

**COASTAL AMERICA 2007 SPIRIT AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION
AWARDS PROGRAM
Spirit Award Nomination Summaries**

Woodbridge Creek and Joseph Medwick Marsh Project

The Woodbridge Creek in Woodbridge New Jersey and The Joseph P. Medwick Marsh, in Carteret, New Jersey are two separate restoration projects that fall under one unified contract for wetland mitigation/restoration. The Woodbridge Creek project created a 64 acre, high-quality salt marsh complex, including enhancements to designated preservation zones. The Joseph Medwick wetland restoration project resulted in the reestablishment of access to essential marsh habitat areas for living marine resources and in the creation/enhancement of 16 acres of productive salt marsh. A combined 80 acres of high-quality estuarine habitat were restored, protected and enhanced by these two projects.

The creation of two discrete “on-site” disposal placement areas resulted in cost-savings and additional upland/grassland habitat restoration opportunities. The restoration team was able to contain harmful contaminants that were previously located within upland areas that are exposed to the public. These projects involved conversion of filled degraded wetlands to high-quality spartina marsh and productive fisheries habitat

Federal partners in these projects include USACE, NOAA, USFWS, The Port Authority of NY & NJ, NJ DEP, as well as several non Federal Partners such as The Township of Woodbridge and Woodbridge River Watch.

Elders Point Jamaica Bay Salt Marsh Islands

The Elders Point East mitigation/restoration site, located in Jamaica Bay, New York, is the result of impacts created by New York and New Jersey Harbor Deepening, and by the creation of JFK Airport. Jamaica Bay is in environmental peril, it is estimated that 1,400 acres of tidal salt marsh have been lost from the marsh islands since 1924, with the system wide rate of loss rapidly increasing in recent years. If this trend continues, all remaining salt marsh on the islands will be lost over the next 30 years. This site was chosen for the mitigation of intertidal and shallow water habitat impacts because it was a previously approved site by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. With the restoration of Jamaica Bay as the goal, the team utilized the mitigation of approach channels to affect a wetlands restoration project and move one step closer to their restoration goal. The recommended plan provides for 29 acres of mitigation at Elders Point East, and 22 acres of restoration at Elders Point West.

One aspect that makes this project a partnership of note is the integration of USACE wetlands restoration efforts with the USDA plant materials centers. Several of the centers were involved with the production of the material because the volume needed was so significant. Ensuring the integrity of local genetic characteristics in salt marsh restoration has been a concern for some time, the USDA put those concerns into practice by utilizing only local seed stock from the restoration area to produce the new plant material. The USACE & USDA/NRCS partnership was further enhanced by cooperation

with additional federal and state agencies. This is the first time in the New York City region that so many agencies have worked together to get a project of this scale built.

Los Machos Mangrove Restoration project, Puerto Rico

The Los Machos Mangrove mitigation/restoration effort is the result of an October 1999 oil spill of ~112,000 gallons at the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Ceiba, Puerto Rico. The spill resulted in the injury of 46 acres of mangroves, 25 of which were unrecoverable. The Navy proposed that mitigation claim funds from that spill be used as a catalyst to jump start the restoration of the Los Machos basin forest mangrove. Under the direction of NOAA, an inter-agency spill response team was formed to assess natural resource injury and recovery. The resulting Damage Assessment Remediation and Restoration Program plan concluded that the preferred primary restoration alternative would be natural recovery and the preferred compensatory restoration alternative would be off-site at Los Machos Mangrove, an area previously recommended for restoration in the 1987 Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Land Management Plan. The most significant achievement of this project is the restoration of the historic hydrology to the 1,300 acre Los Machos basin forest mangrove.

Key to the utilization of the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station damage claim for the Los Machos restoration was the cooperation and vision of the damage claim Trustees. As a single agency the Navy would not have had the expertise or political influence with both regulatory and natural resource management agencies to attain the clearance for offsite restoration which extends beyond the 25 acre requirement to benefit the overall coastal ecosystem of eastern Puerto Rico. Without the Trustee Team, consisting of over 20 partners, the Navy would have been forced into onsite restoration. The result could have cost 4-5 times more than off-site restoration and the environmental benefit would not have been as significant. The interagency team includes the following Trustee Partners: Navy, NOAA, DOI, USACE, EPA, Commonwealth Partners in Puerto Rico, and many others.

Special Recognition Nomination Summaries

America's WETLAND Foundation

America's WETLAND: Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana is the largest and most successful public education campaign in the States history. The Campaign was launched in 2002 with the goal to raise public awareness of the impact of Louisiana's wetland loss and to gain support for conservation efforts. The Campaign leads the effort to protect and restore Louisiana's vanishing coast through a variety of initiatives including broadcast and print media, tours, high profile summits and a website.

In addition, the America's WETLAND Conservation Corps (AWCC) is a partnership between the America's WETLAND Campaign and LSU Agriculture Center. The 18 AWCC members have completed 25 restoration projects, involving at least 500 volunteers and expending 25,000 community service hours.

The Campaign partnered with Louisiana state agencies, such as the Governor's Office of Coastal Activities, The Department of Natural Resources, The Department of Culture Recreation and Tourism, the Louisiana Congressional Delegation and many groups inside and outside of Louisiana. In addition, more than 200 organizations are involved in the America's WETLAND Campaign support networks. Notable members include: National Wildlife Federation, Environmental Defense and Ducks Unlimited.

Shedd Aquarium Great Lakes Awareness Program

Since the inception of its Great Lakes Awareness Program in 2004 Shedd Aquarium has provided an open, centrally located and welcoming venue for many important Great Lakes meetings, workshops, discussions and media events. As a result, the Aquarium, located on the shore of Lake Michigan, has positioned itself as the premier Great Lakes meeting facility, and has become the preferred setting for Great Lakes events. Shedd Aquarium is one of CA's most active CELC's. As such, this institution has been selected to co-lead a new joint Coastal America/ NOAA/ Smithsonian Institution initiative to enhance communication to the public and improve ocean literacy through the innovative use of ocean interpretive stations.

The centerpiece of Shedd Aquarium's Great Lakes initiative is the Great Lakes Awareness Campaign. This overarching campaign reaches residents of Chicago and the entire Great Lakes basin (eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces) with strategic messages on Great Lakes awareness, stewardship and action extended through public communication and targeted training. Shedd Aquarium's programs have evaluation embedded in each program element which is both formative and summative and provides feedback to continuously improve each and every facet of the Aquarium's programs.

The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium

The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium, located in Dubuque, Iowa, is the only CELC on the inland rivers of the United States. This institution was selected to receive a Special Recognition Award for their outstanding leadership efforts to establish the Great River Road Network of Museums and Interpretive Centers. The Great River Road Network is partnership of 62 education organizations spanning the 10 bordering States of the Mississippi River drainage. The Network includes educational centers from the northern most headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca in northwestern Minnesota to where the river meets the Gulf of Mexico in New Orleans, LA.

The goals of the Great River Road Network are to: 1) outline a Restoration Plan to identify key outcomes for the Mississippi River to the Gulf based on scientifically sound benchmarks for Land, Water, and People; 2) unite organizations with strong internal communication tools, designate a steering committee, and engage key partners from the river community at large; and 3) develop a public campaign to raise awareness of the value of the Mississippi River, its communities, tributaries, bluff lands and the coastal delta. This project is funded in part by the National Scenic Byways program of the Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium CELC has been selected to co-lead a new joint Coastal America/ NOAA/ Smithsonian Institution initiative to enhance communication to the public and improve ocean literacy through the innovative use of ocean interpretive stations.