

# Coastal Barrier Resources System

*Harnessing the Power of Market Forces to Conserve America's Coasts and Save Taxpayers' Money*



**Fisheries  
& Habitat  
Conservation**

*The Coastal Barrier Resources Act - a free-market approach to conservation:*

*Conserves coastal habitats that support a variety of fish and wildlife including migratory birds, shorebirds, finfish, shellfish, and sea turtles.*

*Saves taxpayers' money by restricting Federal subsidies to develop and rebuild again and again places subject to storm surge and chronic erosion.*

*Keeps people out of harm's way by discouraging construction in risky areas where hurricanes strike first.*



*Above: Coastal barriers are important for migratory birds and many at-risk plants and animals. Photo by Corel.*

**Coastal barriers provide many free services that are foundations of a strong economy and healthy environment. They create the back-bay water quality needed to support productive and lucrative fisheries, offer habitat for migratory birds and many at-risk plants and animals, and are also popular vacation destinations and a boon to local economies. Developing coastal barriers, however, is risky business. They serve as the mainland's first line of defense against storm surges and hurricane winds. Aware of their risk and value, Congress adopted the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) in 1982. That law is the essence of free-market natural resource conservation; it in no way regulates how people can develop their land, but transfers the full cost from Federal taxpayers to the individuals who choose to build.**

#### **WHAT DOES THIS PROGRAM DO?**

- Saves taxpayers' money.
- Keeps people out of the deadly path of storm surge.
- Protects valuable habitat for fish and wildlife.

#### **HOW DO WE DO IT?**

- Communicate with the public and local and state governments to help them understand how CBRA works and affects them.
- Consult with Federal agencies that propose spending funds in CBRA areas.
- Cooperate with landowners to identify properties affected by CBRA.

#### **WHAT HAVE WE DONE ALREADY?**

- Saved the taxpayers more than a billion dollars.
- Worked with landowners, local governments, and Congress to adjust boundaries.
- Consulted with our partners to understand how we can better serve their needs.

#### **HOW DOES THE PUBLIC BENEFIT?**

- Taxpayers across the country do not pay to develop—and rebuild again and again—risky and biologically rich places.
- Valuable coastal barrier habitat remains intact, helping migratory birds and at-risk plants and animals.
- The natural amenities that attract economic growth endure.

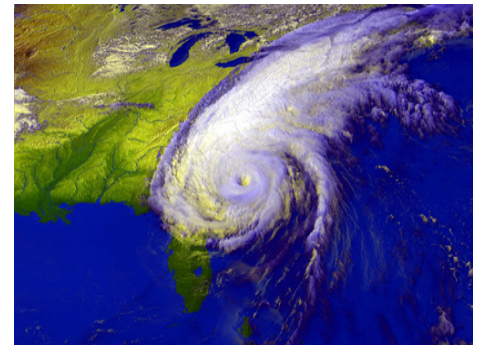
#### **WHAT MORE CAN WE DO?**

##### **MAP MODERNIZATION IS THE FUTURE.**

- Give our customers user-friendly, digital maps that can be fully integrated into local and state management tools.
- Increase government efficiency by placing CBRA information on the Internet, making it easy for our customers to access information quickly.
- Reach out to more and more partners. CBRA is one item in the conservation toolbox that works best when complemented by other programs.



*Above: Coastal barriers are attractive—but risky—places to build. Photo by SFWMD.*



*Above: Hurricanes menace coastal barriers almost every year. Photo by NOAA.*

**For more information about the Coastal Barrier Resources System, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries and Habitat Conservation at 202/208-6394 or visit us on the Internet at <http://fisheries.fws.gov/>.**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
800/344-WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov>**

**February 2005**

