



## The Coastal Program In the Caribbean: *Puerto Rico* *Caring for Our Coastal Habitats*

### Overview

The mission of the Coastal Program is to protect and recover Federal Trust Species (threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, and inter-jurisdictional fish) by supporting restoration of high-priority coastal habitats. The Coastal Program provides financial and technical assistance for voluntary, on-the-ground habitat restoration and protection projects through locally-based field coordinators. The Program works closely with other Federal, Commonwealth, non-governmental organizations, and private partners to carry out restoration projects. The small size and steepness of the watersheds makes consideration from ridge-top to reef important. Ongoing projects include restoration and enhancement of mangrove forest, mudflats, native beach dune forest, freshwater marsh and swamp forest, dry forest, riparian forest, and coral

### Coastal Program in the Caribbean Projects Restored or enhanced in FY 2005 - 2006

- 20 acres of mangrove and salt flat wetlands done
- 24 acres of hawksbill habitat done
- 40 acres of hawksbill and Mona iguana habitat underway
- 10 acres of marsh and forested wetland underway
- 112 acres of mangrove/mudflat underway
- 35 acres of upland dry forest underway
- Benefits to over 30 acres of coral reef habitat from upland erosion control underway

reefs. Invasive exotic plant or animal removal in areas that provide long-lasting benefits to native species, and measures to reduce illumination of sea turtle nesting beaches are also favored. In addition to Federal trust resource species, restoration efforts may benefit native and endemic animals and plants, particularly those identified as rare by the Commonwealth.

### Priorities

Priorities are determined with partners

using area or watershed based plans, particularly the Commonwealth Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy and Critical Wildlife Area plans with strong emphasis on projects falling within the defined geographic focus areas. Priority will be given to projects with long-lasting practices that benefit multiple species or habitats. Examples of target habitats for restoration include dry forest, riparian forest, stream restoration for native aquatic species, marsh and forested wetlands, offshore cays, sea turtle nesting beaches, seagrass beds, and coral reefs.

Projects may occur on Federal, Commonwealth, or private lands. Priority will go to projects on or near National Wildlife Refuges, Commonwealth Forests and Reserves, Critical Wildlife Areas, and other conservation lands.

### For More Information

For more information about the Coastal Program, contact Beverly Yoshioka at 787-851-7297 ext. 227 or visit us on the internet at <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/> to view our more detailed Caribbean program information sheet.

