

PRESS RELEASE

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Environmental Concern Announces Ramsar Grant Awards on World Wetlands Day

February 2nd is World Wetlands Day. All over the world, organizations, communities, and schools celebrate the anniversary of the *International Convention on Wetlands Treaty*. The treaty, which encourages the protection of valuable wetlands, was signed by the U.S. and 158 other countries in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran. The U.S. National Ramsar Committee (USNRC) includes wetland-focused organizations and government agencies, tasked with identifying and supporting the designation of critical wetland sites, promoting the wise-use of wetlands and educating about the importance of wetlands. Today, 1,713 wetlands totaling over 378 million acres have been designated as *Wetlands of International Importance*.

In celebration of World Wetlands Day, Environmental Concern Inc., on behalf of the U.S. National Ramsar Committee, is pleased to announce the recipients of the "*Promotion of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*" grant awards. These grants are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's *Wildlife Without Borders Global Programs*.

Grant funding in the amount of \$28,700 was awarded to support the designation of new Ramsar sites. Recipients included: *Ballona Institute*, California; *Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation*, California; and *Wisconsin Wetlands Association*, Wisconsin. Grant funding in the amount of \$50,700 was awarded to assist existing Ramsar sites with communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to promoting wetland conservation. Recipients included: *Ahahui Malama I ka Lokahi*, Hawaii; *Cache River Wetlands*, Illinois; *Horicon Marsh*, Wisconsin; *Grassland Ecological Area*, California. Also, the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore, MD received funding to educate the public about the importance of the *Chesapeake Bay Estuarine Complex*. Rutgers University in New Jersey received funding for workshops to educate teachers about the *Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge*. The University of Connecticut's Sea Grant Program received funding to raise awareness of the *Connecticut River Estuary*.

Celebrate World Wetlands Day! Visit one of the following websites to learn more about Ramsar and the importance of wetlands. www.ramsar.org, www.ramsarcommittee.us, or www.wetland.org.