

Media Advisory

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Ken Warren, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
(772) 562-3909, ext. 323; ken_warren@fws.gov
James Miller, The Nature Conservancy
(407) 489-5538; james_miller@tnc.org

South Florida Partnership to Receive Award for Coastal Restoration, Protection Initiatives

STUART, Fla. – The Treasure Coast Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (TC CISMA) partnership will receive the 2010 Coastal America Partnership Award for outstanding actions to restore and protect the coastal environment in Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River Counties. The award will be presented **March 4, 2011** at 1 p.m. at St. Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park.

From the letter announcing the award: **“The award recognizes the team’s innovative efforts to implement a comprehensive, cooperative approach across boundaries to address the threat of invasive species throughout four coastal counties in Florida. The award review committee was especially impressed with the team’s innovative ecosystem-based management approach to removing invasive species while protecting other natural resources in the area.”**

The TC CISMA was established in 2007 with the mission to implement a comprehensive, cooperative approach across boundaries to address the threats of invasive species. The TC CISMA has more than a dozen active partners that either are involved in the steering committee and/or also involved in on-the-ground habitat restoration. Partners being recognized at this event for their restoration efforts include Martin and St. Lucie Counties, The Nature Conservancy, the Florida Park Service, the Treasure Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the University of Florida. Additional steering committee members representing county and state governments, non-governmental groups, private environmental companies, and academic institutions will also be receiving recognition.

Each of the partners contributes technical expertise to the TC CISMA steering committee and numerous partners sponsor cooperative workdays on their lands. Additionally, TC CISMA has been successful in receiving funds for on-the-ground work. The partners secured two grants, totaling nearly \$80,000 to do work on public conservation lands in Martin and Palm Beach Counties. In 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program funded a multi-year cooperative agreement (currently totaling \$134,000) targeting the removal of *Scaevola taccada*, as well as other invasive exotics in beach dune systems. This money, including recent funding through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, expanded the focus of TC CISMA's efforts to include more sites on public and private lands.

For additional award ceremony information or to RSVP, contact Mike Renda of the Nature Conservancy at (561) 744-6668 by March 2. **News media representatives interested in covering the ceremony should RSVP by March 3 to Ken Warren at (772) 562-3909, ext. 323 or James Miller of the Nature Conservancy at (407) 489-5538.** The Coastal America Partnership is an action-oriented, results-driven collaboration process dedicated to restoring and preserving coastal ecosystems and

addressing critical environmental issues. For more information about Coastal America go to <http://www.coastalamerica.gov/>.

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Media Note: **Award recipients and guests will be shuttled from the Sandsprit Park Boat Ramp, 3443 SE St. Lucie Blvd. in Stuart, to the state park. Photo opportunities of work done by the TC CISMA are available at the park.** The U.S. Department of Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks and the Director of the Coastal America Program will present the award. TC CISMA organizations being recognized with plaques include representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Martin County, Florida Park Service Department of Environmental Protection, St Lucie County, University of Florida/IFAS, Treasure Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council, and The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Certificates will be given to members of the TC CISMA Steering Committee.

Below is the tentative agenda for the award ceremony:

**Friday, March 4, 2010
St. Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park**

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| 12:00 | Arrive at Sandsprit Park Boat Ramp, 3443 SE St. Lucie Blvd., Stuart |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Depart Via Boat to Award Ceremony Site (It's about a 20-minute boat ride; departure times will vary) |
| 1:00 – 1:05 | Welcome <i>Debbie DeVore, USFWS South Florida Coastal Program Coordinator</i> |
| 1:05 – 1:10 | Introduction to TC CISMA Partnership <i>Mike Renda, The Nature Conservancy Blowing Rocks Preserve</i> |
| 1:10 – 1:15 | Introduction of Coastal America Award Program <i>Virginia Tippie, Director</i> |
| 1:15 – 1:25 | Award Overview and Remarks <i>Eileen Sobeck, Department of Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks</i> |
| 1:25 - 1:45 | Award Presentation <i>Virginia Tippie</i> |
| 1:45 – 1:50 | Closing Remarks <i>TBD</i> |
| 1:50 – 2:30 p.m. | Q&A Session (Media Interviews) and Optional Walking Tour |