

# The Bush Administration is Conserving and Restoring Our Ocean and Coastal Resources

## Conservation and Restoration

- In April 2004, President Bush committed his Administration to an aggressive new national goal to move beyond a policy of “no net loss” toward an overall increase of wetlands in America each year. The President’s goal is to restore, improve, and protect at least three million wetland acres over the next five years.
- In 2004, EPA announced 14 watersheds – representing 17 states – eligible for \$15 million from EPA’s Targeted Watersheds Grant Program.
- In 2004, NOAA reached a final settlement of \$56 million with eight responsible parties for the contamination of the Grand Calumet/Indiana Harbor and Canal in Indiana. The settlement amount will be used for the protection and restoration of 233 acres of critical habitat and wetlands.
- From 2001 to 2003, the 28 estuaries in EPA’s National Estuary Program protected or restored approximately 710,000 acres of habitat.
- From 2001 to 2003, the Department of the Interior restored 467,569 acres of prairie, native grassland, and other uplands; restored 144,977 acres of wetlands; treated 122,501 acres for invasive species; entered into 7,977 landowners agreements; rehabilitated 2,201 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat; and removed 121 fish barriers to facilitate breeding and spawning.
- Since 2001, NOAA has restored 11,020 acres of critical ocean, estuarine and riparian habitat to benefit marine fisheries.
- Since 2001, NOAA has removed dams and culverts to make an additional 555 miles of stream available for fish spawning and passage.
- Since 2001, NOAA has: organized over 50,000 volunteers who have contributing nearly 250,000 hours of service; entered into 122 partnership agreements; and provided \$24.6 million to over 650 coastal fisheries habitat restoration projects across the United States.
- Since 2001, the Department of Transportation has provided more than 12,600 acres of wetland habitat replacement – a net increase of over 7,500 acres and an average replacement rate of 2.6 acres for each acre of wetland impacted.
- Since 2002, USDA has supported the purchase of approximately 16,000 acres of easements to restore wetlands in Florida.
- Since 2002, NOAA has funded 40 land acquisition projects, for a total of \$50 million to ensure conservation of coastal areas with significant ecological, recreational, historical, and aesthetic value.
- In 2003, the Minerals Management Service (MMS) extended the existing shoreline of Holly Beach, Louisiana; completed beach restoration of Virginia Beach, Virginia using 3.2 million cubic yards of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) sand; and repaired severe erosion of Assateague Island National Seashore, Maryland. In 2004-05, MMS will provide 15 million cubic yards of OCS sand for coastal restoration in Louisiana.
- In 2003, USDA provided funding to implement best management practices on private lands within Florida watersheds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (\$3.3 Million), the Wetland Restoration Program (\$10.3 million) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (\$40,000). Approximately \$2 million was distributed to Puerto Rico, \$1.5 million to Hawaii, and \$500,000 to other U.S. islands in the Pacific basin through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- In 2003, the Department of the Interior restored 4,680 acres and protected 11,600 acres of coastal wetlands; restored 550 acres and protected 6,900 acres of coastal uplands; entered into 109 partnership agreements; rehabilitated 51 miles of coastal streamside habitat; and removed 7 fish barriers.
- In 2004, the Department of the Interior dedicated \$352,000 for monitoring Asian carp distribution in the Mississippi River Basin and for development of an Asian carp control plan.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, working in partnership with the State of Louisiana and other Federal agencies, has projects currently underway that will preserve or restore an estimated 161 square miles of wetlands.

## **Everglades Restoration**

- Due in part to Administration efforts, as of 2003, nutrient pollution into the Everglades has been reduced by 52 percent and the waters flowing into the Everglades are the cleanest in decades, with water flows being restored in the 3.1 million acre ecosystem. Endangered species are recovering, including the Schaus swallowtail butterfly, the Florida panther, and the endangered Key Deer.
- The President's 2005 budget for the Department of the Interior includes \$106 million in Everglades funding, including \$40 million to protect the Big Cypress National Preserve and almost \$1 million to acquire lands in the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge.
- The President's 2005 Army Corps of Engineers budget includes \$125 million for the Everglades, of which \$67 million is for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program.

## **The Great Lakes**

- In May 2004, President Bush issued an Executive Order creating the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force. The Task Force will address environmental and natural resource issues of national concern and better coordinate the region's sustainable development and restoration.
- President Bush's FY 2005 budget proposes \$45 million for the cleanup of contaminated Great Lakes sediments, nearly a five-fold increase over FY 2004 levels.
- In 2002, the Department of State, working through the International Joint Commission with Canada and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, provided \$170,000 to combat Asian carp migration into the Great Lakes.
- Since 2000, when the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) was signed into law, EPA has awarded \$21.3 million in grants to 35 eligible states and territories, with an additional \$10 million to be issued this year, to support microbiological testing and monitoring of coastal recreation waters, including the Great Lakes waters, and public notification of possible exposure to disease-causing microorganisms.
- In 2002, NOAA supported work with Dr. Ballard's Institute for Exploration and Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary to videotape nearly two dozen shipwrecks. In addition, sinkholes and other geologic features were searched for evidence of human habitation prior to the refilling of the Great Lakes following the last ice age.
- In 2002, NOAA approved and funded Indiana's Lake Michigan Coastal Management Program, which was designed to establish a comprehensive and coordinated approach for the protection, preservation, and orderly development of the state's coastal resources.
- A comprehensive, interagency, bi-national Great Lakes Navigation Study was begun in 2003. The Department of Transportation and the Army Corps of Engineers are leading U.S. work on this study, which will include a 50-year baseline assessment of current environmental and infrastructure conditions related to locks, dams, harbors, ports, and channels in the navigation system, and an evaluation of operations and maintenance.
- NOAA plans to increase the accuracy of its Great Lakes water level forecasts to be accurate to within 1 centimeter by 2007. The shipping industry is highly sensitive to small changes in lake levels – a two-centimeter forecasting error can translate into a loss of \$1.5 million for one ship carrying cement over the course of one year.