techniques would be most effective before the large scale project could proceed.

Partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, NJCWRP, Pinelands Nursery, Inc., Ducks Unlimited, Brooklyn Botanic Garden

Public Outreach & Education

Support of USDA Educational Programs

The CWRP, in cooperation with USDA's regional offices, provides substantial support to USDA's educational and outreach efforts. CWRP partners have provided funding and in-kind services annually to support the participation of school children in educational and outreach programs.

Outreach to Communities

CWRP partners provided financial and logistical support for a major outreach project to heighten awareness of the importance of the oceans and our coastal environment for a healthy planet. The Ocean Art Contest, sponsored by USDA, the Smithsonian Institute and other federal agencies, was a highly successful program that reached school children throughout the nation.



Environmental Education

USDA



Coastal America is a partnership among federal, state, and local governments and private alliances to address environmental problems along our nation's coasts. The federal partners are: Executive Office of the President, Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation.