

PRESS RELEASE

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RELEASE

America's Great Waters Coalition Designates Nine New Waterways to Advocate for Restoration Needs

Adequate funding for restoration projects will help meet challenges facing our Great Waters

WASHINGTON - From the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Puget Sound to the Everglades, our Great Waters are the lifeblood of our nation, driving regional economies, preserving our national heritage, and shaping the daily lives of Americans. Today, on World Water Day, America's Great Waters Coalition designates nine new *Great Waters*, including the New York/New Jersey Harbor, the Albemarle Pamlico Sound in North Carolina, and the Colorado River. The Coalition works to ensure the restoration of America's Great Waters to protect people, wildlife, and the economy by advocating for adequate funding for restoration efforts and raise awareness and educate decision makers about the challenges facing our nation's Great Waters.

"We cannot afford not to protect our Great Waters," said Theresa Pierno, co-chair for the America's Great Waters Coalition and executive vice president for the National Parks Conservation Association. "The health of our Great Waters is directly linked to America's economic recovery and the creation of jobs. Millions of jobs are dependent on our Great Waters and contribute trillions to our nation's economy."

The nation's Great Waters are the backbone of America's economy, impacting people, businesses, communities and wildlife, but unfortunately, these waters are under attack.

For more than three decades, landmark legislation and funding for restoration efforts has protected our nation's waterways. With intense disagreement on funding levels for fiscal year 2011, funding for critical

restoration projects is at risk. The Coalition is advocating that decision makers support restoration efforts for America's waterways that are critical to local economies and way of life for communities nationwide.

"Cuts now will cost us later," said Roy A. Hoagland, co-chair for the America's Great Waters Coalition and vice president at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. "The longer we wait to invest in restoring our nation's Great Waters - whether it be the Chesapeake Bay, the Everglades, Great Lakes, Long Island Sound, Puget Sound, San Francisco Bay, the Gulf of Mexico or others - the more we will have to pay to achieve healthy ecosystems. It is frightening to consider the impacts that major funding cuts would have on the health of our Great Waters."

In addition to the 10 Great Waters already designated, the Coalition today added the following bodies of water: the Albemarle Pamlico Sound, Colorado River, Delaware River, Galveston Bay, Missouri River, Narragansett Bay, New York/New Jersey Harbor, Ohio River, and the Rio Grande. While the Great Waters vary in geographic location and physical characteristics, they are plagued by similar problems such as toxic pollution, altered water flows, habitat loss and destruction, invasive species, and more. However, across the country, restoration efforts funded by the federal government are producing on-the-ground results.

"America's Great Waters are essential to our nation's growth and prosperity," said Malia Hale, co-chair for the America's Great Waters Coalition and director for national restoration and water resources at the National Wildlife Federation. "For example, a recent report by Mather Economics found that every \$1 invested in Everglades restoration generates \$4 in return. In addition, a recent study by the Brookings Institution found that restoring the Great Lakes will bring the eight-state region at least \$2 in economic benefits for every \$1 of federal investment."

The Coalition consists of more than 50 local, regional, and national organizations that believe that speaking with a united voice and working together will help nationalize Great Waters' priorities, and will bring more strength to each region's restoration efforts.

About the Great Waters Coalition: More than a year ago,

water restoration advocacy groups from across the country joined to launch the "America's Great Waters Coalition," to help nationalize water issues and to protect, preserve, and restore our nation's Great Waters. To learn more about the Great Waters Coalition, and to view a map of America's Great Waters, please visit: www.nwf.org/greatwaters.

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