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# Congressman José E. Serrano

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### SERRANO ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR BRONX RIVER RESTORATION

Washington, D.C. (March 8) - Congressman José E. Serrano (D-NY) today announced the appropriation of \$7,851,000 for the restoration and renewal of the lower Bronx River from the Botanical Gardens to the river's confluence with the Long Island Sound. Through a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) regional community-based partnership, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) will oversee the multi-year grant to restore coastal habitats, acquire land that improves public access and establish educational programs that foster stewardship of the degraded river.

"As the ranking member of the Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, I am proud to have been able to bring some badly needed resources to the efforts to clean up and restore the Bronx River. I have been committed for years to our local efforts to restore the Bronx River and with this appropriation we will take a big step forward," Serrano said.

Projects funded through this partnership will benefit the local community and involve citizen groups, non-governmental organizations, businesses and government agencies. WCS, with input from a steering committee, will work with the local community to develop strategies and implement projects for the benefit of the lower Bronx River ecosystem and the communities living along the river. This cooperation is expected to strengthen ongoing working partnerships and create new relationships and innovative approaches to achieve the goals of restoring fishery habitat, increasing community awareness and instilling a greater sense of pride for the Bronx River.

"While many organizations have worked diligently to protect and promote the Bronx River, any long-term solutions to the challenges facing the river must involve the people who live and work closest to it," said WCS President and CEO Steven Sanderson. "One of the primary goals of this partnership is to involve local communities in restoration activities that turn citizens into stewards of their natural environment, dedicated to preserving and improving the lower Bronx River."

The grant awarded to WCS is but one of 17 national and regional multi-year partnerships awarded by NOAA in 2001 through its Community-Based Restoration Program, with additional partnerships and funds to be awarded in 2002. All of these partnerships have a focus on competitively awarding funds to local communities for achieving cost-effective on-the-ground restoration of fishery habitats.

"NOAA Fisheries is pleased to be involved in the activities to restore fishery habitat and increase public access to the lower Bronx River," said Bill Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. "This partnership will provide an excellent opportunity to bring the internationally-recognized expertise of the WCS home to the lower Bronx River community."

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WCS is currently accepting applications for projects up to two years in duration, to be completed no later than May 31, 2004. The application process will be competitive and awards will support the creation of cost-effective partnerships. Proposals should focus on one or more of the following activities: habitat restoration, land acquisition or public access benefitting the marine, estuarine and/or anadromous fishery resources of the river. Applications must be received by May 30, 2002. For further information on eligibility and project requirements, you can access the request for proposals (RFP) at [www.wcs.org](http://www.wcs.org) or contact Ms. Jan Kaderly with specific questions at (718) 220-6394.

Funding for this project is yet another step in Congressman Serrano's continuing efforts to rehabilitate the Bronx River with projects including the Army Corps of Engineers' Bronx River Ecosystem Restoration Study, expansion of the Bronx River Greenway, NOAA fishery habitat restoration, and land acquisition via a NOAA Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program.

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Please visit this site for more information:

[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ny16\\_serrano/~list.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ny16_serrano/~list.html)