



What's New @ Ramsar

Ramsar signs two Memoranda of Understanding with the USA

USA makes continued funding available for two key Ramsar small project assistance programmes

The Ramsar Convention Bureau and delegates from the United States State Department and Fish and Wildlife Service took the occasion of the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee, in Gland, Switzerland, to sign two memoranda of understanding that open an area of even greater cooperation in the funding of small projects in pursuit of the Convention's principles of wetland conservation and wise use.

At the gala dinner for Standing Committee delegates and observers, hosted by the Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests, and Landscape, Ms Joyce Namde of the US State Department and Dr Herbert Raffaele of the Fish and Wildlife Service presented two memoranda of cooperation to be signed by Ramsar's Secretary General, Dr Peter Bridgewater.



Wetlands for the Future

Since 1995, the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands, the United States State Department, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have operated a special initiative, the **Wetlands for the Future (WFF)** training program, to benefit Latin American and Caribbean institutions and individuals through capacity building and training in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. This initiative promotes the implementation of the concept of "wise use" of wetlands through strengthening the capacity of countries to manage their wetland resources in perpetuity and contributing to integrate wetland conservation and management with the development process. All proposed activities

should be in line with the principles, recommendations and guidelines of the Ramsar Convention. The sponsors of Wetlands for the Future establish partnerships with training institutions, catalyze wetland training activities currently underway or planned within the region, or complement existing training and education initiatives with wetland-related instruction.

Approximately 25 projects per year have been funded through the Wetlands for the Future Fund over the past eight years, at the rate of US\$ 250,000 per year, and the new memorandum expresses the US commitment to continuing this exceptionally valuable programme from 2003 through to 2008, the period covered by the Ramsar Strategic Plan. Many of the results of these projects make extraordinary success stories and have resulted in carry-on effects in training workshops, publications and educational materials, media products, inventories and GIS surveys, laboratory set-ups, NGO strengthening, community participation and management programmes, capacity building amongst Ramsar national and site personnel, academic studies, Internet access and new Web sites, and on and on.

Coastal America Foundation

The **Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP)** is a public-private partnership between the United States federal government, U.S. state governments and private corporations to restore wetlands and other aquatic habitats. The CWRP's objective is to stop and reverse the degradation of America's fresh and saltwater wetlands and other aquatic habitats, and it is facilitated by the Coastal America Partnership in Washington, D.C. This multi-agency federal partnership was established to protect and restore the coastal environment, and it is managed by a group of nationally recognized marine scientists who volunteer in order to allow the foundation to meet its goals for protecting, preserving and restoring aquatic habitats.

The **Ramsar Small Grants Fund** is a small projects assistance programme providing funding for wetland conservation and sustainable use projects in the developing countries and those with economies in transition. It has been financing an average of 15-20 projects per year since 1992, up to a value of 40,000 Swiss francs each, through voluntary contributions provided usually by Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, the USA, and especially Sweden, as well as by WWF and other non-governmental sources.

In order to increase the funding support for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund and the Wetlands for the Future Fund, the Ramsar Convention and the CWRP have entered into this Memorandum of Understanding for the 2004 Project Cycle. A similar MOU, based on the experience gained in 2004, will be prepared to establish a longer-term relationship between Ramsar and CWRP. The **Coastal America Foundation (CAF)** (<http://www.coastalamerica.gov>) will disburse funding on behalf of CWRP, in the following manner: at the completion of the project assessment phase in 2004, the Ramsar Secretariat will deliver the list of projects that meet requirements for funding to Coastal America, which will then distribute the information to CWRP partners along with a

request for donations. CAF will consolidate the donations and report the amount of funds collected to the Ramsar Secretariat for inclusion in its funding recommendation to the Standing Committee for the Small Grants Fund and, in a separate process, to the Secretariat for the Wetlands for the Future Fund.

