



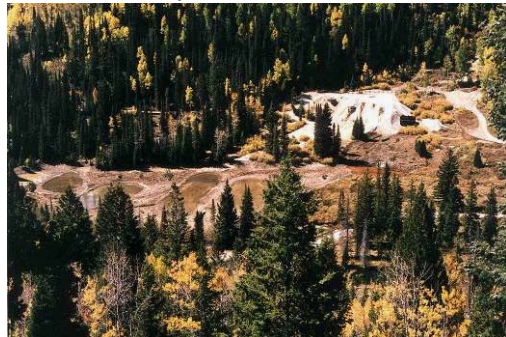
July 2007—No. 3



## POLICY AND LEGISLATION

**Good Samaritan Administrative Package:** On June 6th, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Stephen L. Johnson announced administrative tools that will help clear legal roadblocks that discourage volunteers from cleaning up abandoned mine sites. Drainage from thousands of abandoned hard-rock mines is one of the largest sources of water pollution throughout the western United States.

American Folk Canyon, Utah



In many cases, the entities responsible for the pollution from abandoned mine sites no longer exist or are not financially viable. The new tools will allow individuals and organizations that are not responsible for the pollution, but are willing to participate in voluntary remediation projects, do so without fear of undue liability under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act.

“President Bush is clearing legal roadblocks that for too long have prevented the cleanup of our nation’s watersheds. Through EPA’s administrative action, we are reducing the threat of litigation from voluntary hard rock mine cleanups and allowing America’s Good Samaritans to finally get their shovels into the dirt,” said Administrator Johnson. More information on Good Samaritan tools is available at:

<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/publications/cleanup/superfund/factsheet/goodsam-tools-fs.html>

**Cooperative Conservation Enhancement Act:** On June 19th, the Department of the Interior announced new legislation, entitled the “Cooperative Conservation Enhancement Act.” The legislation would enable federal agencies to work in closer cooperation, generate improved opportunities for funding of non-governmental partnerships on conservation projects, and increase flexibility to resolve disputes through collaborative problem solving.

The legislation also addresses several issues raised at the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation and in 25 listening sessions held nationwide last year. For example, the Act would: a) establish a Working Landscapes Initiative to facilitate landscape-scale conservation projects involving multiple government agencies, organizations and landowners; b) clarify existing partnership and cooperative agreement authorities and reduce administrative barriers; c) authorize the Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program, the Private Stewardship Program, and the Landowner Incentive Program; d) permanently authorize the pilot Service First program and the Department's Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution and e) modify the tax code so that Department grants to landowners are not treated as income.

"This hallmark legislation advances the Department's vision of conservation partnerships," Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett said. "Nature itself is unbounded. Cooperative conservation enables us to enhance, protect, and restore coasts, forests, wetlands, and prairies across a mosaic of lands through shared stewardship. With this Cooperative Conservation Enhancement Act, we will be able to remove the barriers and roadblocks that hinder conservation and deter citizen and community conservation."

The text of the proposed Cooperative Conservation Enhancement Act is available at: <http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/CooperativeConservationEnhancement%20Act.pdf>

**Healthy Forests Partnership Act:** Also on June 19th, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior proposed legislation which will improve the ability of both departments to accomplish conservation projects in partnership with state, tribal and local governments.

The legislation would allow the departments to perform scientifically based forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration and wild-land fire reduction projects through partnerships on both federal and adjacent non-federal lands. It would also provide authorities to each of the Secretaries permitting their respective departments to easily enter into cooperative agreements or contracts, including sole-source contracts, with state, tribal or local governments to enhance forest, rangeland or watershed restoration projects or to complete projects intended to reduce the risk of wild-land fires.

The Act would also enable the Secretaries to designate areas of federal and adjacent non-federal lands as "Healthy Forests Partnership Zones." These zones would be areas either at risk of uncharacteristically severe wild-land fire or areas where there is insufficient industry capacity and public infrastructure to implement the required management activities. This designation would foster non-federal investment in local industry development and provide economic benefits to communities.

"The Healthy Forests Partnership Act would provide us additional tools to facilitate partnerships among federal, state, tribal and local governments," said Mark Rey, Under Secretary of Agriculture. Forest Chief Kimball added, "We've made great progress under the Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) and have improved the health of millions of acres of forests and rangelands

across America. This legislation, however, will allow us to work more effectively with our state and local government partners to fully achieve the desired effects of HFI.”

## COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION IN ACTION

### **Department of Defense and RAND Corporation Release Reports on Conservation Buffer**

**Program:** The Department of Defense’s (DoD) conservation buffer program, the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI), recently released its first annual Report to Congress. REPI provides funding for the military to work with state and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and willing landowners to limit encroachment and incompatible land use. REPI funding leverages public/private partnerships in order to promote innovative land conservation solutions that help sustain military readiness while protecting habitat and other natural resources.

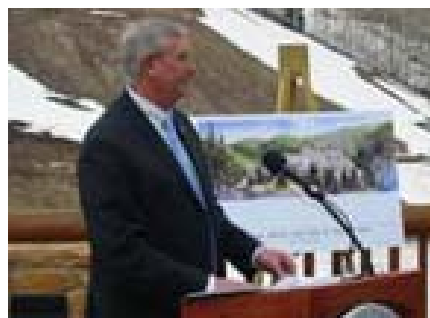
To evaluate the effectiveness of this expanding program, DoD sought an independent assessment of REPI by the RAND Corporation’s National Security Research Division. RAND’s report, “The Thin Green Line – An Assessment of DoD’s Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative to Buffer Installation Encroachment,” evaluates the effectiveness of the REPI program in helping its installations prevent incompatible land use.

Congress has shown increasing support for the REPI program, raising its funding from \$12.5 million (FY2005) to \$37 million (FY2006) to \$40 million (FY2007). To date, there are over fifty REPI projects underway in twenty-one states. The REPI Report to Congress and RAND’s assessment can be viewed at the Sustainable Ranges website:

<http://www.denix.osd.mil/SustainableRanges/>.

Administrator Johnson at the Empire Canyon Event

**EPA Announces Empire Canyon Project:** On April 17th, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, Stephen L. Johnson and Utah Governor Jon Huntsman joined public officials and business leaders to kick off the first Environmentally Responsible Redevelopment and Reuse (ER3) project in the nation. EPA’s ER3 program removes legal obstacles in a manner that encourages environmentally-friendly building and minimizes the impacts of redevelopment projects. Through the initiative, EPA works with developers to specifically encourage and incorporate green principles into proposed projects. By incorporating sustainable practices and principles into their projects, developers of contaminated sites can minimize environmental impacts without sacrificing profitability.



“Through the work of EPA and our partners, Empire Canyon will be a success story of restoring contaminated properties back into community assets,” said Administrator Johnson. “Formerly a mine that extracted precious resources, this site will soon add to the environmental and economic well-being of this area.”

Secretary Kempthorne with Florida CC Awardees Allison Higgins and Greg Jubinsky.

**Department of the Interior Presents Cooperative Conservation Awards:** On May 9th, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne presented the Department's Cooperative Conservation Awards at the 64<sup>th</sup> Honors Convocation. The award recognizes cooperative conservation achievements that involve collaborative activity among a diverse range of entities that may include federal, state, local, and tribal governments; private for profit and non-profit institutions; other non-governmental entities and individuals. The awards went to:



- Florida Upland Invasive Management Program: for creating an efficient and cost effective invasive species control program;
- Scenic Hudson, Inc.: for efforts to protect land adjacent to the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site;
- Southern Nevada Agency Partnership Site Stewardship Program: for training over 251 stewards who monitor critical cultural sites in Clark County, NV;
- Florida Keys Invasive Exotics Task Force: for developing cooperative partnership tools; encouraging new ordinances and tax relief; and creating a volunteer corps to eradicate invasive species on public and private lands;
- Nicole Kamins: for leading a team of federal, state, industry and nongovernmental organizations in the restoration of Hegewisch Marsh in south Chicago;
- Terry and Mary Kohler and Windway Capital Corp. Flight Team: for outstanding contributions to reintroducing flocks of endangered migratory birds to Wisconsin and the eastern United States, and to crane conservation;
- FIRE Up for Summer Program: for demonstrating a successful field-based model for connecting high school students to natural resource careers, while producing useful data for fire fuels monitoring and fire hazard analysis for land managers;
- The Foothills Learning Center: for helping raise awareness and appreciation of the desert environment, the urban-wildland interface and the challenges land management agencies face in caring for these unique lands;
- Deep Gulf Habitats Project: for efforts in the exploration and study of sensitive biological communities below a depth of 3,300 feet in the Gulf of Mexico;
- Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative Teams: for enhancing the lives of those in Appalachia through economic improvement, environmental enhancement and providing recreational opportunities by reforesting reclaimed mine sites;
- Deschutes River Conservancy: for its cooperative partnership between federal, tribal, state private, and local participants, that was founded on the belief that economic progress and natural resource conservation go hand-in-hand benefiting the basin and its residents;
- Groundwater Foundation: for its efforts to inform the public about ground water. One of its many programs, Groundwater Guardian, empowers local citizens to take voluntary steps towards conserving and protecting ground water resources;
- Long-Term Resource Monitoring Program: for working in coordination with a variety of nongovernmental agencies collecting, sharing, and using scientifically based information to improve management in the Upper Mississippi River;
- Western Great Lakes Wolf Populations: for helping increase the wolf population from 750 when listed, to 4,000 in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan upon their delisting under the guidance of the Eastern Timber Wolf Recovery Plan and this partnership.

**NOAA Honors Cooperative Conservation in Support of Fisheries Management:** On June 6th, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service awarded its second annual Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards. The awards recognize individuals or groups who have enhanced the understanding, protection, and sustainable use of the ocean's resources. The awards embody the ethic of cooperative conservation. Four are highlighted below to demonstrate the range of cooperative conservation approaches for marine resource management.

NOAA Administrator Lautenbacher and Assistant Administrator Hogarth with award recipient Don Hansen

*A Special Recognition Award* was presented to Don Hansen for his work to improve the management programs for West Coast marine fisheries. Now in his third term as a Pacific Fishery Management Council member, Don Hansen is a life-long participant in marine fisheries efforts off the coast of California. The owner of Dana Wharf Sportfishing since 1971, and a member of many state and national fishery boards, Don has fostered open dialogue and understanding between scientists, managers, and fishing communities. Under his chairmanship, the Pacific Fishery Management Council has integrated an innovative approach to managing fish stocks, developed a large marine protected area off the entire Pacific coast to protect rockfish, and closed 200,000 square miles to bottom trawling to protect essential ground-fish habitats.



The *Coastal Habitat Restoration Award* was presented to the Amigos de Bolsa Chica, which was recognized for acquiring, restoring and preserving 1,200 acres of wetlands along the California coast. Spanning over 30 years and surviving enormous economic pressures for coastal development, the full restoration of the coastal wetlands of Bolsa Chica culminated in 2006 when an inlet into the wetlands was re-opened, allowing ocean water to enter the wetlands for the first time in over 90 years. The Bolsa Chica project involved a partnership of citizens, governmental agencies, and industry to acquire and rehabilitate one of the last remaining wetland areas in southern California.

The *Conservation Partnership Award* was presented to the Coastal Conservation Association of Texas, which was recognized for its Bay Debris Cleanup Program. The Program is recognized for promoting volunteerism through its monumental cleanup of the southern Texas coast. The program brought together a broad group of citizens, industry, and local, state and federal governments to clear large debris from the bay and beaches of coastal Texas.

The World Wildlife Fund was awarded the *Science, Research and Technology Award* for its Smart Gear Competition. Now in its third year, the competition was recognized for inspiring innovation and entrepreneurship dedicated to reducing by-catch in the world's fisheries. The international competition has spurred invention and fostered a marine stewardship ethic toward the oceans.

## CONTACT US

In keeping with President Bush's vision of Cooperative Conservation, we welcome your views. Please feel free to **Contact Us** on the [www.cooperativeconservation.gov](http://www.cooperativeconservation.gov) website to share any comments, ideas, or requests for information.