



**Restore America's Estuaries 6<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Coastal and  
Estuarine Habitat Restoration**  
*Restoring Ecosystems, Strengthening Communities*

**October 20-24, 2012  
Tampa, Florida, USA**

**Call for Proposals: Dedicated Sessions, Presentations, and Posters**

**Submittal deadline: February 1, 2012**

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**ABOUT THE CONFERENCE**

The Conference will bring timely and much-needed attention to the challenges and opportunities for restoration and will bring together a unique blend of people who are involved in policy, science, strategy, business, and on-the-ground restoration. This Conference is unique for its exclusive focus on coastal and estuarine habitat restoration, and we invite you to be a part of it.

The Conference Program will address all aspects of coastal and estuarine habitat restoration, in all habitats, at all scales, and all regions, including the Great Lakes and international locales. Habitat restoration – the manipulation of the physical, chemical or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning self-sustaining natural or historic structure and functions to former or degraded habitat – offers great promise for reversing the trend of habitat loss and degradation, and it is a crucial component of comprehensive ecosystem restoration, protection, and management. In addition, habitat restoration offers a pathway for sustainable job creation and economic growth, both of which are particularly critical at this time.

Past Conference locations included Galveston, TX in 2010, Providence, RI in 2008, New Orleans, LA in 2006, Seattle, WA in 2004, and Baltimore, MD in April 2003. The five previous Conferences have been attended by more than 5,200 people.

## **CONFERENCE AUDIENCE**

The Conference is an international gathering encompassing all disciplines within the coastal and estuarine habitat restoration community. Restore America's Estuaries will work with 200 partnering and supporting organizations to develop and host the Conference and we expect 1,000 attendees from the restoration community: non-profit and community organizations, tribes, academic and research institutions, businesses with an interest in the coast, and agencies from all levels of government. Restoration practitioners, citizens and community leaders, consultants, scientists, educators, planners, engineers, students, volunteers, philanthropists, program managers, field staff, contractors, regulators, and others involved in restoration efforts are expected and encouraged to participate.

## **CONFERENCE THEME – *RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES***

Coastal and estuarine habitats are critical to all aspects of society, and their restoration plays an equally important role in strengthening the social, economic, and environmental aspects of communities. Recognizing that people are a critical part of coastal ecosystems, the role of community will be the interwoven focus throughout the Conference. Human and natural systems are interdependent, and healthy economies and the jobs they support rely on healthy estuaries. Habitat restoration can have a substantial effect on communities, whether they are considered urban, suburban, or rural. These activities truly can have profound impact, improving quality of life, supporting fish and wildlife, and engendering a sense of place. This overarching Conference theme will explore the many ways restoration can shape communities and vice versa, how to effectively measure and convey these changes, and how society can incorporate restoration such that economies and ecosystems can both prosper.

## **ABOUT RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES**

Established in 1995, Restore America's Estuaries, is a nonprofit organization working to preserve the nation's coasts and estuaries by protecting and restoring the lands and waters essential to the richness and diversity of coastal life. Restore America's Estuaries and its alliance members collectively represent millions of citizens in all coastal regions of the United States. Restore America's Estuaries has also been a leader in the economics and valuation of estuaries, "blue carbon" storage and sequestration, national advocacy, and a wide variety of coastal habitat restoration issues.

Our eleven alliance organizations are leaders in regional efforts around the country to restore bays, estuaries, and coasts. They are:

- American Littoral Society
- Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
- Galveston Bay Foundation
- People For Puget Sound
- Save The Bay – San Francisco Bay
- Tampa Bay Watch
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Conservation Law Foundation
- North Carolina Coastal Federation
- Save The Bay – Narragansett Bay
- Save the Sound – a program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals for Sessions, Presentations, and Posters are due February 1, 2012. To submit a proposal, visit <http://program.estuaries.org>.

The Program Committee invites you to submit a proposal to present at the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference. The Program emphasizes lessons learned and best practices in every aspect of coastal and estuarine habitat restoration. There are three ways in which you may participate in the program:

- **Dedicated Sessions** – Potential session chairs should propose four presenters in a 90 minute session. Dedicated sessions must include multiple perspectives and we strongly encourage proposals to address multiple aspects of restoration within the chosen topic. Submissions must be made by the proposed session chair and must identify all proposed presenters. Session chairs may propose themselves as one of the presenters in the session. Example session: Session chair, Speaker A, Speaker B, Speaker C, Speaker D.
- **Presentations** – Please propose one or more 15-20 minute presentation within one or more of the Conference themes and topics. The Program Committee will organize selected presentations into cohesive 90 minute concurrent sessions and assign session moderators. If you would like to propose more than one presentation, you must submit each proposal separately. We strongly encourage student presentation proposals. A Student Presentation Contest will offer cash awards to the best student presentations. For more contest information, please visit the Conference website, [www.estuaries.org/conference](http://www.estuaries.org/conference).
- **Posters** – Posters will be displayed throughout the Conference, and dedicated time will allow poster presenters to directly interact with Conference participants. To the greatest degree possible, posters will be arranged and displayed by topic or theme. If you would like to submit more than one poster, you must submit each proposal separately. We strongly encourage student poster proposals. A Student Poster Contest will offer cash awards to the best student posters. For more contest information, please visit the Conference website, [www.estuaries.org/conference](http://www.estuaries.org/conference).

## THEMES AND TOPICS

Restore America's Estuaries and the Program Committee seek proposals for sessions, presentations, and posters that relate to one or more of the Conference themes. While presentations and posters that address the specific topics identified in each theme are encouraged, you may also submit a proposal that falls outside of the suggested topics and themes. Please keep in mind that the term "coastal" also extends to Great Lakes ecosystems, as the challenges and hurdles are similar to those faced in brackish and saltwater systems. Similarly, we welcome proposals on large scale approaches, upstream restoration, and water quality restoration, as estuaries and coasts are dramatically impacted by activities throughout their watersheds. We encourage international submissions, as well.

## **Theme I. The intersection of habitat restoration and community: how one strengthens the other**

The relationship between coastal communities and their habitats is an extremely interdependent one. If one gets affected, both feel the impact – good *and* bad. Events of the past decade have highlighted just how reliant each is on the other. This theme explores this interdependence, the role of restoration to strengthen both, and how to value restoration in wider societal, economic, and ecosystem services contexts. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Habitat restoration as an education tool
- “Green” job growth and career development through habitat restoration
- Working with boating, fishing, and shellfishing communities to implement habitat restoration
- Benefits to societies from coastal habitat restoration, particularly in the face of climate change
- Effective outreach and education, including use of remote learning technologies
- Role of habitat restoration in protecting communities and mitigating damage due to storm events
- Valuation of coastal and estuarine habitat restoration benefits
- Identifying and quantifying ecosystem services related to restoration
- Role of habitat restoration in recovering from large-scale impacts, such as the Deepwater Horizon Spill
- Role of ports and port managers in habitat restoration
- Socioeconomics of restoration
- Addressing environmental justice through restoration
- Role of traditional ecological knowledge in restoration
- Incorporating Low Impact Development into communities to benefit coastal habitat restoration
- Building diverse partnerships and broad support for restoration
- Effective use of social media for habitat restoration
- How to affect social and political change via habitat restoration
- Putting restoration-related issues in the spotlight to generate funding and political support
- Developing public-private partnerships to support habitat restoration
- Restoration as a tool to educate and involve lawmakers and public officials
- Role of religious communities in habitat restoration
- Catalyzing and incentivizing private investment in habitat restoration
- Habitat restoration in urban areas

## **Theme II. The “how to” of restoration – the basics tenets, techniques, and efforts associated with implementing on-the-ground habitat restoration**

“What worked?” is a question repeated throughout conversations about restoration. This theme focuses on practices and approaches that have directly affected on-the-ground restoration of coastal and estuarine habitats. Often realizing what did not work is as critical as identifying what did, so “lessons learned” sessions are encouraged. We welcome information and sessions related to all

types of habitats, including those of the Great Lakes and international coastal ecosystems. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- “Restoration 101” sessions – best practices and lessons learned from real world examples across all coastal and estuarine habitat types:
  - Salt marsh and tidally influenced wetlands
  - Shellfish
  - Submerged aquatic vegetation
  - Corals
  - Mangroves
  - Fish passage
  - Beaches and shorelines
  - Water quality
  - Ecotones and adjacent ecosystems
- Monitoring – best practices and lessons learned
- Use of reference sites in developing and monitoring restoration results
- Selection and prioritization of restoration sites
- Living shorelines – best practices and lessons learned
- Protecting seed sources needed for restoration
- Role of commercial and community-based native plant nurseries in habitat restoration
- Responding to unanticipated results – leveraging the results you actually get
- Oil spill recovery and restoration
- Construction, installation, and effectiveness of floating islands
- Effectively managing marine debris challenges in restoration

### **Theme III. Integrating restoration science, technology, and planning**

In order for coastal and estuarine habitat restoration to be effective, practitioners, scientists, planners, and decision makers must have the most accurate data and best tools at their disposal. This theme captures the intersection of restoration science and technology and how these can best be put to use in making restoration and planning decisions. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Ocean and coastal acidification – its effects on restoration and restoration planning
- Applying adaptive management principles to improve restoration project results
- Incorporating climate change factors, including sea level rise, in restoration planning and prioritization
- Modeling tools and technology in restoration planning
- How to incorporate vulnerability assessments in habitat restoration planning
- Taking migration corridors into account in habitat restoration planning
- Implementing a watershed approach to coastal and estuarine habitat restoration
- Integrating upland and upstream restoration into downstream coastal habitat restoration
- Technologies available to support restoration implementation and monitoring – opportunities and constraints
- Coastal marine spatial planning technologies and their implications for habitat restoration

- Integrated, estuary-wide planning – how it works, how it doesn't, and how restoration should be incorporated
- Advances in the science and policy of coastal and estuarine “blue carbon” storage and sequestration and implications for coastal wetlands restoration and protection
- Lessons learned with early project planning and coordination
- Emerging science of habitat restoration
- Role and impacts of renewable energy methodologies [e.g. wave generating technologies] on habitat restoration
- Importance and use of land acquisition in habitat restoration
- Role of habitat restoration in “storm proofing” areas
- Managing invasive species in restoration projects
- Interactions between marine protected areas and coastal and estuarine habitat restoration

#### **Theme IV. Large scale coastal and estuarine habitat restoration**

Coastal and estuarine habitat restoration at all scales is important for various reasons. Large scale restoration requires different, and sometimes unique, approaches and tools in order to succeed. This theme delves into how large scale restoration can be effective and what the restoration community has learned through the years. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Gulf of Mexico: Deepwater Horizon and beyond
- Impacts of large-scale restoration projects on downstream coastal and estuarine habitat
- Watershed and/or ecosystem approaches – e.g. Tampa Bay, San Francisco Bay, Mississippi Delta, Great Lakes, Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Long Island Sound, Florida Keys, etc.
- Elements of successful regional partnerships and collaborations for large-scale ecosystem restoration goals
- Planning and implementing coastal and estuarine habitat restoration on a large scale
- Establishing and applying standardized success criteria for restoration on a large scale

#### **Theme V. The roles of policy and funding in coastal and estuarine habitat restoration**

Policy and funding choices profoundly affect the restoration community's ability to implement successful projects. The topics in this theme will provide attendees important information on policies and approaches that have or may affect restoration, insight into a variety of funding opportunities and mechanisms, and allow a forum in which to discuss critical policy decisions that impact restoration. Suggested submittal topics include, but are not limited to:

- How to effectively advocate for restoration at the local, state, and federal levels
- Innovative funding mechanisms
- Congressional updates – what Congress is doing and the implications for coastal and estuarine habitat restoration
- Recent regulatory and legal changes and their impact on restoration – e.g. Coastal Zone Management Act, Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act, etc.
- Leveraging funds for habitat restoration – making the most of what is available
- Ecosystem service markets to support coastal and estuarine habitat restoration – status and new directions

- Implications of the National Ocean Policy on habitat restoration
- Policy, training, and funding needs for habitat restoration practitioners
- How to use “penalty projects” and mitigation projects to support restoration
- The role of federal agencies in coastal and estuarine habitat restoration – the latest and what’s coming in the future
- Comparing effectiveness of different management frameworks in restoring and maintaining coastal and estuarine habitats
- Evaluating policy implications of carbon sequestration in restoration
- Private entity funding of restoration projects – successful models and lessons learned
- Enacting and implementing effective permitting policies for habitat restoration

## INSTRUCTIONS

To submit a proposal for a dedicated session, presentation, or poster, visit <http://program.estuaries.org> to complete the proposal form and submit it online. You will be required to provide full contact and biographical information for all presenters and the session chair (if a dedicated session). **The deadline for proposals for all sessions, presentations, and posters is February 1, 2012. Please mark your calendar!**

### Presentation and Session Format

Conference sessions will last 90 minutes each and will include four presentations of approximately 15-20 minutes, with the remainder of each session dedicated to a moderated dialogue between presenters and attendees. The Conference program will be structured to enable cross-sector dialogue within the restoration community.

### Selection Process and Criteria

The National Program Committee will review proposals in conjunction with Restore America’s Estuaries’ staff. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria, including:

- Significance to the habitat restoration community,
- Relevance to Conference themes,
- Ability to provide information that can be applied in local communities and regions,
- Providing insight about upcoming habitat restoration trends and science, and
- Thoroughness of proposal.

The selection process is competitive and not all submitted proposals will be accepted in the Conference Program. Presentations not selected for inclusion in the Conference Program will receive strong consideration for inclusion in the Poster Session.

### Presenter/Chair Responsibilities

Once a presentation, poster, or dedicated session has been accepted, Restore America's Estuaries will communicate due dates for additional required information for the printed Conference Program guide along with A/V logistics. Session chairs are responsible for providing all required information related to their sessions to Restore America’s Estuaries by the due dates. Reasonable audio-visual equipment, including projectors and screens, will be provided as needed.

### **Poster Setup and Display**

Posters will be displayed on a board 4' high x 8' wide ("landscape" orientation) from 5 p.m. Sunday evening, October 21<sup>st</sup>, through Wednesday afternoon, October 24<sup>th</sup>. Poster set-up will occur on Sunday afternoon. To the degree possible, posters will be arranged by topic or theme. If you would like your poster displayed with others – either your own or by a different presenter – please indicate this in your proposal. The Conference schedule will include time during which posters will be featured.

### **Student Contests and Prizes**

Students are particularly encouraged to participate! All students participating in the Program will be entered into the Student Poster or Student Presentation Contests. Please be sure to indicate your status as a student when completing the online form. Cash prizes will be awarded. Please note that a discounted registration rate will be available for students as well.

### **Some key points to keep in mind:**

- Proposals for single presentations and dedicated sessions will be reviewed based on the information received by the due date, which is February 1, 2012. Proposals deemed incomplete or lacking in information will likely be rejected by the review committee(s).
- When developing your proposal, please refer to the GPO Style Guide [<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/index.html>] for guidance about capitalization, punctuation, acronyms, and similar grammatical items.
- Dedicated sessions must have four speakers. If a session is submitted with only three speakers, the committee will add a fourth speaker from the pool of single presentations proposals.
- Dedicated sessions should consist of multiple viewpoints and organizational representation; sessions consisting of staff from only one organization will not be favorably reviewed and will likely be rejected by the committee.
- **All attendees, including speakers and poster presenters, must register and pay to participate in the conference in person, including travel costs.** If you are submitting a dedicated session, please make sure the speakers in your session understand this requirement and are prepared to register and travel.
- Scholarships and similar funding mechanisms will be available in limited quantities. Information will be available at [www.estuaries.org/conference](http://www.estuaries.org/conference) when it is available.

### **Timeline and Due Dates**

- February 1, 2012 – All proposals due
- May 1, 2012 – Presenters notified of selection status.



## QUESTIONS?

For additional information about the conference, please contact the following people:

- Sponsorship – Harvey Potts [hpotts@estuaries.org]
- Exhibiting opportunities – Meg Beiter [mbeiter@estuaries.org]
- General conference information – Elsa Carlisle [conference@estuaries.org]
- Program information – Suzanne Giles Simon [program@estuaries.org]