



RESTORE  
AMERICA'S  
ESTUARIES



# 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

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Restore America's Estuaries

# 2023 IN REVIEW

As we reflect on the remarkable accomplishments of the past year, it is with immense pride and gratitude that we present the highlights of our journey together. In 2023, Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) continued to advance our mission to preserve and protect our nation's precious estuarine ecosystems for all.

RAE proudly launched two innovative programs, made possible through collaboration and support from RAE members and key federal agencies and backed by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

The [Gulf Region Oyster Network](#), funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), creates a strong, diverse network of organizations with skills and experience in oyster shell recycling and reef restoration and provides a learning network that can serve to expand this critical work throughout the Gulf and the US with an emphasis on regional learning, impact and inclusive growth.

Our second new program, the [Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund \(LISCIF\)](#), is a partnership among RAE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the [Long Island Sound Study \(LISS\)](#). This program helps achieve the goals of the [Justice40 Initiative](#), which calls for 40% of certain Federal investments to flow to disadvantaged communities that have been marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. LISCIF will help to build capacity for organizations located in communities affected by disproportionate environmental and human health risks and fund project proposals which improve access to the Long Island Sound, while reducing overall environmental health risks.

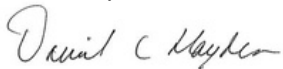
This October, our commitment to knowledge-sharing and collaboration reached new heights at the [2023 Living Shorelines Workshop](#) in Galveston, TX. With the support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and NOAA, this pivotal event saw record attendance with 250 coastal restoration professionals and policy makers coming together to foster an environment of innovation and shared expertise that will undoubtedly shape the future of nature-based shoreline stabilization.

A few weeks prior to the Workshop, we celebrated [National Estuaries Week \(NEW\)](#), an annual recognition of the role healthy coasts play in protecting and providing for our nation. In recognition of Congress passing an overwhelmingly bipartisan Resolution recognizing the week, we hosted our first NEW Celebration in Washington, DC. Attended by Congressional staff, federal agencies, and partner organizations, dozens of old and new friends shared local seafood and stories from our shores. Capping off the night, Dr. Rick Spinrad, NOAA Administrator, addressed the crowd, contributing valuable insights that bolstered our collective commitment to safeguarding our nation's estuaries.

As we celebrate these achievements, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been instrumental in making these initiatives a reality. Your unwavering support has been the catalyst for our success, and we look forward to deepening these collaborations in the years to come.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are excited about the positive impact we can achieve together. As we forge ahead, let us continue to stand united in our shared commitment to the environment and the communities that depend on the vitality of our coastal ecosystems.

Sincerely,



Daniel Hayden  
President & CEO  
Restore America's Estuaries



Daniel Hayden (left) and Dr. Rick Spinrad (right) at a September National Estuaries Week celebration.





# ABOUT US

Puget Sound, WA

**Restore America's Estuaries is dedicated to the protection and restoration of bays and estuaries as essential resources for our nation.**

Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) is a national alliance of 10 coastal conservation groups dedicated to restoring and preserving America's estuaries and coasts. RAE member organizations, and our Affiliate Member partners, restore coastal habitats in estuaries nationwide, stretching from Maine to California.

## MEMBER GROUPS



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION  
Saving a National Treasure



Save the Sound®  
Action for our region's environment.

**SAVE THE BAY**



North Carolina  
Coastal Federation  
Working Together for a Healthy Coast

## AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay | Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership | Audubon Society | Billion Oyster Project | Black in Marine Science | Bonefish & Tarpon Trust | Buzzards Bay Coalition | Choctawatchee Basin Alliance | Clean Foundation | Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation | Ducks Unlimited | Ecosystem Restoration Institute | Environmental Defense Fund | Gulf of Mexico Alliance | Land Trust Alliance | The Nature Conservancy | National Wildlife Federation | Ocean Conservancy | Pontchartrain Conservancy | Restore the Mississippi Delta | Women's Aquatic Network





## HANDS ON LEARNING IN GALVESTON, TX

It was an energizing two days at the 2023 Living Shorelines Tech Transfer Workshop, co-hosted by Restore America's Estuaries and the [Galveston Bay Foundation](#). More than 250 of the nation's leading practitioners, policy makers, and stakeholders gathered in Galveston to learn, network, and engage in conversations on the latest trends and science of nature-based shoreline stabilization.

In addition to two days of learning, attendees had the opportunity to spend some time in the field. The multiple field trips provided an opportunity for participants to get up close and personal with coastal habitat restoration in Galveston Bay and learn about the threats, opportunities, and practices that have worked in the region.

The shared experience in the field was a reminder of how unique our estuaries from region to region are and yet how much they have in common and how much we can learn from one another. These opportunities also inspire in us what's truly possible through the power of partnerships and the exchange of information.

With the support of the [Island Foundation](#), RAE was able to award 15 scholarships to students and early career professionals to attend the Workshop free of charge. Events like these present the opportunity to foster career defining relationships that shape the pathway for young people's future and expand the breadth and perspective of our audience.

# 250

ATTENDEES

# 38

PRESENTERS

# 29

POSTERS

# 17

SPONSORS

# 15

SCHOLARSHIPS



9/10 attendees would recommend the workshop





# GULF REGION OYSTER NETWORK

Mississippi River, LA

## OYSTERS FOR RESILIENCE

Established through NOAA with funding from the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#), the Gulf Region Oyster Network (GRO) is a first of its kind initiative in the region aimed at growing and improving efforts to recycle oyster shells and implement oyster habitat restoration.

Our vision for GRO is to create a strong, diverse network of organizations with skills and experience in oyster shell recycling and reef restoration and provide a learning network that can serve to expand this critical work throughout the Gulf and the US. The total award for the project is \$4.9 million.

The Network will operate within three pillars: 1) Inclusive Growth 2) Expand Existing Programs 3) Regional Knowledge Exchange.

Of course, we couldn't take on a project of this magnitude and importance on our own, so we've partnered with five established, highly respected organizations working in the Gulf: Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, Galveston Bay Foundation, Tampa Bay Watch, Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program, and the Alabama Coastal Foundation. Additionally, RAE will partner with Minorities in Aquaculture to help facilitate the Network and peer-to-peer learning with communities in the Gulf.

The GRO will consist of four primary initiatives:

- Oyster Shell Recycling and Restoration
- Meaningful Engagement
- Learning Exchange
- Impact Monitoring





## BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

With funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and in coordination with the White House's Justice40 Initiative, Restore America's Estuaries launched the [Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund \(LISCIF\)](#) in June 2023 with support from EPA and the Long Island Sound Study. This competitive grant program will focus on activities that address challenges and opportunities facing overburdened and underserved communities within the geographic scope of the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP).

The Fund intends to distribute at least \$2 million in competitive grants and provide technical support and capacity building for organizations in the region to advance environmental justice over the next five years. In addition to funding, RAE will also facilitate annual peer-to-peer learning and tech-transfer meetings among awardees and key stakeholders in the region.

Eligible projects funded under this program include:

- Quantifiable pollutant prevention or reduction.
- Restoring habitat.
- Public engagement, knowledge, and stewardship.
- Projects that enhance community resilience and sustainability.
- Planning and design that set-the-stage for implementation of water quality projects, eligible habitat restoration projects and resilience projects.
- Community-based science projects.
- Data management and integration projects.

Additionally, RAE also hired Shahela Begum to manage the program, giving RAE a greater presence in the Long Island Sound region and utilizing her years of experience working with New York City's under represented and under resourced communities to the better administer this Fund.

The application deadline for the first round of funding closed on December 1st. We plan to announce awards in early 2024.

# 35

A P P L I C A T I O N S

# \$2.6 M

R E Q U E S T E D





# FORGING PARTNERSHIPS

San Francisco, CA

## CANOEING WITH CONGRESS



Congressional staff and partners canoeing on the Anacostia River in Washington, DC.

In the leadup to National Estuaries Week, a week long celebration of our nation's coasts and their benefits, RAE, the [Association of National Estuary Programs \(ANEP\)](#), and the [National Estuarine Research Reserve Association \(NERRA\)](#) took staff members from the Congressional Estuaries Caucus canoeing on the Anacostia River in Washington, DC. We got a close up look of the challenges that urban watersheds face, including eroding shorelines and pollution, while discussing opportunities to overcome these obstacles. Thanks to the [Anacostia Watershed Society](#) for hosting us.

## ART AND ESTUARIES

[Sophia Tigges](#) is a PhD candidate at Boston University studying salt marsh resilience. In addition to Sophia's research and teaching, they have a passion for using art, specifically comics, for community outreach and education. RAE and Sophia began a partnership in 2023 to circulate these illustrations as a means for science communication on our social media platforms, using this visual storytelling method to reach new audiences. The success of this partnership is a testament to the importance of finding creative ways to interact and engage with members of our community.



Credit: Sophia Tigges

## BRIEFING THE ESTUARIES CAUCUS



Bob Stokes presents at Congressional Estuaries Caucus Briefing.

RAE, NERRA, and ANEP hosted a briefing for the [Congressional Estuaries Caucus](#) in March. RAE board member and Galveston Bay Foundation President, Bob Stokes, joined other experts from coastal restoration organizations to talk with Members of Congress and federal agencies about the threats of climate change and how estuaries can play a role in protecting our critical coastal infrastructure and ecosystems. We'd like to thank Representatives Bill Posey (FL), Suzanne Bonamici (OR), Brian Mast (FL), and Rick Larsen (WA) for their support as co-chairs of the Estuaries Caucus and for inviting us to speak on these and other pressing issues.



# ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

Chesapeake Bay, MD

## COASTAL MANAGEMENT

More than 250 coastal restoration professionals, policy makers, and managers filled the auditorium at EPA headquarters in Washington for the first ever Transformational Coastal Management Meeting. The event was highlighted by RAE's Daniel Hayden introducing [CEQ Chair, Brenda Mallory](#). Each session emphasized the need for federal funding and a forward-thinking approach to coastal management, incorporating a future in which climate change becomes more severe and dangerous but also one in which all community members are engaged in the process and benefit from the outcomes.



RAE CEO, Daniel Hayden, introduces CEQ Chair, Brenda Mallory.

## ENGAGING CONGRESS



Genevieve Genest prepares to address Congress.

RAE member group, Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF), was invited to join lawmakers in Washington this Summer to discuss the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program](#) with the House Natural Resources Committee. Working with RAE staff in DC, Genevieve Genest delivered testimony to the Committee on the Foundation's two decade track record of success putting Coastal Program dollars to work in the region for the benefit of coastal communities, the economy, and ecosystems.

## TALKING BLUE CARBON WITH CEQ

RAE participated in multiple meetings with the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to discuss ways to utilize [blue carbon](#), or the ability of coastal ecosystems to sequester and store carbon, to aid in the fight against climate change, specifically within the framework of the Administration's Ocean Climate Action Plan. Coastal regions play a critical role in preventing the most damaging effects of climate change and we're enthusiastic about the growing interest in tapping into the wealth of benefits these ecosystems provide.







# FUNDING RESTORATION

Gulf of Maine, ME

\$8M	44	\$6.3M	250	\$53M
AWARDED	AWARDS	MATCH	REQUESTS	REQUESTED

Working with public and private sector partners, RAE facilitates on-the-ground restoration to better protect communities from flooding, improve water quality by mitigating pollution, protect blue carbon ecosystems, and construct living shorelines. We also support innovative research and community led programs that engage diverse audiences with the goal of improving our knowledge and understanding of the valuable ecosystem, economic, and cultural services healthy estuaries provide.

RAE is leading initiatives to break down barriers to entry for traditionally marginalized communities. We implemented a *match bank* in 2021 to lessen the burden on applicants that may not have access to the full federal match requirement. In 2022, our National Estuary Program Coastal Watersheds Grant began offering a federal match waiver for qualified applicants. In 2023, each of our grant programs now considers the impact any funding may have on traditionally underrepresented and diverse communities, first piloted in our Caring for our Coasts grant program. Despite the millions of dollars we awarded this year, the overwhelming number of applications go unfunded, exemplifying the vast needs of coastal communities in the face of 21st century problems facing our nation's estuaries.



## NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM WATERSHEDS GRANT

Hudson Bay, NY

\$2.9M	8	\$1.3M	56	\$20.2M
AWARDED	AWARDS	MATCH	REQUESTS	REQUESTED

Restore America's Estuaries, in coordination with and financial support from EPA, administers the [NEP Watersheds Grants](#), a nationally competitive grants program designed to support projects that address urgent, emerging, and challenging issues within the 28 NEP boundary areas. The first round of awards were selected in 2023 and projects are expected to be completed by 2027.



# SNEP WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

Narragansett Bay, RI

**\$3.2M**

AWARDED

**12**

AWARDS

**\$1M**

MATCH

**69**

REQUESTS

**\$17.7M**

REQUESTED

The [Southeast New England Program \(SNEP\) Watershed Implementation Grants](#) target integrated approaches to water quality and ecosystem restoration in Southeast Massachusetts and Rhode Island. SNEP recognizes that clean water, healthy habitats, resilient ecosystems, and prosperous communities are closely interconnected, and that strong partnerships offer the most effective means of meeting Southeast New England's environmental challenges. This program is funded by US EPA Region 1.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### WETLAND RESTORATION AT BRISTOL GOLF PARK

In 2011, the New York Times wrote that Bristol, RI's municipal golf course was the worst course in America. In 2023, with support from SWIG, the Town restored freshwater wetlands at the course to reduce runoff of nutrients and bacteria to Bristol Harbor and the Warren River, which are valued for swimming, fishing, shell fishing, boating, and other recreational and commercial uses. In addition to its water quality benefits, the work reduced flooding, restored wetland habitat, and substantially improved the playability of the golf course. Installation of new trails further enhanced access and enjoyment of the property.



*Celebrating the reopening of Bristol Golf Park*

### CUTTYHUNK GHOST GEAR REMOVAL



In 2022, SWIG awarded \$55,000 to the Provincetown-based Center for Coastal Studies (CCS) for an innovative project to remove derelict fishing gear, or "ghost gear," from the shores of Cuttyhunk, the outermost of the Elizabeth Islands, southwest of Cape Cod. The CCS team, including Cuttyhunk residents, commercial fishermen, Massachusetts environmental police, and students from Cornell University, removed nearly 8 tons of debris, including more than 700 lobster traps. The project team included artists who used some of the recovered material to raise awareness about marine pollution through installations in New Bedford and on Cuttyhunk this past summer.

*Laura Ludwig and Constance Old installing a sculpture made from recovered fishing gear on Cuttyhunk.*





# TAMPA BAY ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION FUND

Tampa Bay, FL

**\$666,209**

AWARDED

**6**

AWARDS

**\$3M**

MATCH

**12**

REQUESTS

**\$1.9M**

REQUESTED

The [Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund \(TBERF\)](#) is a strategic partnership between the Tampa Bay Estuary Program and Restore America's Estuaries. TBERF seeks applications for cost-effective projects that will protect, restore, or enhance the natural resources of Tampa Bay and its contributing watershed. Funding for TBERF comes from a coalition of public and private resources.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### LOWER GREEN SWAMP PRESERVE HYDROLOGIC RESTORATION

This Tampa Bay Environmental Restoration Fund supported project implemented restoration concepts prioritized in the Lower Green Swamp Hydrologic Restoration Master Plan. Hillsborough County installed ditch blocks, wet crossings, overflow sills, and other best management practices across 380 acres of wetland habitats. Habitats in the Lower Green Swamp Preserve will benefit from these hydrologic interventions, as will the water quality in bay segments downstream.



Lower Green Swamp.

### BOCA CIEGA BAY LIVING SHORELINE



Living shoreline in Boca Ciega Bay.

St Petersburg College installed a living shoreline along Boca Ciega Bay at their Bay Pines Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Center. Before installation of oyster bags and native plants could occur, the College first had to remove concrete seawall, derelict vessels, marine debris, and invasive plants. TBEP, Keep Pinellas Beautiful, and St. Petersburg College hosted a Give-A-Day for Tampa Bay event where 30 volunteers removed 28,000 pounds of Brazilian Pepper trees that were used as mulch along the bayside nature trail.



# NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM COASTAL WATERSHEDS GRANT

*Santa Monica, CA*

**\$1.2M**

AWARDED

**6**

AWARDS

**\$1.1M**

MATCH

**55**

REQUESTS

**\$10.8M**

REQUESTED

Restore America's Estuaries, in close coordination with and financial support from EPA, administers the [NEP Coastal Watersheds Grant Program](#). This grant program funds projects within the geographic boundaries of the National Estuary Program and supports Congressionally-set priorities such as habitat loss, algal blooms, invasive species, flooding, coastal erosion, and pollution.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### RESTORING HABITAT IN THE RARITAN WATERSHED

The Hudson River Foundation (HRF) surveyed more than 300 road-stream crossings and prioritized the removal of nonfunctional bridges and culverts throughout the Raritan River watershed in New Jersey. Following the assessment, HRF created a restoration design for one stream crossing as well as a toolkit to be used by planners and project managers to address additional defunct infrastructure in the watershed. This novel approach to restoration provided a new means to engage partners in both the transportation industry as well as municipal governments.



*HRF staff survey a culvert in the Raritan River watershed.*

### PROTECTING SACRED SITES AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES' RESILIENCE IN LOUISIANA



*Aerial view of a retired oil and gas canal planned for restoration.*

Working with three local indigenous Tribes, the Lowlander Center identified old oil and gas canals suitable for backfilling, thereby protecting sacred sites and increasing community and ecosystem resilience, with the ultimate goal of permitting the restoration. Honoring Indigenous, local, and traditional knowledges and wisdom, tribal leaders and community organizers guided the work to bring together diverse ways of knowing with innovative scientific insights to inform nature-based sustainable solutions and increase awareness.





# CARING FOR OUR COAST GULF REGION GRANTS

Gulf Shores, AL

**\$44,000**

AWARDED

**12**

AWARDS

**20**

REQUESTS

**\$67,000**

REQUESTED

Restore America's Estuaries is excited to partner with CITGO to facilitate the [Caring for our Coast Grants](#) to organizations and groups hosting locally-based volunteer events in the Gulf of Mexico region. These grants provide organizations, municipalities, and community associations with funding to host trash clean-ups, estuary restoration, and other educational/outreach events. In 2023, Caring for our Coast projects engaged 6,000 volunteers, restored 150 acres of wetlands, planted 3,100 native plants, and collected 83,000 lbs of trash and marine debris in the Gulf of Mexico.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### GULF COAST BIRD OBSERVATORY CLEANS BEACHES, RESTORES HABITAT

With support of this program, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Texas hosted and contributed to over 37 education and outreach events in 2023, including their annual Summer Bird Camp. They also used funding to host seven beach cleanups - five in Surfside, one in Bay Town, one in Palacios, and one in Bolivar.

In total, 371 volunteers attended these cleanups, removing over 1,384lbs of trash from important habitats.



Students spot birds at GCBO  
Summer Camp

### NATUREFEST AT THE WETLAND PARK & NATURE TRAIL



Enjoying lunch at NatureFest.

Sankofa Wetland Park & Nature Trail observed Earth Day 2023 with NatureFest, a family-friendly celebration of nature, wildlife and community in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood with more than 300 participants.

Supported by funding from Restore America's Estuaries and CITGO, more than 200 youth also participated in outdoor, hands-on classrooms for ecology education during the summer of 2023. Learning about the importance of wetlands in protecting the fragile Louisiana coast will increase their commitment as they grow into adulthood.





# MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



*Barnegat Bay, NJ*

## RECYCLING OYSTER SHELLS IN TAMPA BAY



*Collecting oyster shells from local Tampa Bay restaurants.*

In September of 2023, Tampa Bay Watch officially launched "Shells for Shorelines." This unique initiative, in collaboration with the Gulf Region Oyster Network and generously supported by Duke Energy, Neptune Flood, and a significant grant from NOAA and Restore America's Estuaries, focuses on ecological restoration through innovative shell recycling. The program converts discarded oyster shells from local restaurants into tools for rehabilitating oyster reef habitats in Tampa Bay. Since its pilot phase in February 2022, TBW has recycled more than 102,000 pounds of oyster shells.

## SAVE THE SOUND SETS THE NORWALK RIVER FREE

Dana Dam (also known as Strong Pond Dam) in Wilton, CT was built by Charles Dana in the early 1940s to create an ice-skating and swimming pond for his grandchildren. The dam created unintended yet substantial ecological consequences, however. It blocked fish passage and sediment transport while the impoundment behind the dam submerged the river's floodplain, decreasing the system's resiliency to storms, flooding, and other climate change consequences. On November 11, 2023, Save the Sound and the Town of Wilton took the dam out, freeing the portion of the Norwalk River in Merwin Meadows Park to restore fish passage and natural functions of the ecosystem. Vegetation and fish run monitoring will be done to track the return of biodiversity.



*Removing Dana Dam.*



*Before and after dam removal on the Norwalk River.*





# MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

## REVITALIZING PRAIRIE HABITAT IN GALVESTON BAY



*Volunteers plant prairie grass in Kemah, TX.*

On the grounds of the Galveston Bay Foundation's new Kemah home, a revival story is unfolding, echoing the rich history of the Gulf Coast's Coastal Prairie. Historically, there were more than 9 million acres of prairie habitat along the Gulf Coast, but only 1% remains due to urban sprawl and agriculture use. In 2023, GBF led the planting of 2,500 diverse plants, with over 100 species, thanks to the collective effort of service groups, local Master Naturalists, and individual volunteers. These 2,000 volunteer hours translated to an impressive value of \$59,720 in service contributions, showcasing the remarkable commitment and impact of our volunteers. Every plant set in the ground, every hour dedicated, is a step toward bringing back the splendor of this once expansive habitat.

## EARTHCORPS PLANTS TREES FOR ORCAS

EarthCorps spent 50 crew days maintaining a long-term community-based stewardship plan across 17 NRDA Restoration Sites in the Commencement Bay coastal areas and surrounding watersheds. In response to over 100 years of pollution, the project partners with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians to focus on protecting and restoring the habitat in the lower portion of the Puyallup River Watershed - ensuring native flora and fauna can thrive. Throughout the year, crews controlled non-native invasive species at over half the sites, restoring the riparian forest buffer and shoreline. Activating and engaging members of the community, EarthCorps organized public events and volunteers planted approximately 100 native trees and shrubs at Tahoma Salt Marsh, which are integral to restoring the native salmon habitat and recovering critically endangered Orca whales.



*Planting native trees in Commencement Bay, WA.*



# MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

## RESTORING SALT MARSH AND PROTECTING NARRAGANSETT BAY



*Save the Bay staff and volunteers restore salt marsh habitat in Rhode Island.*

Along the Palmer River in Warren, Rhode Island, Save The Bay - Narragansett Bay began restoring a salt marsh and marsh migration corridor this year. The corridor itself was protected through a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) easement, and the 24-acre parcel, once used for farming salt marsh hay and now called the Sowams Preserve, is currently undergoing an impressive transformation. The fields are being converted to native grasses, invasive shrubs have been removed, and tidal flow in and out of the marsh is being restored.

## RESTORING WETLANDS AND OYSTERS ON THE NORTH CAROLINA COAST

Working with contractors, and volunteers, the North Carolina Coastal Federation completed the earthwork component of the restoration of 10 acres of wetlands at Carolina Beach State Park. Additionally, as part of the Federation's work to restore wild oyster populations, our staff and partners completed the construction of the Cedar Island Oyster Sanctuary which adds 16.7 acres to the state's sanctuary network.



*Restoring marsh habitat at Carolina Beach State Park.*

## LIVING SHORELINES IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

Last summer Kati Grigsby, a Chesapeake Bay Foundation restoration specialist, managed the installation of an impressively large 718-foot living shoreline of oyster reefs and marsh vegetation at a waterfront home in Portsmouth, Virginia. Over the course of 10 weeks, about 90 volunteers worked on the project—ranging from the recently retired to graduate students to members of the military, and more.

CBF worked closely with the Elizabeth River Project to make the Berner shoreline a reality. Funding for the materials came from a Virginia Environmental Endowment grant, while volunteers provided the labor. Altogether, they installed 400 tons of sand, 2,400 oyster castles, 27 coconut fiber coir logs, 1,150 bushels of loose oyster shells, 35 bushels of live oysters, and 2,500 wetland plant plugs.







## REPRESENTATION IN COASTAL RESTORATION

Since its inception, RAE's [Inclusive Coasts Initiative](#) has made great strides in advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Access (DEIJA) in the coastal restoration community. What started as a workshop in 2019 has blossomed into a nationwide community of restoration policy makers, practitioners, and funders.

In March 2023 we launched phase two of the ICI, the [Communities of Practice](#) groups, with the intent to build a community to rely on and share ideas with when implementing DEIJ initiatives in the workplace.

The Communities of Practice were formed from feedback from the Inclusive Coasts Initiative Workshop Series (2020-2022). The groups were born from the desire for conversations around DEIJA and a need for a space to share struggles, successes, and advice from peers.

The groups are split into three role specific sections: 1) community engagement and environmental education professionals, 2) program managers, and 3) restoration professionals. Each section has been attended by folks from diverse backgrounds in nonprofit work, government, foundations, and more.

We look forward to seeing these Communities of Practice grow and change with continued feedback from participants in the new year.

## RAE STAFF

- Daniel Hayden - President & CEO
- Elsa Schwartz - Senior Director of Restoration and Administration
- Tom Ardito - SWIG Program Director
- Shahela Begum - LISCIF Program Director
- Suzanne Simon - NEP Watersheds Grant Program Director
- Lance Speidell - Senior Director of Development
- Hilary Stevens - Coastal Resilience Senior Manager
- Rob Shane - Senior Manager of Communications
- Sara Smith - Grants Administrator
- Samaya Rubio - Community Engagement Associate



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

Wrightsville Beach, NC

## 2023 SUPPORTERS

### \$75,000+

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- CITGO
- The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company
- Mosaic

### \$10,000 - \$74,999

- Cheniere Energy, Inc.
- The Clayton Fund
- Dudley Foundation
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Sea World Busch Gardens Conservation Fund
- VERRA

### \$1,000 - \$9,999

- Coastal Environments, Inc.
- Ducks Unlimited
- Gulf of Mexico Alliance
- HDR, Inc.
- Industrial Fabrics & Premier Concrete
- Island Foundation Inc
- Living Shoreline Solutions, Inc
- National Science Foundation
- Natrx
- Ocean Foundation
- Reef Innovations
- Resources Legacy Fund
- Sandbar Oyster Company
- The Trustees of Reservations
- United States Department of Agriculture

### \$1 - \$999

- Catherine Davis
- Climate Focus North America
- Curt Johnson & Nancy Dittes
- Daniel Silver
- Diane Kuykendall
- Janis Martin
- Kathy Fletcher
- Kara Nunnally
- Kim Davis Reyher
- Peter and Carolyn Mattox
- Peter Clark
- Richard Engel
- Richard Layman
- Sarasota Bay Estuary Program
- Todd Miller
- Tom Ries
- Wolfgang Oesterreich
- Zak Kalles

\*Supporters list updated as of December 21, 2023

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kimberly Reyher (Board Chair) – Executive Director, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
- Alison Prost (Vice Chair) – VP for Environmental Protection & Restoration, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- David Lewis (Secretary) – Executive Director, Save The Bay – San Francisco
- Bob Stokes (Treasurer) – President, Galveston Bay Foundation
- Evelyn Andrade – Executive Director, EarthCorps
- Peter Clark – President, Tampa Bay Watch
- Tim Dillingham – Executive Director, American Littoral Society
- Todd Miller – Executive Director, North Carolina Coastal Federation
- Topher Hamblett – Interim Executive Director, Save The Bay – Narragansett Bay
- Leah Lopez Schmalz – President, Save the Sound





# 2024 COASTAL & ESTUARINE SUMMIT

HOSTED BY RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES

October 6-10, 2024

Washington, D.C. Region



## JOIN US IN WASHINGTON, DC FOR THE 2024 RAE COASTAL & ESTUARINE SUMMIT

At the 2024 RAE Coastal & Estuarine Summit, we'll be exploring the latest research, policy, and practice in coastal restoration. With a focus on the future of restoration practice, this event is your opportunity to connect with other leaders in the field, share your insights, and help shape the future of coastal restoration policy.

Over four days of field sessions, inspiring presentations, workshops, and multiple networking opportunities, you'll have the chance to learn about the latest trends and challenges in coastal restoration, hear from experts in the field, and connect with colleagues from around the world. Whether you're a seasoned policy maker, a new practitioner, or a dedicated coastal manager, the 2024 RAE Coastal & Estuarine Summit is the place to be.

This is your chance to be a part of the future of coastal restoration policy and practice. We can't wait to see you there!

For more information, visit: [www.estuaries.org/2024-rae-summit](http://www.estuaries.org/2024-rae-summit)







RESTORE  
AMERICA'S  
ESTUARIES



# Restore America's Estuaries

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