



# Wetland Restoration



*Wetlands are one of the most valuable and fragile components of a watershed, but for many years they were filled and drained for agriculture and development. Now we are learning that wetlands are crucial to the health of our waters and wildlife. Wetland restoration, the renewal of natural and historical wetlands that have been lost or degraded, is a growing activity. It can improve water quality and wildlife habitat across the nation.*



*Wetland restoration involves renewing natural and historical wetlands that have been lost or degraded.*

## What Is Restoration?

Restoration is the return of a degraded wetland or former wetland to its preexisting naturally functioning condition, or a condition as close to that as possible. It is a complex process that requires expertise, resources, and commitment from many different stakeholders. Ideally, a successfully restored wetland will mimic the functions of a healthy natural wetland.

All restoration projects require planning, implementation, monitoring, and management. Many projects require a team with expertise in ecology, hydrology, engineering, and environmental planning. Getting local experts and the community involved gives the project local ownership, which is important for restoration success.

## Why Restore Wetlands?

Restoring our lost and degraded wetlands to their natural state is essential to ensure the health of America's watersheds. Unless we reverse the tide of wetland loss, the quality of

our waters will continue to be threatened and a part of our natural heritage will be lost. The quality of America's waters is closely linked to the integrity of America's wetlands. Over the past 200 years, wetlands have vanished at an alarming rate. More than half of our nation's original natural wetlands in the contiguous

states have been lost to agriculture and development. Many of the wetlands that remain today continue to be degraded. Such losses and damage hamper wetland functions, such as water quality protection, habitat for fish and other wildlife, and flood prevention. Read more about wetland and watershed restoration at EPA's web site at [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore).

## Community-based Wetland Restoration

EPA is working with its partners on community-based wetland restoration projects in 500 watersheds across the nation. EPA's Five-Star Restoration Program ([www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star)), provides wetlands challenge grants, facilitates technology/information transfer and partnership collaboration, and supports peer-to-peer communication programs.

If you want to restore a wetland on your property or in your community, many different organizations and agencies can help. Many land-owners are eligible to enroll in federal programs that provide restoration expertise and funding, such as the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program or the Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. If your project doesn't qualify for such a program or it is a community project involving many different stakeholders, you might want to hire a professional to draft a plan and put together a team to do the work. You can obtain more information through the web sites and resources listed on the reverse.



Through its Five-Star Restoration Program, EPA is working with multiple partners to reach a goal of 500 community-based wetland restoration projects across the nation.

## LOCAL YOUTH RESTORE NEW YORK MARSH

Youth organizations are working hard to restore and protect an urban wetland in Utica, New York. The marsh is home to more than 190 bird species and 250 plant species. The Sustainable Utica Project, headed by Utica Community Action, Inc. (UCAI), recently became one of eight youth corps organizations nationwide to receive a \$20,000 grant from EPA's Five-Star Restoration Grant Program. Over the next few months, project organizers will improve existing nature trails to make the entire trail network accessible to the public. They'll also develop a nature interpretation trail system for marsh visitors that will enhance public understanding of the wetland's value. UCAI will also remove invasive plants, trash, and other debris from the marsh to enhance its wildlife habitat value. So far, they have removed 6 tons of garbage from the marsh. In addition to promoting conservation education and tourism, the project will generate economic development opportunities for the local community. For more information, contact John Furman, Program Planner, Utica Community Action, Inc., 253 Genesee Street, Utica, NY 13501. Phone: (315) 797-7364; fax: (315) 792-1983; e-mail: JFurman835@aol.com.

### *The Wetland Fact Sheet Series*



**Wetlands Overview**

**Types of Wetlands**

**Functions & Values of Wetlands**

**Threats to Wetlands**

**Wetland Restoration**

**Funding Wetland Projects**

**Wetland Monitoring & Assessment**

**Sustainable Communities**

**Volunteering for Wetlands**

**Teaching about Wetlands**

For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands).

## *Wetland Resources*

### *On the Internet*

EPA's River Corridor and Wetland Restoration home page .....	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore">www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore</a>
USDA's Conservation Reserve Program .....	<a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/crp/">www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/crp/</a>
USDA's Wetland Reserve Program .....	<a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/">www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/</a>
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program .....	<a href="http://partners.fws.gov">partners.fws.gov</a>
The Association of State Wetland Managers .....	<a href="http://www.aswm.org">www.aswm.org</a>
Society for Ecological Restoration .....	<a href="http://www.ser.org">www.ser.org</a>
National Wetlands Conservation Alliance .....	<a href="http://users.erols.com/wetlandg">users.erols.com/wetlandg</a>
National Marine Fisheries Service Restoration Center .....	<a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration">www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration</a>
Chesapeake Bay Program .....	<a href="http://www.chesapeakebay.net">www.chesapeakebay.net</a>
Society of Wetland Scientists .....	<a href="http://www.sws.org">www.sws.org</a>
Izaak Walton League of America .....	<a href="http://www.iwla.org">www.iwla.org</a>

### *In Print and On Video*

*A Citizen's Guide to Wetland Restoration* (EPA910-R-94-006). Available from EPA Region 10. Call (206) 553-1200.

*Wetland Creation and Restoration: The Status of the Science*, Jon Kusler and Mary Kentula, 1990. Available from Island Press. Call 1-800-828-1302.

*Wetlands: An Approach to Improving Decision-Making in Wetland Restoration and Creation*, Mary Kentula et al., 1992. Available from Island Press. Call 1-800-828-1302.

*Wetland Restoration: Steps to Success*. This 21-minute video from The Wetlands Conservancy discusses techniques for wetland restoration, including using native plants and when and where to plant. For copies, call The Wetlands Conservancy at (503) 691-1394 or log onto their website at [www.wetlandsconservancy.org](http://www.wetlandsconservancy.org).

*Restoration, Creation, and Recovery of Wetlands: National Water Summary on Wetland Resources*, Mary Kentula, 1999. United States Geological Survey Water Supply Paper 2425. Available on-line at [water.usgs.gov/nwsum/WSP2425/restoration.html](http://water.usgs.gov/nwsum/WSP2425/restoration.html).