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## America's Great Waters Coalition

Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Conference

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# America's Great Waters Coalition

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- America's Great Waters Coalition is an alliance of more than 50 national, regional, state, and local organizations representing 10 of America's Great Waters ecosystems:
  - Puget Sound
  - San Francisco Bay
  - Mississippi River
  - Great Lakes
  - Coastal Louisiana
  - Everglades
  - Chesapeake Bay
  - Long Island Sound
  - Lake Champlain
  - Gulf of Maine



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# Great Waters Locations



[http://online.nwf.org/site/DocServer/Americas\\_Great\\_Waters\\_Map\\_v9\\_2.pdf?docID=12541](http://online.nwf.org/site/DocServer/Americas_Great_Waters_Map_v9_2.pdf?docID=12541)



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# Coalition Purpose

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- **Vision:**

America's Great Waters Coalition envisions a day when America embraces its Great Waters and ensures they are healthy, valued, and productive resources for our nation.

- **Mission:**

By speaking with a united voice the Coalition will work to ensure the restoration of our Great Waters to protect people, wildlife, and the economy.



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# Coalition Goals and Objectives

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The Coalition will work towards:

- (1) Building public support to make restoration of our great waters a national priority;
- (2) Securing long term sustainable funding for restoration;
- (3) Enacting and ensuring sound implementation of restoration legislation; and
- (4) Providing a forum for information and resource sharing.

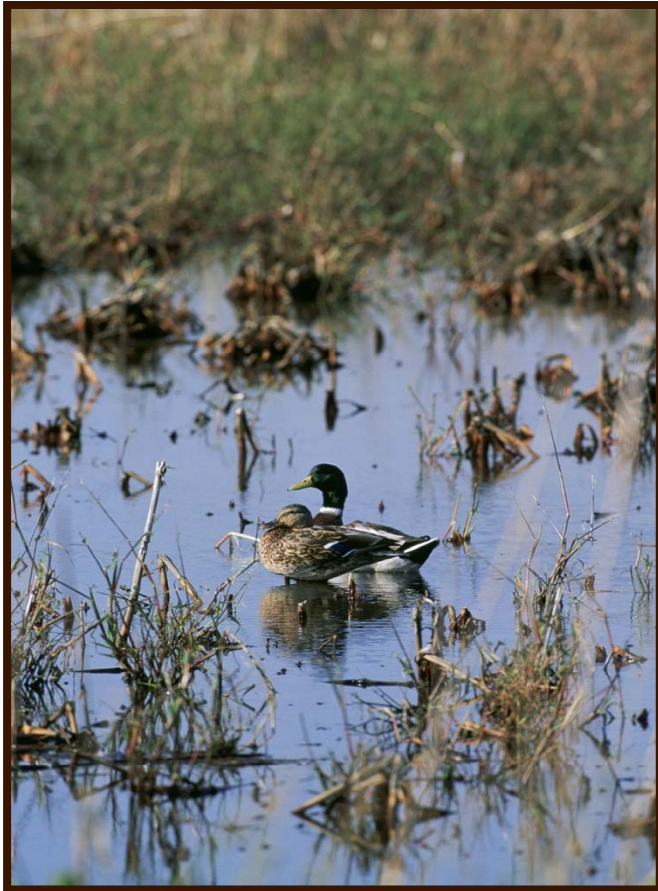


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# Example Need for Action: Global Warming and the Great Lakes



- A steady decrease in winter ice coverage
  - increasing evaporation
  - declining lake levels
- Increased precipitation leads to declining water quality
- Improved habitat for invasive species (e.g. the Carp)
- Hardiness zone migration northward
  - Vegetation migrates, impacts species



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# Problems and Roadblocks to Restoration:

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- Restoration of major aquatic ecosystems requires many years of significant federal funding.
- Examples: Everglades plan calls for over \$10 billion; Great Lakes is \$20 billion.
- Authorized programs are currently a patchwork.



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# Coalition as a Solution to the Problem:

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## A National Approach to restoration

### Federal Budget:

- President submits budget to Congress every year, from info provided by each federal agency over a year in advance
- Budget funds both Programs and Earmarks
- **The Coalition strives to have Great Waters Restoration programs authorized through legislation, rather than pushing for earmarks.**



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# Why Programs over Earmarks?

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- Earmarks happen one year at a time; they are not sustainable or dependable.
- Programs can be authorized for multiple years which will ensure reliable funding



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# Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Great Waters Funding:

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- **Great Bodies of Water:**

\$641 million, \$63 million above the request, to protect the nation's great water bodies including the Great Lakes, San Francisco Bay, Puget Sound, and the Chesapeake Bay.

- **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative:**

\$475 million, involve the coordination and collaboration of 16 Federal agencies, the states of the Great Lakes region, local government, and citizens groups in an effort to restore the source of 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water.

**Source:** Committee Report of 2010 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill



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# Recent Great Waters Bills

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- Bills passed Senate EPW Committee on 30 June 10:
  - Clean Estuaries Act (H.R. 4715)
  - Puget Sound Recovery Act (S. 2739)
  - Great Lakes Ecosystem Protection Act (S. 3073)
  - Chesapeake Clean Water and Ecosystem Restoration Act (S. 1816)
  - Columbia River Basin Restoration Act (S. 3025)
  - Gulf of Mexico Restoration and Protection Act (S. 1311)
  - Long Island Sound Restoration and Stewardship Act (S. 3119)
  - San Francisco Bay Restoration Act (S. 3539)

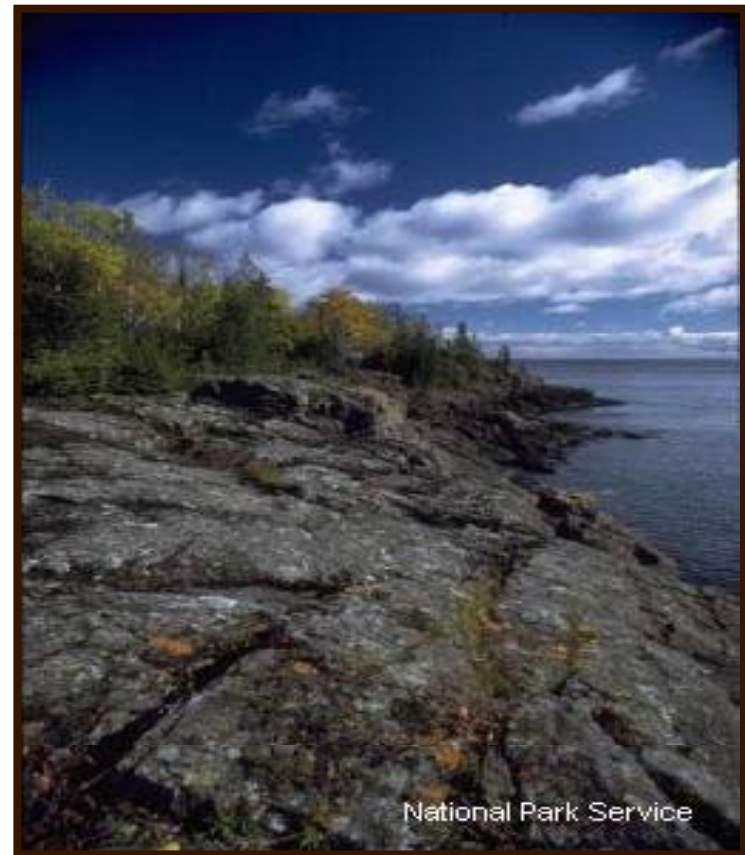


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# Global Warming Legislation

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- House version provides funding for natural resources, including restoration.
- Funding comes from the sale of emissions allowances.
- Federal agencies working on aquatic ecosystem restoration could receive on average \$340 million annually over the first 19 years (subject to appropriations)



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# Funding Distribution

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- Funding for aquatic ecosystems is distributed as follows:
  - US ACE – 5%
  - EPA – 7.5%
  - NOAA – 7%
    - NOAA's allocation includes work on coral and marine species and habitats
  - State Coastal Agencies – 6%



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# Looking Ahead: Global Warming Legislation

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- **The Senate**
  - Graham-Kerry-Lieberman negotiations
    - Sens. Brown, LeMieux, and Voinovich
  - Cantwell-Collins Cap and Dividend
  - Energy only bill--no cap
    - Letter



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# Global Warming Legislation: Our Actions

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The Senate must pass a bill that contains a Natural Resources section, which will:

- **Revitalize local economies through restoration** of public lands, parks and coastlines
- **Create sustainable American jobs** that can't be outsourced while restoring coastlines, forests, deserts and rivers to health
- **Invest in jobs that increase the resiliency of our lands and waters**, so they can better adjust to climate changes



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# Who Can Become A Great Waters Coalition Member?

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Any non profit organizations that work on aquatic ecosystem restoration are eligible to join the America's Great Waters Coalition.



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# Why Join The Coalition:

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- Shared best practices
- Collaborative strategy on Capitol Hill
- Program funding vs. Earmarks
- Combined strength of national movement
- Higher profile (national instead of regional)
- Weekly Restoration Update (listserv)
- Occasional Sign-on letters
- Increased access to the legislative process (shared lobbyist)



<http://online.nwf.org/site/PageServer?pagename>



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# What is expected of my organization if I join the Coalition?

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- No membership requirements; your organization can determine how actively to participate in the coalition.
- Optional Coalition Activities:
  - Discuss restoration issues with legislators in D.C.
  - Communicate with congressional offices about relevant legislation
  - Attending the Coalition annual meeting to network and build relationships in the national restoration community



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# Does it cost anything to be a member?

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- No. While dues were envisioned by coalition leaders, they are intended to be nominal and the Steering Committee has waived them for this first year.

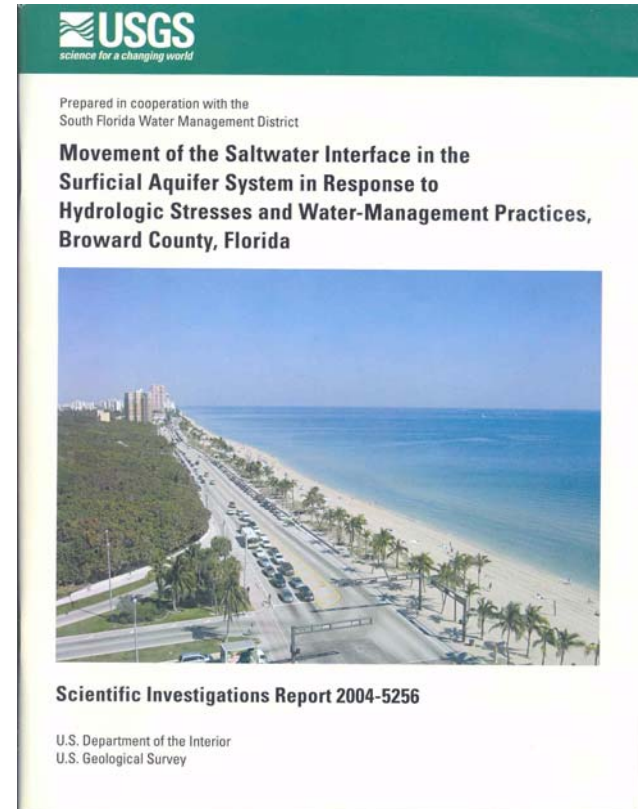


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# Need for a Science Connection:

## Benefit of Coordination

- Share technology tools
- Match up regional activities and NGO work
- Understand connections between science, advocacy, and policy
- Use reports to inform the policy-makers and decisions



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# Current Members:

## Steering Committee

- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Biodiversity Project (Mississippi River)
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Citizen's Campaign for the Environment
- Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Everglades Law Center
- Gulf of Maine Restoration and Conservation Initiative
- National Audubon Society
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Wildlife Federation
- People for Puget Sound
- Restore America's Estuaries
- Trout Unlimited
- Save The Bay--San Francisco

## Organizational Members

- Wildlife Retirement Foundation
- National Audubon Society
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Wildlife Federation
- Bassai River Coalition
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- People for Puget Sound
- The Colorado Watershed Assembly
- Restore America's Estuaries
- Save The Bay--San Francisco
- River
- Save the Dunes Conservation Fund
- Corsica River Conservancy
- Sierra Club
- Everglades Law Center
- Spokane Riverkeeper
- Environmental America
- The MIT Watershed Council
- Frontier National Parks Conservation Association®  
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- Washington Wildlife Federation
- Franklin Institute



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Questions?

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