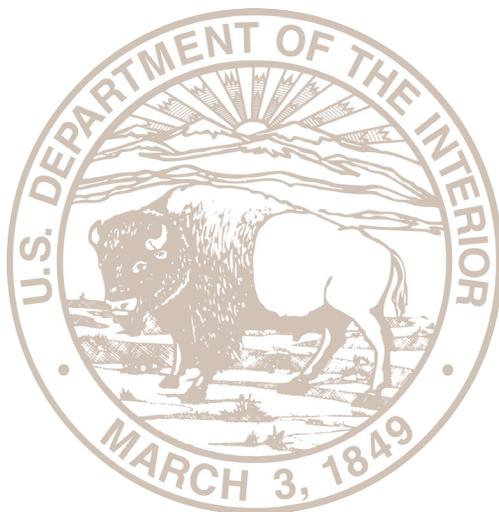


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION
AWARDS CEREMONY



Thursday, January 16, 2014
11:00 a.m.

Sidney R. Yates Auditorium
Stewart Lee Udall Main Interior Building

Message from the Secretary

Welcome to the Department of the Interior's Partners in Conservation Awards Ceremony. Partnerships are at the core of Interior's values and mission. I am thrilled to recognize the accomplishments of more than 260 diverse organizations that are collaborating in new and exciting ways to address today's complex conservation and stewardship challenges.



The organizations receiving awards today span the country and are from all sectors—Federal, state, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, and other non-governmental organizations. Their achievements exemplify innovation and excellence.

Today, we celebrate their accomplishments and ask them to join us in forging a strong agenda to strengthen our economy and ensure that we pass along our Nation's rich conservation legacy to the next generation.

Please join me in congratulating our Partners in Conservation Award winners. They inspire us to dream big and act for the larger good, and we are humbled by their work.

*SALLY JEWELL
Secretary of the Interior*

Program

INTRODUCTIONS & NARRATOR

Michael Gale

*Office of Youth, Partnerships,
& Service*

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Sally Jewell

Secretary of the Interior

PRESENTATION OF THE PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARDS

CLOSING ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Paul Batlan

*Office of Youth, Partnerships,
& Service*

Department of the Interior

Partners in Conservation Award

The Partners in Conservation Award is a Department of the Interior Honor Award established to recognize conservation achievements that include collaborative activity among a diverse range of entities that may include Federal, state, local and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities, and individuals. This award enables the Secretary to acknowledge in one award the contributions of both Interior and non-Interior personnel. Overall, this award recognizes outstanding conservation results that have been produced primarily because of the engagement and contributions of many partners.

Award Recipients

Cienega Watershed Partnership

Three Cienega Watershed Partnership (CWP) projects illustrate this partnership's efforts to promote understanding and stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Through the FROG Conservation Project, partners remove non-native species and enhance habitats to recover native fish and leopard frog populations. The Youth Engaged Stewardship (YES!) program engages high-school students in meaningful outdoor experiences. Teen leaders gain leadership and technical skills, as well as knowledge of environmental and public land law, as they plan and implement restoration projects along with mentors from the CWP, Bureau of Land Management, and elsewhere. The CWP's Oral History Work Group collects and transcribes oral history interviews to encourage cultural preservation of the region.

At the core of this partnership are two collaborative community forums that focus on landscape-level information sharing and stewardship of the Cienega watershed: the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership and the Cienega Corridor Conservation Council. Many partners collaborate to generate and disperse resources to implement strategies, programs, and projects that contribute to the ecological health, long-term sustainable use, and cultural richness of the region. The Partnership's many successful programs and projects provide a means for finding common ground among competing interests. This enables sustainable human use and fosters integrated management across the 45,000 acre Conservation Area and neighboring 100,000 acre planning area.

Nominated by the Bureau of Land Management

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Bureau of Land Management Gila District
Tucson Field Office**

Arizona Game & Fish Department

Audubon Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch

Cienega Watershed Partnership

Clyne Ranch

Colossal Cave Mountain Park

Coronado National Forest

Empire Ranch Foundation

High Haven Ranch

Kalso Family

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

**National Park Service
Saguaro National Park**

Phoenix Zoo

Pima Association of Governments

Pima County Flood Control District

**Pima County Natural Resources
Parks & Recreation**

**Pima County Office of Conservation Science
& Environmental Policy**

Prescott College, Ironwood Tree Experience

Slattum Family

Sky Island Alliance

The Amerind Foundation

The Nature Conservancy

**University of Arizona
Institute of the Environment**

**University of Arizona
Office of Arid Land Studies**

**University of Arizona,
School of Natural Resources & Environment**

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Vail School District
Empire & Cienega High School**

Vera Earl Ranch Inc.

Vail Preservation Society

Walker Ranch

Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative

Students, educators, and young people complete vital agency projects on public lands throughout southern Utah and northern Arizona as the young people gain land and resource management career training. Underserved high school and college-age student interns work as interpreters, natural and cultural resource support staff, and fee collectors. They repair recreational trails, restore streams and riparian areas, reduce woody fuel loads and invasive vegetation, monitor and restore wilderness study areas and cultural resources, and more. The Cooperative trains college interns and former crew members to be crew leaders. One of the program's successes is the creation of the first certified Wildland Firefighter crew in Utah's university system.

Southern Utah University's Harry Reid Outdoor Engagement Center administers the Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative. They coordinate work- and project-based internships, matching state and Federal needs with career training opportunities. This model partnership engages Federal, State, and tribal collaborators working together to prepare the next generation of land managers while completing conservation projects that would otherwise be impossible.

Nominated by the Bureau of Land Management

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Bureau of Land Management
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument**

**Bureau of Indian Affairs
Southern Paiute Agency**

**Bureau of Land Management
Arizona Strip District**

**Bureau of Land Management
Color County District**

Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians

**National Park Service
Bryce Canyon National Park**

**National Park Service
Cedar Breaks National Monument**

**National Park Service &
Bureau of Land Management
Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument**

**National Park Service
Pipe Springs National Monument**

**National Park Service
Zion National Park**

Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah

Southern Utah University

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Dixie National Forest**

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Cedar City Field Office**

Utah Department of Natural Resources

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension - Bootstraps Program

This model youth engagement partnership equips at-risk young adults with the skills to return to school or enter the workforce by involving them in natural resource project work. In the classroom, participants work on team building, peer relations, goal setting, problem solving, decisionmaking, resume writing, and communication skills. They learn about forest and woodland ecology, including sage-grouse nesting, brood-rearing, and winter habitats. In the field, they improve sage-grouse habitat on Nevada's public lands. Since the program launched in 2005, 100 young adults removed more than 12,000 acres of pinyon-juniper trees, built 150 riparian micro-enclosures to protect Aspen tree stands, and more. Not only have they enhanced sage-grouse habitat, they have improved the forage base and access to vital wildlife watering resources, and they have greatly reduced wildfire severity.

The Bureau of Land Management's Nevada Battle Mountain District worked collaboratively with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension to develop this dual education-natural resource mission program. This partnership has served conservation needs as well as the young adults, two-thirds of whom are Native American, and most of whom live on their own or in single-parent households. With partner support, crews work 40-hour weeks for 6 months. In addition to classroom learning and field work, crews camp at remote work sites 3 nights each week. An adult job coach directs the field work and imparts practical life experiences to reinforce classroom-based skills.

Nominated by the Bureau of Land Management

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Bureau of Land Management
Battle Mountain District**

Duck Valley Sho-Pai Tribe

Eureka County

Lander County

National Mule Deer Foundation

Natural Resources & Conservation Service

Nevada Bighorns Unlimited

Nevada Department of Wildlife

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Atlantic Canyons - Pathways to the Abyss

Robotic underwater vehicles, benthic landers, and instrumented moorings are among the cutting-edge tools this collaboration uses to discover abundant deep water coral habitats and – perhaps – the largest methane seep community in the world. Managers will use knowledge gained about unique deep water biological and cultural resources to inform offshore energy management decisions. Results from deep-sea communities and historical shipwrecks off the mid-Atlantic coast will strengthen the protection and conservation of these habitats from potential impact related to energy development.

The Nation's future scientific leaders including graduate students and community college students and a high-school teacher obtained their earliest experiences of research at sea through field expeditions aboard research vessels. Additionally, collaborators expanded outreach to K-12 students, teachers, and the public to share the excitement of at-sea discoveries and the science behind the project through lesson plans and other educational resources. A diverse mix of organizations pooled their assets to support effective natural resource management, including 3 Federal agencies, 11 academic institutions, a state museum, and 2 private companies.

Nominated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Environmental Sciences Division**

ARTWORK, Inc.

Bangor University

Cape Fear Community College

CSA Ocean Sciences Inc.

Florida State University

**National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration**

Office of Ocean Exploration & Research

**Netherlands Institute of Sea Research
at the Island of Texel, Netherlands**

North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

Oregon Institute of Marine Biology

Texas A&M University

University of Connecticut

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

University of North Carolina at Wilmington

University of Rhode Island

U.S. Geological Survey

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Cultural Resources Team of the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership

The Cultural Resources Team of the Southern Nevada Agency Partnership raises awareness of, and respect for, the historical significance of local history and tribal culture. The Team operates in a large, heavily populated urban area surrounding more than 10 million acres of Federal land. These lands offer more than 20,000 fragile cultural sites that range from prehistoric scatters of artifacts and pueblo ruins to rock art locales and historic structures. The Team's accomplishments are numerous and varied. They surveyed more than 20,000 acres of Federal lands, recorded more than 500 cultural resource sites, and cooperatively funded an inventory of more than 1,000,000 artifacts. The Team produces outreach documents, traveling exhibits, environmental education trunks, and museum displays. They established a Southern Nevada Site Stewardship program that served as a model for a State-wide program.

The Cultural Resources Team is comprised of archaeologists from five Federal agencies, including the Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service, as well as representatives from the Lost City Museum and Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. Together, they protect and preserve archaeological and traditional cultural properties while fostering stewardship with professional groups, academia, students, young adults, the public, and Native American groups and tribes.

Nominated by the Bureau of Reclamation

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado Regional Office
Environmental Compliance Group**

**Bureau of Land Management
Las Vegas Field Office**

**National Park Service
Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

**Lost City Museum
Nevada Department of
Tourism & Cultural Affairs**

Nevada State Historic Preservation Office

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex**

Renewable Energy Stewardship Policy

As the Nation moves closer to having renewable energy installations in offshore waters, science-based decisionmaking is essential to protecting natural resources from adverse impacts related to renewable energy development. Partners generated a suite of eight studies that resulted in frameworks, protocols, and other tools that will assist state and Federal managers as they make thorough and reasoned assessments of potential offshore facilities sites. In the process, academic partners engaged graduate students in real-world experiences, contributing to an ocean educated future workforce.

In 2010, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) initiated a partnership for "Developing Environmental Protocols and Monitoring to Support Ocean Renewable Energy and Stewardship" in response to the increased interest in development of offshore renewable energy. The BOEM collaborated with the Department of Energy and three offices within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the auspices of the National Oceanographic Partnership Program, a collaboration of Federal agencies that provide leadership and coordination of national oceanographic research and education. The partnership also engaged academic institutions, private companies, and public stakeholders to conduct this suite of 8 timely projects valuing \$4.7 million.

Nominated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management & the Bureau of Safety & Environmental Enforcement

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Environmental Compliance Office**

**Bureau of Safety &
Environmental Enforcement
Acquisition Management Division**

Cornell University

**Department of Energy
Office of Energy Efficiency
& Renewable Energy**

**National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration
Office of Oceanic & Atmospheric Research**

**National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service**

**National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service**

Pacific Energy Ventures

Parametrix, Inc.

**University of Arkansas
Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies**

**University of Massachusetts
Marine Renewable Energy Center**

University of Rhode Island

**University of Texas at Austin
Bureau of Economic Geology**

**University of Washington
School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences**

Rigs to Reefs Policy

Keen collaboration and strong leadership moved a multi-stakeholder team to achieve their goals to develop a Nation-wide policy that creates sustainable marine habitats, generates millions of dollars, and shed new light on creating artificial reefs. Partners convened disparate groups including Federal and state agencies, oil and gas industry representatives, commercial and recreational fishing groups, diving groups, and the general public to discuss highly desired and needed changes to the Rigs to Reefs process. They tackled questions about essential fish habitat, the use of explosives during decommissioning, and explanations of platforms not qualified for reefing. The resulting policy provides states the greatest flexibility in their artificial reef planning while balancing environmental and safety concerns with the various other uses for Outer Continental Shelf lands.

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and the National Ocean Council successfully coordinated, communicated, and built consensus with stakeholders from industry to the local angler and diver through meetings and open forums to create this policy. The Rigs to Reefs process provides ecosystem and economic sustainability by creating healthy and robust marine habitats while improving the long-term viability of fishing, diving, and tourism industries. The process has generated more than \$100 million for states, which helps these local economies to be more sustainable, while producing a variety of ancillary benefits, such as capital improvement projects. The process is now paving the way as a collaborative planning tool for future partnership efforts.

Nominated by the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Bureau of Safety &
Environmental Enforcement
Environmental Enforcement Division**

**Bureau of Safety &
Environmental Enforcement
Office of Congressional Affairs**

**Bureau of Safety &
Environmental Enforcement
Office of Public Affairs**

National Ocean Council

Minute 319 Binational Partnership

For decades, environmental and water supply concerns over the Colorado River have been the subjects of controversy, dispute, and litigation along the U.S.-Mexico border. After years of intense negotiation, a historic partnership agreement, “Minute 319,” has been touted as one of the most innovative negotiated agreements between nations to include environmental river flows. Signed in November 2012, Minute 319 provides the agreement under the authority and framework of the 1944 Water Treaty to implement actions under consideration by multiple administrations dating back to the late 1990s. Key elements include the first-ever instream flows to the Colorado River Delta, both base (instream) and a one-time pulse (mini-flood) flow mimicking natural flooding.

Minute 319 involves the Department of the Interior’s Office of Policy, Management and Budget and the Office of the Solicitor as well as the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They join three agencies of Mexico as well as a number of Colorado River Basin state principals and non-governmental organizations, and one university. Partners are implementing Minute 319 through a series of binational workgroups with members from both Countries.

Nominated by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Assistant Secretary for Water & Science**

**Bureau of Reclamation
Office of the Commissioner**

Arizona Department of Water Resources

**Bureau of Reclamation Lower
Colorado Region**

**Bureau of Reclamation Upper
Colorado Region**

**Central Arizona Water Conservation District
Central Arizona Project**

Colorado River Board of California

Colorado River Commission of Nevada

Colorado Water Conservation Board

**Department of State
International Boundary
& Water Commission**

Environmental Defense Fund

**Metropolitan Water District of
Southern California**

**Mexico – Comision Internacional
De Limites Y Aguas**

Mexico – Comision Nacional Del Agua

Mexico – Secretariat of Foreign Affairs

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission

Pronatura

Southern Nevada Water Authority

Squire Sanders

University of Arizona

Upper Colorado River Commission

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of Policy, Management & Budget**

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of the Solicitor**

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

U.S. Geological Survey

Utah Division of Water Resources

Wyoming State Engineer’s Office

Center for Land-Based Learning Partnership

Youth in the California Central Valley are getting down and dirty, literally, for conservation. The partnership includes the Center for Land-Based Learning's Student and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship (SLEWS) program that provides opportunities for civic engagement, meaningful learning, and hands-on stewardship. High school students engage in a yearlong habitat restoration experience that integrates hands-on conservation with classroom learning. Through a series of field days, students participate in restoration projects—planting native trees, shrubs and grasses, installing irrigation and wildlife habitat structures, and monitoring plant and wildlife populations. Teambuilding, leadership, and science activities are also built into each field day. Students have improved more than 250 acres of habitat in nearby national wildlife refuges and private lands. In addition, the partnership has reached over 2,500 elementary, junior high, and high school students. Teachers also receive training through this partnership and, in turn, enhance learning experiences for students every year.

The primary partners include the Center for Land-Based Learning and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Sacramento-based Conservation Partnerships Program. The Center has 20 years of experience engaging young people in land stewardship through building collaborative partnerships with Federal and state agencies, tribal nations, non-profit organizations, private landowners, universities, high schools, and community volunteers. The FWS provides technical training, skills, and expertise to the students, as well as financial assistance to support the overall effort.

Nominated by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
Conservation Partnerships Program**

Center for Land-Based Learning

Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program

Balancing the Needs of Wildlife, Water, & People

On the edge of the Texas Hill Country lies the Edwards Aquifer, one of the most biologically diverse aquifers in the world. This unique resource is home to species found nowhere else in the world, including eight threatened and endangered species. It also serves the water demands for more than 2 million residents. Tales of struggles concerning the aquifer fill the history of south-central Texas, from confrontation and legal action to severe drought. The Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program is a collaborative, consensus-based stakeholder partnership created to balance the demands on the Aquifer.

Eight years ago, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) engaged stakeholders in efforts to balance human needs and species recovery. This resulted in consensus for Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Program's (EARIP) Habitat Conservation Plan among a diverse group of more than 40 groups and individuals. At the beginning of 2013, FWS approved this Habitat Conservation Plan. Five stakeholder groups agreed to jointly hold the permit and accept lead responsibility for implementation the EARIP. These include the Edwards Aquifer Authority; the cities of New Braunfels, San Marcos, and San Antonio through the San Antonio Water System, and Texas State University. On the heels of the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, springs will continue to flow and serve human needs, and the fountain darter and Texas blind salamander will survive, even through another drought.

Nominated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Austin Ecological Services Field Office**

Alamo Cement Company II, Ltd.

Alamo Concrete Products, Ltd.

Alamo Park, Inc.

Aquifer Guardians in Urban Area

Bexar County

Bexar Metropolitan Water District

Carol Patterson

City of Castroville

City of Garden Ridge

City of New Braunfels

City of San Marcos

City of Victoria

Comal County

CPS Energy

Dan Laroe

Dow Chemical

East Medina Special Utility District

Edwards Aquifer Authority

Gilleland Farms

Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance

Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

Guadalupe Basin Coalition

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority

Guadalupe County Farm Bureau

New Braunfels Utilities

Nueces River Authority

Preserve Lake Dunlap Association

Regional Clean Air & Water Association

San Antonio River Authority

San Antonio Water System

San Marcos River Foundation

South Central Texas Water Advisory Committee

South Texas Farm & Ranch Club
Texas BASS Federation
**Texas Commission on
Environmental Quality**
Texas Department of Agriculture
Texas Living Waters Project
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
Texas State University

Texas Water Development Board
Texas Wildlife Association
Union Carbide Corporation
**U.S. Geological Survey
Texas District Office
Texas Water Science Center**
John Donohue
Larry Hoffman
Mary Kelly

Great Plains Nature Center
An Urban Oasis for Wichita Area Youth & Conservationists

A wild oasis in an urban setting, the Great Plains Nature Center provides outdoor recreation and education opportunities to millions of youth and adult visitors. The facility is a “one-of-a-kind” partnership. It serves as an outdoor education center for the City of Wichita; it houses a regional office for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism; and it is an administrative site for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Friends of the Great Plains Nature Center provide a focal source for the trio to cooperatively offer “fee free” interpretation and environmental education. Visitors experience the plants and animals of the Great Plains region from live animal exhibits to dioramas depicting native flora and fauna, from nature trails to wildlife viewing opportunities, and even close-up viewing of native fish in a 2200-gallon aquarium. Popular education programs operate throughout the year.

This unique Federal, State, and local government partnership began in 1988 when the City of Wichita approached State, and later, Federal officials. The Center became a reality when Congress provided the initial funding. All three agencies share equally in the operational expenses. As a result of this partnership, visitors learn first-hand about fish and wildlife resources and about the roles and responsibilities of the partners in the wise stewardship of natural resources.

Nominated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Great Plains Nature Center**
Friends of the Great Plains Nature Center

**Kansas Department of Wildlife
Parks & Tourism**
Wichita Department of Parks & Recreation

Klamath Tribal Leadership Development Program for Integrative Science & Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Tribal youth in northern California and southern Oregon are getting a unique opportunity to combine their tribal ancestral cultural knowledge about the local ecology and resources with the high-tech capabilities of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Federal natural resource agencies. Students gather traditional knowledge from discussions with tribal elders and apply this to programs that advance the restoration and management of native fish populations in the Klamath Basin. In summer 2013, a pilot group of tribal students worked with agencies and tribes to link physical river conditions to native salmonid populations and cultural values using traditional ecological knowledge, and collected data to evaluate their hypotheses. In 2014, students will compare results and expand the information base for decisionmaking to explore the use of remotely sensed data and models to evaluate river conditions.

Klamath Tribal Leadership Development for Integrative Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge is an innovative program combining tribal cultural knowledge with today's technology. Partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Geological Survey, NASA, the U.S. Forest Service, local tribes, and other partners. The tribes associated with this program include Quartz Valley Indian reservation, Resighini Rancheria, Klamath Tribes, Karuk Tribe, Yurok Tribe, and Hoopla Valley Tribe. To date, partners have brought their collective resources and expertise and have applied these to this collaborative effort, including remote sensing and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). These technologies hold promise for improving our knowledge base and conservation effectiveness through energy efficient, cost-effective approaches to data collection with less impact on our ecosystems. As a result of this partnership, tribal youth in the Klamath Basin are being equipped with essential job skills that will allow them to become future conservation leaders while also contributing to the current management of culturally important fish species.

Nominated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Yreka Fish & Wildlife Service Office
Ecological Services Program**

**Bureau of Indian Affairs
Branch of Fisheries, Wildlife, & Recreation**

Hoopla Valley Tribe

Humboldt State University

Karuk Tribe

Klamath Tribes of Oregon

**National Aeronautics & Space
Administration Ames Research Center**

Oregon Institute of Technology

Quartz Valley Indian Reservation

Resighini Rancheria

Southern Oregon University

The Nature Conservancy

U.S. Geological Survey

Yurok Tribe

The Groundwork USA Network

Changing places and changing lives, Groundwork USA (Groundwork) improves access to parks, recreational areas, and conserved natural resources in partnership with communities most impacted by brownfields, derelict vacant lots, polluted waterways, food deserts, and limited economic opportunities. Youth are a focus of the Groundwork partnership through its Green Team Programs at each Groundwork Trust, which provide employment, skill building, mentoring, and career development opportunities in conservation and environmental fields. Youth participate in projects and programs to improve their local environment and service learning projects at national parks. Green Team members from across the country come together annually to share experiences, have fun, conserve national parks and build the bonds that enhance self-esteem, enable peer growth, and spark dreams.

The Groundwork partnership with the National Park Service and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency delivers projects and programs to address local environmental justice issues through a creative mix of professional staff, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, and public and private sector resources. The Groundwork network, which began 17 years ago, has grown to 22 communities across the country, including 3 new communities selected in 2013. Collectively, the network leverages its Federal investment by 11:1, engages thousands of community volunteers of all ages, conserves miles of water bodies, creates and improves hundreds of acres of parks and green spaces, transforms acres of brownfields and produces tons of healthy foods with the communities they serve. Success and sustainability begin by building onto communities' assets and engaging communities in leading transformation.

Nominated by National Park Service

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**National Park Service
Rivers, Trails, & Conservation
Assistance Program**

**Environmental Protection Agency
Brownfields Program**

**Environmental Protection Agency
Urban Waters Program**

Groundwork USA

**National Park Service
Office of Youth Programs**

American Samoa Rainforest Partnership

Invasive rubber trees and nitrogen-fixing tamaligi and lopa trees severely threaten the integrity of biodiversity in American Samoa's rainforests. These fast-growing alien species readily establish themselves from wind-blown seeds and animal dispersal across the native forests. The American Samoa Rainforest Partnership has restored more than 4,500 acres since 2001. More than 2,000 acres were restored in Fiscal Year 2013 (FY 2013) alone. Village councils have authority over each village's communal land and their support is critical for success. The essential management strategy is hiring unemployed and underemployed local villagers to eradicate the weeds, which also promotes long-term stewardship of the native forests. In addition to hands-on workforce training, student interns master skills and knowledge in environmental education, botany, weed management, safety, field leadership, and mapping technology.

In FY 2013, Interior's Office of Insular Areas provided \$221,000 to restore hundreds of acres of Samoan forests in 10 villages on Tutuila and Ta'u Islands by removing populations of non native trees. This work was so successful in large part because The National Park of American Samoa (NPAS) staff worked effectively and in close collaboration with traditional chief councils and utilized local villagers to remove these invasive weeds. The NPAS coordinated the partnership with the villages by working with traditional chief councils and engaging local villagers. Council involvement created widespread grassroots support for removing invasive species and allowing for natural forest regeneration. The NPAS and the U.S. Forest Service Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry continue collaborative research to determine the impact of weed species removal. By far the largest habitat restoration effort in American Samoa to date, the partners are restoring habitat for plant species endemic to the Samoan Islands and habitat for indigenous bats, land birds, and sea birds.

Nominated by the National Park Service

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**National Park Service
National Park of American Samoa**

**U.S. Forest Service
Institute of Pacific Island Forestry**

American Conservation Experience

Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative

Flight 93 Reforestation Project

When Flight 93 crashed on September 11, 2001, killing all 40 passengers and crewmembers, the plane hit ground on a 1,000-acre reclaimed surface mine site near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The National Park Service (NPS) is building a memorial at the crash site and plans to naturalize the surrounding area. The NPS asked the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) to direct the reforestation of the previously reclaimed land surrounding the memorial. In 2004, OSM and the seven state regulatory authorities in Appalachia created the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) to reestablish healthy, productive forest habitat on mine lands in the eastern coalfields. The OSM and ARRI foresters, however, faced significant challenges returning the area to the forest cover that existed given past regulatory emphasis on goals other than reforestation. Ultimately, and with little direct funding, 1,200 volunteers planted more than 34,000 tree seedlings.

The secret to ARRI's success is in its innovative "concentric ring management model" that builds successive layers of active partnerships. Core and Science teams translated basic forestry and soil science concepts into plain language and instructed each potential ring of ARRI partners about the virtues of reforesting coal mined lands before moving to the next outer ring. They engaged landowners, mine operators, reclamation practitioners, and the general public across Appalachia. As a result, ARRI is changing the culture in the mining industry concerning forestry post-mining land use. This reforestation initiative now serves as an model across the world for restoring disturbed landscapes with reforestation on a regional scale. The project will continue years into the future providing healing for the land and hearts after the tragedy of September 11, 2001.

Nominated by the Office of Surface Mining

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

Office of Surface Mining
Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative

National Park Service
Flight 93 National Memorial

AMDTreat Software Partnership

Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) is a detrimental byproduct of mining. For example, following a mine water upwelling at Ben's Creek in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, a clean trout-stocked fishery was transformed into a tomato-soup colored contaminated mess. When responding to AMD impacts it is important to identify effective treatments and have the ability to estimate and control long term treatment costs. After implementing costly chemical treatments in the past, the partners utilized AMDTreat software to identify more effective strategies for restoring Ben's Creek. The AMDTreat analysis indicated natural treatment processes could work at lower cost for the State of Pennsylvania. Following initial construction costs for new treatment ponds on lands generously donated by a local family, the annual treatment costs dropped significantly. As a result, Ben's Creek has returned to a fishery through a more natural and cost effective long term treatment plan. This story illustrates the importance of applying advanced software capabilities in coal regions to more effectively treat water pollution from mining activities and restore affected natural resources.

The AMDTreat software was developed cooperatively by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the U.S. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. In 2012, the partners developed new capabilities for simulating chemical processes in water treatment through a new AMDTreat module developed by the USGS. These software advancements allow geochemists and hydrologists to determine how to most effectively and economically treat polluted water from coal mining and other sources. The AMDTreat has users in over 41 states and over 40 countries and is an excellent example of partnering through technology to better protect the natural environment.

Nominated by the Office of Surface Mining

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**Office of Surface Mining
Acid Mine Drainage Treatment Team**

U.S. Geological Survey

**Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Protection**

**West Virginia Department of
Environmental Protection**

Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program

Alaska Native students gather scientific data for decisionmaking on issues of interest to Alaska Native communities. Student interns learn the scientific process and better understand how science helps inform difficult resource decisions while sharing their experiences and perspectives with agency mentors. At the same time, bureaus gain insights into traditional and cultural perspectives needed to move forward, positively, on shared challenges. The Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP) Department of the Interior Alaska Partnership places young people in the path of career opportunities within Interior. In addition to dynamic mentoring opportunities and hands-on experience in an array of natural resource and Earth sciences, students engage in weekly lunch meetings for information exchange among students and partner organizations. This provides an opportunity for students to stay connected with partner organizations and learn communication skills. From zero students in 2009-2010 to more than 50 in 2012-2013, the Partnership is preparing a 21st century workforce.

In 1995, the University of Alaska Anchorage founded ANSEP with one Alaska Native student and a focus on engineering. Indigenous students arriving at the University were under prepared, and only 3 Alaska Native engineers graduated in 15 years. Over time, ANSEP grew and built capacity, increasing the numbers of students and partners, supporting an academic model engaging students from middle school to the Ph.D. level. Now, as more students experience life as a scientist or manager with the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management, many are among the first in their families to graduate from high school, prepared academically and professionally to be leaders in science, technology, engineering, and math fields. The ANSEP academic model has expanded to numerous western states with more Interior regions and offices joining the effort; together they are assuring unprecedented change in the representation of young Native Americans in Earth and environmental sciences.

Nominated by the U.S. Geological Survey

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Geological Survey
Alaska Area Science Center**

**Alaska Native Science &
Engineering Program**

Huron Erie Corridor Initiative Partnership

The Huron-Erie Corridor (HEC) carries the international border between Canada and the U.S. throughout its entire length; it is widely recognized as one of the world's busiest waterways. Spawning habitat in these waterways was reduced when rocks were removed to improve navigation. The HEC Partnership employed a science-based, engineered approach to construct three fish spawning reefs in the Detroit and St. Clair Rivers. Pre- and post-construction monitoring revealed 14 native fish species are using the reefs, including the endangered northern madtom and threatened lake sturgeon. Further, partners videotaped large, mature lake sturgeon spawning at one restoration site before construction was even completed. With such tangible results, the HEC Partnership is planning seven additional fish spawning habitat remediation projects by 2015, resulting in an estimated 10 acres of habitat per river.

The HEC Initiative is an international partnership of 34 Federal, tribal, First Nation, state, provincial, local, and non-governmental participants working since 2004 to address aquatic resource and management needs in the corridor. The Partnership's early successes allowed them to leverage additional resources to restore habitat while integrating fishery management agencies and scientists with other public and private interests. Annual meeting participation rose from 25 to 75 individuals, each representing countless other people from local communities and the public in general. As the Partnership maintains healthy, diverse, and productive aquatic ecosystems throughout the HEC, in turn, they provide social and economic benefits throughout the region. The Partnership is improving water quality and improving the quality of life for underserved urban communities along these rivers.

Nominated by the U.S. Geological Survey

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Geological Survey
Midwest Area
Great Lakes Science Center**

BASF Corporation

CineGroup

Central Michigan University

**Department of Fisheries & Oceans
Ontario, Canada**

Detroit Riverkeeper

Detroit River Canadian Cleanup

DTE Energy

Environmental Canada

Environmental Consulting & Technology

Essex Region Conservation Authority

Friends of the Detroit River

Great Lakes Commission

Herpetological Resource & Management

JJR LLC

**Michigan Department of
Environmental Quality**

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Michigan Sea Grant

Michigan State University

**National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration**

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Ontario Ministry of the Environment

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

The Nature Conservancy

University of Michigan

University of Toledo

University of Windsor

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Walpole Island First Nation

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wayne State University

U.S. Geological Survey

Wildlife Habitat Council

Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership

Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP) is a forum for collaboration among entities responsible for monitoring aquatic resources in the Pacific Northwest. The PNAMP maintains a broad and diverse community of policy and technical representatives focused on resource management issues that unify Federal, state, local and tribal entities, as well as citizens and landowners. The PNAMP is unique because of its geographic, technical and policy scope: it includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho and northern California; engages technical experts in water quality, water supply, energy resources, endangered species recovery, invasive species, ecological modeling and data management; and reports annually to Federal, state, and tribal executive leadership.

Working together, they strive to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring by developing best practices for methods and design, and the management and exchange of data. The PNAMP's free web accessible tools help users discover and share data, document methods, and design and manage monitoring programs. These tools provide means for entities to collaborate to increase the quality and accessibility of data needed for program and project evaluation, and natural resource decisionmaking. The progress and success that PNAMP has achieved in the Northwest provide a model for other parts of North America.

Nominated by the U.S. Geological Survey

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Geological Survey
Northwest Region
Office of the Regional Director**

Bonneville Power Administration

Colville Confederated Tribes

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

**Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish
Commission**

Idaho Department of Fish & Game

**National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration
Northwest Fisheries Science Center**

**National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration
Northwest Region**

Northwest Power & Conservation Council

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Geological Survey

**Washington Governor's
Salmon Recovery Office**

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Washington State Department of Ecology

**Washington State Recreation &
Conservation Office**

Restoring Threatened & Endangered Fishes of the Truckee River Watershed Partnership

At Independence Lake, threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) have been rebounding since 1997, when the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) began working with managers to protect this unique population. Since then, the average annual survival of LCT fry has almost tripled. This recovery began when USGS and partners started removing non-native predators from spawning grounds, a program supported by participation from citizens and youth. At the other end of the Truckee Watershed sits Pyramid Lake, home to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. Since 1981, USGS has guided efforts of the Tribe and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to recover the endangered and tribally sacred Cui-ui sucker fish. The FWS identified the limiting factors and informed water allocation decisions to best meet community demands while also protecting this endangered and sacred species.

Freshwater ecosystems are among the most endangered habitats in the country. Aquatic organisms are going extinct at a rate five times higher than birds or mammals. At the Truckee River Watershed, USGS is conserving freshwater systems to build resiliency by restoring the ecosystem to its historic condition. The USGS with Federal, state, non-governmental, and tribal managers are working together to restore native species assemblages. The coordinated, collaborative effort, focused and guided by USGS science, may serve as a model for watershed conservation around the nation to help safeguard our communities and ecosystems in the face of ongoing environmental change.

Nominated by the U.S. Geological Survey

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS:

**U.S. Geological Survey
Northwest Region
Western Fisheries Research Center**

Bella Vista Foundation

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

California Trout

Desert Terminal Lakes Program

Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

The Nature Conservancy

Truckee Meadows Water Authority

Truckee River Watershed Council

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service**

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



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