

2012 Coastal America Partnership Award Winners Announced!

Senior Obama Administration Leadership from each of Coastal America's eight core agencies unanimously agreed upon the slate of 6 National Partnership Awards and one Special Recognition Award.

Since 1997, the Coastal America Awards Program has recognized outstanding collaborative projects and excellence in leadership for protecting, preserving and restoring the nation's coastal resources. As always nominations are carefully reviewed by an interagency committee and approved by political leadership representing the Obama Administration. Selection criteria require that successful projects include at least one federal agency partner as well as one non-federal entity, clearly demonstrate the "value added" of the partnership effort, reflect an innovative or unique way of accomplishing stated goals and objectives with positive environmental results, and contribute to the accomplishment of Coastal America's objectives to restore and protect resources and to increase public awareness of the coastal and marine environment.

Congratulations to the 2011 Award winners!

Stonybrook Marsh Restoration Project – Brewster, MA

This coastal watershed restoration project includes several components: 1) two separate salt marsh restoration sites to restore a total of 41 acres of salt marsh; 2) two separate fish passage improvement projects to restore diadromous fish passage to 386 acres of spawning and nursery habitat for endangered river herring and American eels; 3) removal of a beach parking lot suffering from coastal erosion and restoration of the barrier beach; and 4) remediation of stormwater discharges throughout the watershed in order to improve water quality for shellfish, fish and wildlife. Restoration work involved feasibility assessments, planning, fundraising, permitting, construction, monitoring, and outreach. The town and its partners have also preserved hundreds of acres of open space in the watershed over the years, which will help to ensure the long-term viability of restoration.



Long Beach Wetlands Restoration Project – CT

This project took two years and was completed on April 15, 2011. A total of 37 cottages, 25 outbuildings, 4 docks, retaining walls, debris, and trash including hazardous materials, which consisted of lead, asbestos, and PCBs were removed on 35-acres. A significant amount of the debris was also recycled. Habitat was improved for federally- and state-listed species and the project also improved public access, aesthetics and safety issues at the site.



Lincoln Park Wetlands Restoration Project – NJ

The project unites and synchronizes landfill closure, site remediation, beneficial re-use of federal navigational dredge material, public health and safety, wetland and habitat restoration, regional recreation for bikers, hikers and paddlers, migratory fish passage, and public awareness and education regarding coastal issues.

The final completed vision for Lincoln Park West included the creation of 42 acres of new wildlife habitat, including Tidal Low Marsh (22 acres), Open Water/Mud Flat (11 acres), Tidal High Marsh (2 acres), Scrub Shrub (4 acres) and additional pedestrian pathways and bridges (3 acres).

Gulf of Mexico Community Based Restoration Partnership

The purpose of the partnership is to strengthen conservation efforts by supporting on-the-ground projects to restore coastal marine habitats, benefit living marine resources, and foster local stewardship of the sites. To date, the GCRP has funded more than 75 community-based restoration projects. In total more than \$3 million has been funded towards these restoration projects, of which an additional \$5.5 million has been leveraged in matching contributions from project partners. This match includes nearly 50,000 contributed volunteer hours. In total, more than 15,000 acres of coastal habitat have been restored as part of these partnership projects.

Ocean Science Program – Seattle Aquarium – WA

The Ocean Science program, an on-going five-year project partnership between Seattle Aquarium and NOAA Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary catalyzes change in K-12 science education, integrating Ocean Literacy principles with inquiry-based classroom curriculum and experiential learning experiences at local beaches. Ocean Science focuses on two target audiences, students in grades 4-5 of the greater Puget Sound and underserved rural communities along the outer coast of Washington. The program has four basic components: 1) teacher in-service workshops and follow up training and support; 2) parent and chaperone training; 3) classroom beach box curriculum; and 4) two all-expenses-paid field trips to Seattle Aquarium or a marine science center and a local beach. This four-part approach supports content training in marine ecosystems, ocean conservation, and nearshore field investigations, as well as pedagogical models for teaching inquiry science.



Middle Watsonville Slough Wetland Protection & Water Quality Partnership

Over the last 3 years, the partnership efforts have acquired 490 acres within the slough complex and initiated numerous restoration projects that will improve water quality and habitats for federally-listed species, as well as many resident and migratory bird species along the Pacific Flyway; all while demonstrating sustainable farming practices in the region. The partnership works to improve water quality, and improve habitat for coastal species while simultaneously maintaining the agricultural heritage and economic viability of the community of the Monterey Bay region.

2011 Special Recognition Award

Restore America's Estuaries – VA

Founded in 1995 as a 501(c)3 alliance specifically dedicated to restoring and protecting coastal habitats, RAE unites community, corporate, governmental, and non-governmental organizations at the national, state, and local levels to build partnerships and secure resources to restore and preserve estuarine habitats. Eleven disparate non-profit organizations came together to address the need for more on-the-ground coastal habitat restoration. RAE links these organizations, leverages precious financial and technical resources across the member organizations, and works on the national level to empower their groups to increase the pace and scale of their restoration efforts. RAE supports on-the-ground community-based restoration projects, creates tools and resources to guide the restoration process, and engages and unifies key stakeholders in a biennial national conference and through local outreach efforts.