

2014

ANNUAL
REPORT



I N S P I R I N G A C T I O N



RESTORE
AMERICA'S
ESTUARIES

2014

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



RESTORE
AMERICA'S
ESTUARIES

INSPIRING ACTION

As the leader of an alliance of eleven community-based conservation organizations, the convener of vast numbers of concerned stakeholders from a wide range of sectors, and the provider of information on the benefits and importance of coastal restoration, Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) works in a variety of ways to advance our mission to protect and restore America's bays and estuaries as resources for our nation. Yet, almost all of our work is done with the same goal in mind: Inspiring Action. By advancing the science around blue carbon we inspire people and communities to protect and restore wetlands; by sharing knowledge about the benefits of living shorelines we inspire public and private property owners to implement these ecologically valuable alternatives to bulkheads and seawalls; our community-based restoration events and leadership of National Estuaries Week inspire tens of thousands of volunteers to get out and help maintain and restore their coastal areas; and the more than 1,200 participants in our 2014 National Summit both shared and received ample amounts of not only knowledge on ways to help protect and restore our nation's coasts and estuaries, but also the inspiration to do so. In the

following pages, you will learn of the impressive accomplishments that our many supporters have helped bring about in these different areas over the past year.

However, perhaps the greatest example of inspiration we saw in 2014 was that which RAE's supporters provided to us and our colleagues. The dedication, enthusiasm, and relentless optimism that you continue to demonstrate for our mission and our work are what drive us in our efforts to protect and restore America's bays, sounds, and estuaries. Therefore, as you read this report, you should take pride in knowing that all of these successes were made possible in no small part by you. We thank you for your ongoing support, and look forward to continuing to share with you in the years to come details on the ways that together we are making a difference by inspiring action.

Sincerely,

Jeff Benoit
RAE President

Capt. Peter Clark
RAE Board Chair



1,540

acres restored



14

stream miles
opened



24

states



26,469

volunteers



163,400

volunteer hours served



\$3.8
million

economic value
leveraged through
volunteers

RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES ALLIANCE



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COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE PRODUCE ON-THE-GROUND IMPACT

Restoration of our nation's estuaries is best accomplished at the local level, by the people and communities who have the strongest connection to them. RAE therefore works through our 11 member organizations to support restoration projects that are community-based from design to execution. In 2014, our Community-Based Restoration Program supported more than 60 projects in 15 states. Through these projects 7,320 volunteers contributed more than 79,550 service hours to bring

about tangible results including the restoration of 1,540 acres and opening of nearly 15 stream miles. Projects completed by these volunteers included: oyster and scallop restoration, dam removal, invasive plant removal, living shoreline creation, and salt marsh planting. Results such as these brought about by local community members demonstrate the importance of these natural resources to the people who live near them, as well as the on-the-ground impact that RAE and our member organizations are able to produce.



FISH PASSAGE RESTORED TO RHODE ISLAND RIVER

In June 2014, Save The Bay - Narragansett Bay, along with other partners in the Pawcatuck River Fish Passage Restoration gathered to mark the completion of a project that in just seven years reversed centuries of environmental damage. Dams have blocked fish runs on the Pawcatuck River in Rhode Island since 1762. The project, a collaboration of more than 20 government agencies, corporations, private landowners, and environmental groups, opened up more than 32 miles of riverine habitat for migratory fish and restored access to a 1,433 acre glacial lake which can support an alewife run of more than 100,000 fish annually. The Lower Shannock Falls Dam was removed, a fishway and eel pass were installed at the Horseshoe Falls Dam, and a nature-like fishway was created at Kenyon Mill dam with a series of pools and weirs that slow the flow of the water.

The multi-year project has restored migratory fish access to more than 1,400 acres of fish spawning and nursery habitat; increased food supply for a number of fish species; restored river connectivity and a more natural habitat; improved recreational use and provided additional flood storage area; and has created jobs for the local economy.



INSPIRING ACTION, CREATING RESILIENCE: 2014 NATIONAL SUMMIT

Restore America's Estuaries and The Coastal Society convened their first-ever joint national Summit, "Inspiring Action, Creating Resilience," November 1-6, just outside Washington, DC. The biennial national Summit was hosted locally by RAE's alliance member, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, headquartered nearby in Annapolis, Maryland.

More than 1,200 registered attendees from across the country and abroad convened over 6 days and participated in a variety of ways. They volunteered on a community-based restoration project on the Anacostia River, participated in field sessions across the Chesapeake Bay and the DC Metro area, took in dynamic plenaries, benefited from numerous networking and special events, and explored the award-winning exposition/poster hall. The program featured more than 800 roles, including dedicated sessions, presentations, posters, and moderators.

For the first time, the Summit program addressed all aspects of coastal and estuarine restoration and management, in all habitats, at all scales, and all regions, including the Great Lakes and international locales. The Summit's program themes were very timely, as coastal communities pursue new, more robust strategies to effectively manage, protect and restore their resources. Coastal restoration and management go hand-in-hand by providing services and benefits through natural and built environments. They are pivotal for creating a pathway for sustainable job creation and economic growth, both of which are particularly critical to the nation at this time.

We're now busy making plans for our 8th National Summit – "Our Coasts, Our Future, Our Choice," which will be hosted in New Orleans, LA, December 10-15, 2016. For more info on our upcoming 2016 Summit, visit estuaries.org/Summit.



SUMMIT ATTENDEES GET MUDDY TO HELP RESTORE LOCAL WETLANDS

Nearly 100 Summit participants volunteered at Kingman Marsh as a kickoff to the 2014 National Summit. They braved the chilly wind and mud and repaired eight goose exclosures, which equates to 6,400 square feet of wetland that will now be protected from the geese and will have a chance to grow. Volunteers also removed 8 cubic yards of trash, which is equal to around 2,400 lbs.



19,000 VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK

This year saw the continued success and growth of National Estuaries Week, thanks to the thousands of enthusiastic volunteers and dozens of dedicated event hosts. Highlights of National Estuaries Week 2014, held September 20-27, included:

- 69 events, with details shared on an interactive map. Of these events, 23 were sponsored by RAE member organizations, 26 by NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve Sites, 6 by EPA National Estuary Program Partners, 2 by National Fish Habitat Partnership, and 12 by other organizations.
- 19,149 volunteers and citizens were directly engaged in a combined 83,846 hours of service and other activities based on estimates from event hosts.
- More than 2.3 million social media impressions including #EstuariesWeek.
- National Estuaries Week volunteers contributed an economic value estimated at over \$1.8 million.
- 28 Senators cosponsoring a national resolution recognizing National Estuaries Week.
- 16 Proclamations by state governors and the District of Columbia.

VOLUNTEERS CLEAN TAMPA BAY'S SHORES AND WATERS

In honor of National Estuaries Week, RAE member group, Tampa Bay Watch recruited 280 volunteers to participate in a land and sea-based cleanup of Tampa Bay. Volunteers on land cleaned the shorelines of Fort De Soto Park, Tierra Verde, and the Sunshine Skyway while volunteer boaters cleaned up monofilament from colonial nesting islands and shorelines to reduce the threat of entanglement of marine animals. More than 1,965 pounds of trash were collected and removed from Tampa Bay.





LIVING SHORELINES: PROTECTING OUR COASTAL COMMUNITIES AND ECOSYSTEMS

In 2014, RAE continued to ramp up our efforts to encourage and promote the use of living shorelines in coastal communities nationwide. Living shorelines are a suite of techniques that allow property owners to protect and restore their shoreline using naturally-occurring systems like saltmarsh and oyster reefs while also providing benefits to bays and estuaries. This approach provides shoreline stabilization and habitat functions, as opposed to “hardened” options like bulkheads and seawalls that exacerbate erosion and destroy critical habitat.

In June 2014, RAE convened a panel of experts to identify the major institutional barriers to living shorelines projects and programs. The analysis of these barriers and their recommendations for overcoming them will be the basis for a first-of-its-kind report that will provide a road map for catalyzing the change needed to bring about broader living shorelines implementation.

The 2014 Summit featured a dynamic track solely focused on living shorelines and explored all facets, ranging from lessons learned on practical aspects to regulatory discussions on how to encourage their permitting. The program featured over 40 speakers and also had posters that explored various aspects of living shorelines.



CRCL'S OYSTER SHELL RECYCLING PROGRAM IS NATION'S LARGEST

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana's Oyster Shell Recycling Program, launched in 2014 and has already partnered with 12 New Orleans restaurants to collect more than 1.5 million pounds (over 800 tons) of oyster shell.

Oysters grow best on beds of natural shell, but unfortunately most oyster shells removed from Louisiana waters end up in landfills. The goal of the program is to instead return as much shell as possible to coastal waters.

Collected shells are stored to cure for 6 months before being bagged by volunteers and strategically placed in waters off the Louisiana coast. The shell will encourage oyster growth and over time will also help build new coastal marsh and mitigate storm surge.

CRCL is looking to expand this program. Interested restaurants in New Orleans and Baton Rouge should contact hilaryc@crcl.org.

BLUE CARBON: PROMOTING ESTUARY CLIMATE BENEFITS

Coastal wetlands have the ability to remove and store significant amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, mitigating the effects of climate change. RAE's Blue Carbon Program is increasing understanding of climate benefits and incorporating these benefits into coastal habitat management.

A RAE-led study in Puget Sound, WA released in early 2014, demonstrated that restoration of the estuary could result in 8.9 million tons of CO₂ removed from the atmosphere, an amount equivalent to the 1-year

emissions of 1.7 million cars. RAE is now conducting a similar study in Tampa Bay.

The 2014 White House Priority Agenda on Climate Resiliency highlighted the importance of blue carbon, noting several RAE partnership projects. RAE also developed the first global wetland and seagrass restoration protocol for greenhouse gas offsets, which is finishing the Verified Carbon Standard approval process. Once approved, wetland projects will be eligible to earn carbon credits for sale on the carbon market.



SAVE THE BAY SAN FRANCISCO WORKS TO RESTORE UNIQUE TRANSITION ZONE HABITAT

Save The Bay - San Francisco's (STBSF) on-the-ground wetland restoration projects are creating important buffer areas adjacent to tidal marshes. Their goal is to re-establish native plants in the "transition zone"—narrow areas of vegetation located between bay water and land. Transition zones typically contain the greatest species richness of native marsh plants. These areas also provide crucial buffers from human impacts, terrestrial predators, and provide space for marsh migration in the context of sea level rise.

However, increased urban development and marsh habitat alternation and loss around the Bay have greatly reduced the amount and size of transition zone habitat. The remaining habitat is also heavily colonized by invasive species. Over the course of this project completed in 2014, STBSF, with the help of volunteers, planted more than 4,640 native plants and removed 15,575 pounds of invasive species. The restoration of these areas is crucial to improve habitat structure and function and increase ecosystem services to the greater San Francisco Bay estuary and to organisms using the estuary.



TAMPA BAY ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION FUND SPURS ON-THE-GROUND RESULTS

The Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund (TBERF) is a competitive grants program with the goal of funding projects which restore and protect Tampa Bay and its watershed. It is managed through a strategic partnership between the Tampa Bay Estuary Program and RAE who work together to encourage local and national contributions from the public and private sectors and achieve measurable conservation outcomes. Among the projects that the Fund made possible in 2014 are: Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuary tracking population trends and threats in nationally significant waterbird nesting colonies supporting 50,000 pairs of 31 bird species; The City of Safety Harbor removing invasive plants from a passive-use public park and replanting with native species to restore six acres of marsh/mangrove wetlands; and Manatee County installing 7,500-square-feet of oyster beds as part of the comprehensive restoration of a 651-acre county preserve.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: THE OCEAN FOUNDATION

In 2014, The Ocean Foundation with support from The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation again provided generous support to Restore America's Estuaries. Their grant to our Blue Carbon program allowed us to continue advancing this exciting work, notably to produce a report, Greenhouse Gas Offset Methodology Criteria for Tidal Wetland Conservation, which recommends specific criteria and procedures to create the first global tidal wetland and seagrass conservation methodology for

greenhouse gas offsets which would meet the Verified Carbon Standard requirements. Additionally, their sponsorship of our 7th National Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration helped make this event a rousing success. We greatly appreciate their longstanding support of our efforts to protect and restore our nation's bays and estuaries as essential resources for our nation.



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR 2014 SUPPORTERS

RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES IS APPRECIATIVE OF THE MANY INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED OUR WORK OVER THE LAST YEAR.

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North Carolina Sea Grant
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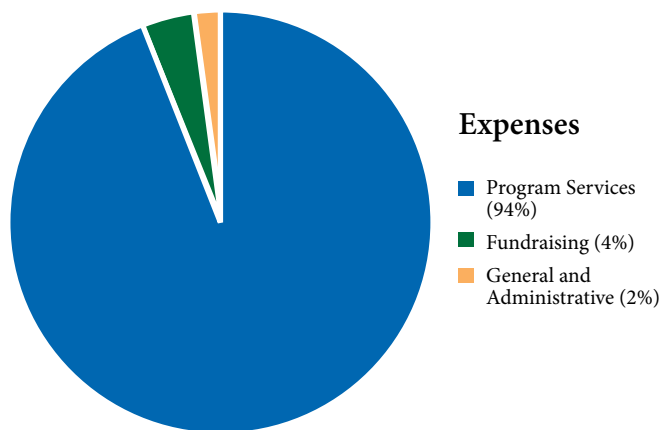
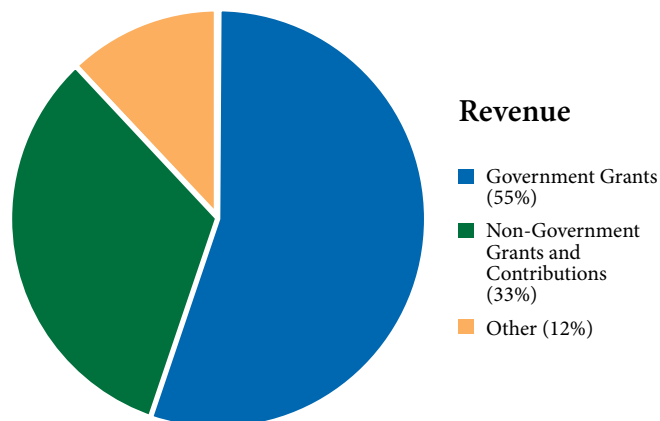
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You can also donate online at www.estuaries.org/donate.



FINANCIAL REPORT: OUR REVENUE & EXPENSES

Years Ended December 31	2014	2013
Revenue		
Government Grants	\$1,865,034	\$2,365,356
Grants and Contributions	542,909	251,350
National Summit and Meetings	937,487	65,588
Other Income	53,650	19,597
Investment Income	8,326	6,941
Total Revenue	\$3,407,406	\$2,708,832
Expenses		
Program Services	\$3,076,181	\$2,760,620
Fundraising	136,413	57,217
General and Administrative	55,134	44,309
Total Expenses	\$3,267,728	\$2,862,146
Change in Net Assets	\$139,678	\$(153,314)
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$896,524	\$1,049,838
Net Assets at End of Year	\$1,034,883	\$896,524



IN DEDICATION: TO DALLAS MINER

The coastal community lost a friend and tireless champion when Dallas Miner passed away unexpectedly on March 22, 2015. Dallas was an avid outdoorsman and devoted his career to protecting, restoring, and preserving habitat, marine life, coastal areas, and the rights of sportsmen.

Prior to his retirement from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dallas was a senior member of the Coastal Program in the Branch of Habitat Restoration. As part of the Headquarters Office, he was instrumental in fostering communication and consultation between Regional and field offices. Dallas was best recognized for his keen ability to create long-lasting partnerships between the Coastal Program and external conservation organizations around the country that together resulted in on-the-ground habitat benefits for fish and wildlife. Dallas was an integral member of a skilled

professional staff with whom he thoroughly enjoyed working.

Early in his career, Dallas hosted the television show Wisconsin Outdoors. Later, he worked for the Connecticut Conservation Association and the Urban Land Institute. Beginning in 1979 he served with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As Director, Office of Marine and Estuarine Sanctuaries he developed policies regarding unique or critical habitat management. Under his direction, several marine and estuarine areas were identified and designated as national sanctuaries, including the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary off the coast of Maui.

Dallas went on to serve at the American Sportfishing Association and later as President of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation where he directed policy development and implementation strategies on natural resource legislation, including the Wallop-Breaux Sportfish Restoration Fund and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Dallas will be missed.





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