

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 21, 2005

*** NEWS FROM COASTAL AMERICA ***
WASHINGTON, D.C.

A Partnership Among Federal, State, And Local Governments And Private Alliances
To Protect, Preserve, and Restore Our Nation's Coastal Ecosystems

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PRESIDENT BUSH'S WETLANDS INITIATIVE ON TRACK

On the first anniversary of the President's wetlands initiative, the Bush Administration today released "Conserving America's Wetlands: Implementing the President's Goal." The new report highlights first-year progress pursuant to the President's goal of restoring, improving, and protecting the quality and quantity of three million acres of wetlands by 2009.

The President's 5-year goal calls for restoring at least one million acres of additional wetlands; improving the condition of at least one million acres of existing degraded wetlands; and extending protection to at least one million additional acres of imperiled wetlands. The President also committed federal agencies to make better use of the array of federal programs that can contribute to the wetland goal.

According to the report, specific achievements between Earth Day 2004 and Earth Day 2005 include:

- 328,000 acres restored or created;
- 154,000 acres improved; and
- 350,000 acres protected.

The report also includes a description of the key federal programs contributing to the goal and their planned accomplishments for FY 2006. The President's 2006 budget requests continued funding for the programs to support an additional 1.6 million acres to be restored or created, improved, and protected by September 30, 2006.

In releasing the report, Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James Connaughton said, "President Bush strongly supports using innovative programs and incentives to encourage private stewardship and cooperative conservation partnerships. As this report demonstrates, working collaboratively with private landowners and local officials has proven remarkably effective in improving and sustaining America's wetlands."

Coastal America is a partnership among federal, state and local governments and private alliances to protect, preserve and restore our nation's coastal ecosystems. Federal partners include: Departments of Agriculture, the Air Force, the Army, Commerce, Defense, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, the Navy, State, Transportation; the Environmental Protection Agency; and the Executive Office of the President.

For additional information, and copies of the report, visit www.coastalamerica.gov.