

2017

ANNUAL
REPORT



IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS



RESTORE
AMERICA'S
ESTUARIES

IMPACT AND PROGRESS



100,000+

plugs of bay grasses planted



225,000+

pounds of trash collected



1,168

linear feet of oyster reef constructed



30,000+

volunteers



112,000+

volunteer hours served



\$2.7
million

economic value leveraged through volunteers

Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) is well known throughout the environmental community for a number of reasons, including our coordination of National Estuaries Week, our biennial National Summit, the success of our Community-based Restoration Program, and our leadership of the national efforts to promote the science and practice of blue carbon and living shorelines. More specifically, RAE is widely recognized for our ability to create, within these and other areas, significant impact. Examples from 2017 include:

- **National Estuaries Week 2017** saw more than 27,000 volunteers participate in 215 events in 27 states, contributing 101,852 hours with an estimated economic value of nearly \$2.5 million.
- RAE supported **community-based projects** that removed 33,000 pounds of trash and 22,000 feet of fishing line from coastal areas, planted more than 100,000 plugs of salt marsh plants, and recycled 336,000 pounds of oyster shell.
- A **blue carbon study** RAE led determined that Tampa Bay coastal habitats will capture 73 million tons of carbon dioxide over the next 100 years.
- The **online Living Shorelines Academy** was launched and provides vital information on living shorelines to property owners, practitioners, and other stakeholders nationwide.

In light of results such as the above, people are frequently surprised to learn that RAE is not a large organization, with a total of 9 full-time employees. We are frequently asked how a group that small can create such outsized impact, to which we generally provide two answers: 1) We're really good at what we do, and 2) Through the power of partnership. Leading a national alliance of 10 coastal conservation groups, RAE was created as a result of and with a mandate to further partnerships among diverse

organizations that share mutual goals. Today, more than two decades after our founding, we continue to develop and strengthen relationships with a variety of partners and to leverage these relationships to allow us to achieve together what none of us could achieve alone.

As we look back on 2017, it is both with pride in the results we were able to bring about and with excitement over the groundwork we were able to lay for even greater success in the years to come. We look forward to continuing to work with our member organizations and other partners to create lasting impact for coastal areas and communities nationwide.

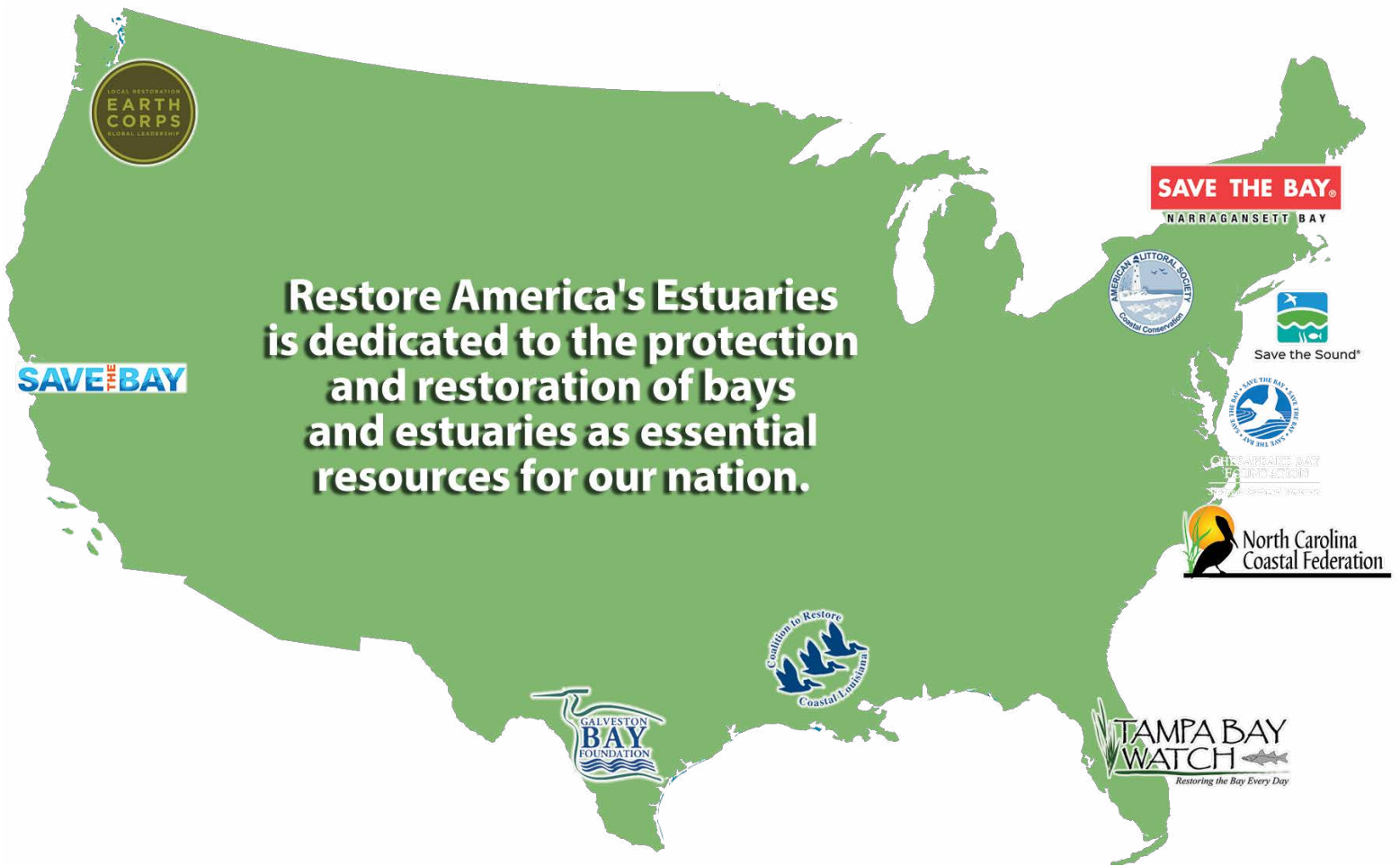
Thank you for your support of RAE and our work to protect and restore America's bays and estuaries as essential resources for our nation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Benoit
President and Chief
Executive Officer



RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES ALLIANCE



RAE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kim Coble (Chair)** – Vice President, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Steve Dubiel (Vice Chair)** – Executive Director, EarthCorps
- Robert Stokes (Treasurer)** – President, Galveston Bay Foundation
- Todd Miller (Secretary)** – Executive Director, North Carolina Coastal Federation
- Peter Clark** – President, Tampa Bay Watch
- Kimberly Davis Reyher** – Executive Director, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
- Tim Dillingham** – Executive Director, American Littoral Society
- Curt Johnson** – Executive Director, Save the Sound – a program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment
- David Lewis** – Executive Director, Save The Bay – San Francisco
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Director of Foundation and Corporate Giving

BLUE CARBON: Adding Value for Coastal Wetlands through Climate Mitigation

RAE's Blue Carbon Program works nationally to increase recognition of "blue carbon" ecosystem services – the ability of healthy coastal wetlands to capture and store greenhouse gases. Coastal habitats are especially good at this, capturing and storing carbon at rates up to 10 times greater than forest ecosystems, and storing it primarily in wetland soils (rather than in above-ground plant materials), where it can remain for centuries or more.

RAE is working with partners across

the nation to *invest in science* and increase understanding of the significant role coastal wetlands have in climate mitigation; *pilot market projects* to connect restoration activities to carbon finance; and *build regional capacity* through webinars, workshops, and outreach materials to support restoration and enhance management. RAE, in partnership with member



Above: Soil 'blue carbon' core pulled from marsh habitat in Cape Cod, MA. (Credit: S.Simpson)

group EarthCorps, released a new infographic and short film titled "Blue Carbon: A Story from the Snohomish Estuary," – both of which can be viewed online at estuaries.org/bluecarbon.

COALITION TO RESTORE COASTAL LOUISIANA: Giving Back is Delicious—CRCL's Oyster Shell Recycling Program

Louisiana is the top producer of oysters in the nation, shelling more than 70% of the oysters consumed in the U.S.—that's 1.3 million tons of the briny bivalves. Sadly, most of the shell ends up in landfills instead of being returned to the water. This shell deficit has dire consequences for Louisiana's oyster fishery and is contributing to the state's our land-loss crisis. About a football field of marshland washes away every 100 minutes, taking with it vital habitat for seafood favorites, economic and cultural opportunity, and stability for those who call Louisiana home.

In response to this, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana's (CRCL) Oyster Shell Recycling Program was born. Since 2014, CRCL has collected nearly 3,400 tons (~6.8 million pounds) of shell from New Orleans area restaurants, destined to be returned to Louisiana's coastal waters to help restore oyster reefs, create fish habitat, and stabilize our coastline.

With the help of more than 600 volunteers, CRCL constructed its first living shoreline oyster reef in 2016 in Biloxi Marsh (Southeast of New Orleans). It stretches for a half mile along a shoreline that is battered by high wave action. CRCL's second reef is slated for the west side of the Barataria Basin (South of New Orleans).

CRCL currently has 16 restaurants participating in the program. So, when you visit New Orleans, you can be a part of saving the coast by eating lots of delicious oysters.

And remember, "Once you shuck 'em, Don't just chuck 'em!"



LIVING SHORELINES: Creating Resilient Communities and Habitats

Our [living shorelines](#) program is thriving! We champion the nationwide use of nature-based approaches in shoreline stabilization projects, which incorporate habitat elements like marshes and oysters that benefit our critical estuaries.

Some highlights for 2017:

- We expanded and improved the [Living Shorelines Academy](#), which is a combination of an online “one-stop shop” for living shorelines and in-person trainings. Online aspects include training modules, an interactive forum, searchable literature database, professional directory, and project locator. In-person events were held in Texas, Washington, and Rhode Island.

- We continued to lead the national conversation on living shorelines with our Community of Practice (COP), which provides a monthly forum for communicating about living shoreline and nature-based approaches. Consisting of teleconferences and webinars, the COP allows practitioners to stay connected without the expense and commitment of extensive travel. Topics vary – some from 2017 included: monitoring, outreach to contractors and realtors, federal policy and funding updates, incentives programs, and shoreline datasets.



NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK: Engaging Coastal Communities Nationwide

RAE, in partnership with the Association of National Estuary Programs (ANEP) and the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA), led a successful National Estuaries Week (NEW) campaign in 2017. This celebration has become the nation’s largest estuary-focused event. Volunteers participate in beach cleanups, restoration projects, and more.

NEW 2017 hosted 215 registered events across 27 states, the most we’ve ever seen. Highlights included:

- 27,880 participants contributed 101,852 volunteer hours to restoring their local waterways and watershed.
- These volunteers contributed an economic value of more than \$2.45 million.
- The first annual Hill Expo brought representatives from EPA, NOAA, and USFWS together with Congressional staffers to discuss estuary priorities.
- A tri-partisan Senate tri-partisan Senate resolution with 28 co-sponsors recognized NEW with 28 co-sponsors.
- 13 state proclamations demonstrated local-level support for estuaries and NEW.
- #EstuariesWeek garnered more than 700 mentions throughout the week.
- Social media participation from top-level officials and government agencies.

RAE continued our partnership with CITGO Petroleum Corporation to offer Gulf Region Grants supporting nine different NEW events throughout the Gulf of Mexico. 3,400 volunteers in the region collected more than 146,000 pounds of trash, cleaned 450 miles of shoreline, restored 65 acres of coastal land, and planted 2,100 trees.



SOUTHEAST NEW ENGLAND WATERSHED GRANTS: Partnering with EPA to Restore Estuarine Ecosystems

Beginning in late 2017, RAE partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to oversee a major regional funding program: Southeast New England Watershed Grants. The program supports the goals and priorities of EPA’s Southeast New England Program (SNEP).

In the first year, RAE expects to award \$4.5 million toward programs, projects and partnerships aimed at solving the region’s most pressing ecosystem problems, such as water pollution, habitat degradation and the impacts of climate change in Rhode Island and Southeast Massachusetts.

For more about RAE’s SNEP Watershed Grants and EPA’s Southeast New England Program, see www.snepgrants.org.





COMMUNITY-BASED RESTORATION: Restoring Estuaries Around the Country

In 2017 Restore America's Estuaries worked with groups around the country to implement on-the-ground restoration projects with real results! Students grew and eventually transplanted approximately 67,345 stems of smooth cordgrass to local restoration sites around Galveston Bay, Texas, restoring more than 2 acres of salt marsh. More than 1,500 students and teachers planted 11,600 plugs of bay grasses at 3 restoration sites in Florida, and in Washington toxic creosote debris was removed from Puget Sound beaches. Urban youth from the New York and New Jersey area removed marine debris from the shorelines of Jamaica Bay and 330 volunteers constructed 968 linear feet of oyster reef in Tampa Bay, Florida. RAE also supported research of the ecology, behavior, and health of Galveston Bay dolphins, and helped to improve water quality through green infrastructure implementation projects throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Results such as these brought about by local community members demonstrate not only the on-the-ground impact that RAE and our member organizations and partners are able to produce, but also the value that coastal communities place on their local waters and natural resources.

NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL FEDERATION: Restoring Oysters to Improve Habitat and Water Quality

The North Carolina Coastal Federation launched its 50 Million Oyster Initiative in 2017. The initiative aims to restore 50 million oysters to North Carolina waters by 2020. The federation, working with partners, will construct 50 acres of oyster reef, with each acre supporting 1 million oysters. These 50 million oysters will filter 2.5 billion gallons of water daily.

In 2017, the federation and partners built 16.5 acres of reef throughout the state. Fifteen of these acres were built at one of the federation's largest restoration projects, the Swan Island Oyster Sanctuary in Pamlico Sound. These acres are part of the state Senator

Jean Preston Oyster Sanctuary Network. The project was funded by private donations and by the North Carolina General Assembly, which appropriated over \$1.1 million. This appropriation helped the federation secure nearly \$1.3 million in grant funds from NOAA.

A true North Carolina project, the Swan Island Oyster Sanctuary employed construction workers, restoration specialists, researchers, state employees and private contractors from across



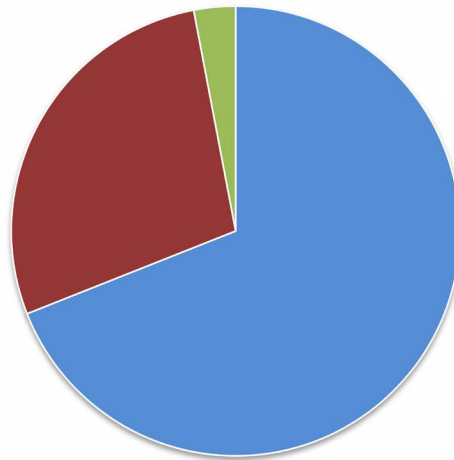
Photo Credit: Todd Miller

the coast, including Edenton-based Stevens Towing, Inc. Construction has moved ahead of schedule, and oysters are already growing on the site. At least 25 more acres will be added to the Swan Island Oyster Sanctuary in 2018 and 2019.

2017

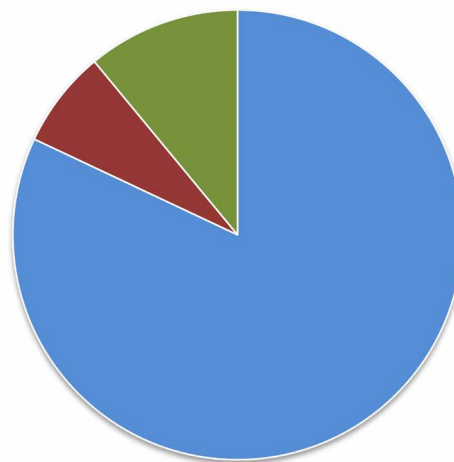
FINANCIAL REPORT

Years Ended December 31	2017	2016
Revenue		
Government Grants	\$1,285,199	\$1,129,954
Grants and Contributions	\$510,624	\$838,453
National Summit and Meetings	\$0	\$756,059
Other Income	\$50,030	\$45,336
Investment Income	\$4,320	\$4,924
Total Revenue	\$1,850,173	\$2,774,726
Expenses		
Program Expenses	\$1,632,576	\$2,414,466
Fundraising	\$140,632	\$142,774
General and Administrative	\$225,628	\$202,774
Total Expenses	\$1,998,836	\$2,759,448
Change in Net Assets	\$(148,662)	\$15,278
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$889,200	\$873,922
Net Assets at End of Year	\$740,538	\$889,200



2017 Revenue

- Government Grants (69%)
- Non-Government Grants and Contributions (28%)
- Other (3%)



2017 Expenditures

- Program Services (82%)
- Fundraising (7%)
- General and Administrative (11%)

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR 2017 SUPPORTERS

Restore America's Estuaries is appreciative of the many individuals, corporations, and organizations that have supported our work over the last year.

Accenture	Mark Sickles	TECO
Amazon Smile	Mosaic Company	The Nature
Blue Ventures	MunichRe	Conservancy
Conservation	National Oceanic	Tim Dillingham
Bob Stokes	and Atmospheric	The Clayton Fund
Brian Phelan	Administration	The Curtis and
c.HAIR.i.TEE	National Estuarine	Edith Munson
CITGO	Research Reserve	Foundation
CLEAN Foundation	System Science	The Louis Berger
Conservation	Collaborative	Group, Inc.
International	National Fish and	Todd Miller
Courtney Lewis	Wildlife Foundation	Tupelo Honey
David Lewis	Patrick McEvoy	University of
Emilie Schwartz	Peter and Carolyn	Michigan
Friends of the	Mattox	U.S. Environmental
Herring River	Peter Clark	Protection Agency
Hollis Pfitsch	Planet Love Life	U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Jeff Benoit	Richard Engel	Service
James Brantley	Robert Simpson	Wildlife Forever Fund
Janet Carlisle	Sam Wainright	William C. Baker
Jonathan Stone	Scott's MiracleGro	<i>If we have inadvertently</i>
Julie Hettig	Sea World Busch	<i>left you off our</i>
Kathy Fletcher	Gardens	<i>acknowledgement list,</i>
Kim Coble	Conservation Fund	<i>we apologize and would</i>
Kim Davis Reyher	Selma Al-Salam	<i>appreciate your letting</i>
Lynette Cardoch	Steve Dubiel	<i>us know by contacting</i>

clewis@estuaries.org



Donor Spotlight:

THE MOSAIC COMPANY

In 2017, RAE was honored to partner with The Mosaic Company to protect and restore the environment and natural resources of Tampa Bay and its watershed through the Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund (TBERF). The Mosaic Company Foundation was a Founding Partner of the fund and Mosaic continues its longstanding supporter of TBERF, a competitive grants program co-managed by RAE that directly funds vital environmental projects while also leveraging significant matching revenue for this work. Since its launch in 2013, TBERF has provided \$3.7 million to 43 projects, resulting in:

- 116.5 acres of upland habitat restored
- 695 acres of wetlands restored
- 7,182 acres of restoration planned
- 2,200 linear feet of living shorelines created
- Treatment of stormwater runoff from 631 acres of urbanized area
- Waterbird management on 13 Tampa Bay island sanctuaries
- 144,930 marsh plants installed
- 1,086 oyster domes installed
- 12,433 square feet of oyster beds created

RAE greatly appreciates the generosity and commitment of The Mosaic Company and The Mosaic Company Foundation, without whom these achievements would not have been possible. We look forward to continuing to work together to protect our nation's vital waters and coasts for the benefit of present and future generations.



DONATE NOW

The support of our generous donors makes possible all that we do. To learn more about how you can help protect and restore estuaries, contact Courtney Lewis at clewis@estuaries.org or visit www.estuaries.org/donate.

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