

National planning tool for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

**(And the approved format for National Reports to be
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the Contracting Parties, Spain, 2002)**

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Institutional information

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Note – Not all actions from the Convention Work Plan 2000-2002 are included here, as some apply only to the Bureau or Conferences of the Contracting Parties. As a result, the numbering system that follows contains some gaps corresponding to those actions that have been omitted.

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 1**TO PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONVENTION**

Operational Objective 1.1: To endeavour to secure at least 150 Contracting Parties to the Convention by 2002.

Actions – Global Targets

1.1.1 Recruit new Contracting Parties, especially in the less well represented regions and among states with significant and/or transboundary wetland resources (including shared species), [CPs, SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]

- **The gaps remain in Africa, central Asia, the Middle East and the Small Island Developing States. Refer to Recommendation 7.2 relating to Small Island Developing States.**
- **Global Target - 150 CPs by COP8**
- **These are the countries which at present are not CPs of the Convention:**
 Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Cook Islands, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Federated States of Micronesia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nigeria, Niue, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Is your country a neighbor of, or does it have regular dealings or diplomatic-level dialogue with, one or more of the non-Contracting Parties listed above? (This list was correct as of January 2000. However, accessions to the Convention occur on a regular basis and you may wish to check with the Ramsar Bureau for the latest list of non-CPs.) **Yes** If **No**, go to Action 1.1.2.

If **Yes**, have actions been taken to encourage these non-CPs to join the Convention? **Yes**

If **Yes**, have these actions been successful? **The United States has regular dealings or diplomatic-level dialogue with several of the listed countries. Specifically the Republic of Palau became a self-governing nation in October 1994, when it entered into a Compact of Free Association with the United States. The Marshall Islands is also a constitutional Government in free association with the U.S. The U.S. has close diplomatic ties with many of the Small Island Nations in the Caribbean such as Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda as well as the Dominican Republic and Haiti.**

The United States through the Wetlands for the Future Initiative funded the production of a Ramsar brochure on why countries, specifically Small Island Developing States should join the Ramsar Convention. This document was drafted by the Bureau and has received wide dissemination.

If No , what has prevented such action being taken? Please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets: Program briefings with partner conservation institution in the hemisphere include information about Ramsar and wetland conservation in the hemisphere. The U.S. has special concerns regarding the development of integrated migratory bird conservation actions throughout the hemisphere and regularly develops in-country conservation activities that directly or indirectly relate to wetland conservation. Although to date efforts have not led to accession, individual wetland and habitat conservation activities have been promoted in some of these countries.
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of International Conservation

<p>1.1.2 Promote membership of Ramsar through regional meetings and activities, and through partners' regional offices. [SC regional representatives, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These efforts are to continue and to focus on the above priority regions and the Small Island Developing States. • The current member and permanent observer States of the Standing Committee are Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Costa Rica, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uganda
Is your country a member of the Standing Committee? No If No , go to Action 2.1.1.
If Yes , have actions been taken to encourage the non-CPs from your region or subregion to join the Convention? Yes
If Yes , have these actions been successful? The U.S. promoted a regional meeting for Small Island Developing States through the Wetlands for the Future Program in 2001 (Trinidad and Tobago). The U.S. provided funding to finance two regional meetings in the hemisphere (neotropical Ramsar region). Funding provided for the participation of non-CP's at these meetings.
If No , what has prevented such action being taken? Currently the U.S. has observer status in the Standing Committee.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

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**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 2
TO ACHIEVE THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS BY IMPLEMENTING AND
FURTHER DEVELOPING THE RAMSAR WISE USE GUIDELINES**

Operational Objective 2.1: To review and, if necessary, amend national or supra-national (e.g., European Community) legislation, institutions and practices in all Contracting Parties, to ensure that the Wise Use Guidelines are applied.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>2.1.1 Carry out a review of legislation and practices, and indicate in National Reports to the COP how the Wise Use Guidelines are applied. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This remains a high priority for the next triennium. The <i>Guidelines for reviewing laws and institutions</i> (Resolution VII.7) will assist these efforts. Global Target – For at least 100 CPs to have comprehensively reviewed their laws and institutions relating to wetlands by COP8.
Has your country completed a review of its laws and institutions relating to wetlands? Yes
If No , what are the impediments to this being done? Please elaborate.
If a review is planned , what is the expected timeframe for this being done?
If the review has been completed , did the review result in amendments to laws or institutional arrangements to support implementation of the Ramsar Convention? Yes
If No , what are the impediments to these amendments being completed? Please elaborate.
<p>If Yes, and changes to laws and institutional arrangements were made, please describe these briefly. Yes, some amendments support strategies promoted by the Ramsar Convention.</p> <p>Reviews of legislation and practices are incorporated in legislation and programs through various means and at different levels.</p> <p>(1) Legislation periodically must go through a re-authorization process at which time each piece of legislation is thoroughly examined to ascertain that it remains relevant and consistent with present needs.</p> <p>The Coastal Zone Act, another piece of landmark legislation relevant to wetland conservation and wise use, was reauthorized in 1990. The reauthorization included a new Section 6217 that requires states to develop and implement coastal nonpoint pollution control programs. Section 6217 broke new ground for federal nonpoint source management by requiring the use of "enforceable policies and mechanisms" by the states to address nonpoint source problems. Protection and restoration of wetlands and use of vegetated treatment systems for nonpoint source control are practices encouraged in guidance adopted pursuant to this legislation (USEPA 1993a).</p> <p>(2) At a more specific level, particular issues related to wetland conservation have been examined periodically by prestigious scientific and technical bodies such as the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences. One study worthy of mention is "Wetlands Identification and Characterization" published in 1996.</p> <p>More recently, on June 26, 2001, the National Academy of Sciences released a</p>

comprehensive analysis on the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which made recommendations for federal agencies and states on how to proceed with effective ecological replacement of wetland functions lost to authorized development activities. The study, "Compensating for Wetlands Losses Under the Clean Water Act" was sponsored by EPA, in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Key recommendations and conclusions include development of mitigation goals that are clear and carefully specify measurable ecological performance standards; and replacement of subjective, best professional judgment in assessing wetland function with science-based, rapid assessment procedures that incorporate at least the following characteristics: 1) effectively assess goals of mitigation projects; 2) assess all recognized functions; 3) incorporate effects of position in landscape; and 4) scale assessment results to results from reference sites.

On May 31, 2001, the research arm of the U.S. Congress, the General Accounting Office (GAO), released the results of its investigation on the use of in-lieu-fee arrangements to mitigate wetlands losses and provided two recommendations to improve the accountability of in-lieu-fee mitigation. The report, "Wetlands Protection: Assessments Needed to Determine Effectiveness of In-Lieu-Fee Mitigation" was requested in December 1999 by ranking members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment. One of the GAO report recommendations directs the Administrator of EPA, in conjunction with the Secretaries of Army, Interior, and Commerce, to establish criteria to determine the ecological success of compensatory mitigation and develop and implement procedures for assessing success. A second recommendation directs the Secretary of the Army to develop procedures to ensure accountability for completing required mitigation.

(3) Finally all federal government programs are subject to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. This legislation provides for performance-based management in the federal government. It promotes a focus on results, service quality, and public satisfaction. It helps managers improve service delivery by requiring them to plan for meeting program objectives and providing them with information about program results. It also helps improve legislative decision making by providing information on achieving statutory objectives and relative effectiveness of various programs. The goal for wetland conservation for several U.S. agencies is to have an annual net gain of 100,000 acres by 2005.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged and fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Activities in waters of the United States that are regulated under this program include fills for development, water resource projects (such as dams and levees), infrastructure development (such as highways and airports), and conversion of wetlands to uplands for farming and forestry. After 25 years of progress, however, the nation's clean water program still faces several major challenges.

Implementation of the existing programs cannot comprehensively respond to all the threats to public health, living resources, and the nation's waterways, particularly from polluted runoff, habitat degradation, and loss of federal jurisdiction over certain

isolated waters as the result of a 2001 Supreme Court decision. Current programs lack the strength, resources, and framework to finish the job of restoring rivers, lakes, wetlands, and coastal areas. To fulfill the original goal of the Clean Water Act--fishable and swimmable water for every American—additional measures are still needed.

In his 1998 State of the Union Address, the President announced a major new Clean Water Initiative to speed the restoration of the nation's precious waterways. This new initiative aims to achieve clean water by strengthening public health protection, targeting community-based watershed protection efforts at high priority areas, and providing communities with new resources to control polluted runoff. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the White House asked federal agencies to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan that would help revitalize the nation's commitment to our valuable water resources. Based on input from various government agencies, including public participation from community groups and citizens, a workgroup produced the Clean Water Action Plan, released in February, 1998.

Proposed national actions and targets: The key actions described in this Action Plan focus on achieving cleaner water and healthier watersheds by strengthening public health protections, targeting watershed protection efforts at high priority areas, and providing communities with new resources to control polluted runoff and enhance natural resource stewardship. The Action Plan builds on the solid foundation of existing clean water programs and proposes new actions to strengthen efforts to restore and protect water resources. In implementing this Action Plan, the federal government's goals included:

- support locally led partnerships that include a broad array of federal agencies, states, tribes, communities, businesses, and citizens to meet clean water and public health goals;
- increase financial and technical assistance to states, tribes and local governments, farmers, and others; and
- help states and tribes restore and sustain the health of aquatic systems on a watershed basis.

This Action Plan is built around four key tools to achieve clean water goals.

(1) A Watershed Approach

This Action Plan was built on a new, collaborative effort by federal, state, tribal, and local governments; the public; and the private sector to restore and sustain the health of watersheds in the nation. The watershed approach is the key to setting priorities and taking action to clean up rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

(2) Strong Federal and State Standards

This Action Plan calls for federal, state, and tribal agencies to revise standards where needed and make existing programs more effective. Effective standards are key to protecting public health, preventing polluted runoff, and ensuring accountability.

(3) Natural Resource Stewardship

Most of the land in the nation's watersheds is cropland, pasture, rangeland, or forests, and most of the water that ends up in rivers, lakes, and coastal waters falls on these lands first. Clean water depends on the conservation and stewardship of these natural resources. This Action Plan calls on federal natural resource and conservation agencies to apply their collective resources and technical expertise to state and local watershed restoration and protection.

(4) Informed Citizens and Officials

Clear, accurate, and timely information is the foundation of a sound and accountable water quality program. Informed citizens and officials make better decisions about their watersheds. This Action Plan calls on federal agencies to improve the information available to the public, governments, and others about the health of their watersheds and the safety of their beaches, drinking water, and fish.

Key Actions of the Clean Water Action Plan include some 111 key actions, including:

Focusing on Watersheds

Protecting Public Health

Expanding Citizens' Right to Know

Controlling Polluted Runoff

Incentives for Private Land Stewardship

Protecting Public Lands

Restoring and Protecting Wetlands

- A strategy to achieve a net increase of 100,000 wetland acres per year by 2005.
- Restoration and enhancement of nearly 15,000 acres of wetlands in high priority watersheds together with private partners.
- Federal support for the Five Star Restoration Program for citizens, organizations, corporations, youth groups, landowners, and government agencies to work together to restore wetlands and river corridors.

The new presidential budget of \$21 million for watersheds is intended to support progress towards reaching the goals set out above.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:
Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), USDA, Department of Interior, NOAA, Army Corps of Engineers

2.1.2 Promote much greater efforts to develop national wetland policies, either separately or as a clearly identifiable component of other national conservation planning

initiatives, such as National Environment Action Plans, National Biodiversity Strategies, or National Conservation Strategies. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **The development and implementation of National Wetland Policies continues to be one of the highest priorities of the Convention, as does the integration of wetland conservation and wise use into broader national environment and water policies. *The Guidelines for developing and implementing National Wetland Policies (Resolution VII.6) will assist these efforts.***
- **Global Target - By COP8, at least 100 CPs with National Wetland Policies or, where appropriate, a recognized document that harmonizes all wetland-related policies/strategies and plans, and all CPs to have wetlands considered in national environmental and water policies and plans. *The Guidelines for integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management (Resolution VII.18) will assist these efforts.***

Does your country have **in place** a National Wetland Policy (or similar instrument) which is a comprehensive statement of the Government's intention to implement the provisions of the Ramsar Convention? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being put in place? **Please elaborate.**

If the development of such a Policy is **planned**, what is the expected timeframe for this being done?

Has your country taken its obligations with respect to the Ramsar Convention into consideration in related policy instruments such as National Biodiversity Strategies, National Environmental Action Plans, Water Policies, river basin management plans, or similar instruments? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to doing so? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, please provide brief details. **When the U.S. ratified the Ramsar Convention, there was already in place a legislative framework directed at the conservation of key ecological resources. This framework has subsequently expanded through new legislation and Executive Orders, some issued as recently as June 1998 (Coral Reef Protection) and August 2000 (Oceans). Significant progress has been made in the past half century to protect the nation's wetland resources, as evident in the following statistics referring to net wetlands acreage loss:**

mid-1950s - mid-70s:	-458k acres/year
mid-1970s - mid-80s:	-290k/year
mid-1980s - 1997:	-59k/year

Chronology of Key Federal Legislation and Regulations Affecting Wetlands

The following is a more inclusive list of federal initiatives, that support U.S. obligations under Ramsar. The U.S. has taken a leading role in wetland conservation in North

America. U.S. efforts are based on the wise-use of wetlands and are based on the reconciliation of conservation objectives with continued private ownership and economic development of protected sites.

- 1899 - Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899; Approval by war secretary required for all construction activities in and deposition of refuse into navigable water.
- 1936 - Migratory Bird Conservation Act; The Migratory Bird Conservation Fund is established to acquire lands for conservation, to maintain acquired lands for habitat preservation, and for any expenses necessary for the administration development, and maintenance of such areas including construction of dams, dikes, ditches, spillways, and flumes for improving habitat, and mitigating pollution threats to waterfowl and migratory birds (16 U.S.C. 715k).
- 1967 - Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; Required U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to include ecological effects in their regulations.
- 1969 - National Environmental Policy of 1969 (NEPA); Requires the filing of environmental impact statements (EIS) for major federal activities. EIS's must identify environmental impacts of proposed activities and alternatives to those activities. The process has been applied to proposed federal actions affecting wetlands. NEPA can serve as a significant deterrent to controversial activities largely because of time delays and adverse publicity.
- 1972 - Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (Clean Water Act); Section 404 vested authority for wetlands regulations in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA. Specifically, this refers to the authority to review and issue permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States (Corps) and to develop the environmental criteria for such review and provide oversight of corps actions (EPA).
- 1972 - Coastal Zone Management Act; Authorized grants for state coastal zone management program planning and implementation.
- 1973 - Endangered Species Act; Required federal agencies to ensure that any actions authorized would not jeopardize endangered or threatened species or hurt or destroy their habitat, including wetlands. It also prohibited the "taking" of an endangered species.
- 1973 - Flood Disaster Protection Act (reauthorized in 1977); Instituted a National Flood Insurance program offering federally subsidized flood insurance to states and local governments that enact regulations against floodplain development.
- 1977 - Amendments to Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act of 1977); Exempted from regulation certain farming, forestry, and ranching activities located in wetlands; clarified the broad geographic scope of waters covered under the act.
- 1977 - Executive Order 11988; Floodplain Management; Required government agencies, wherever possible, to avoid activity in and consider impact on floodplains.
- 1977 - Executive Order 11990; Protection of Wetlands; Required government

agencies to provide leadership and take action to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out agency activities and programs affecting land use. It also ended all direct federal assistance for wetland conversion, including assistance with drainage and channelization.

- 1980 - Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines; Final guidelines issued by EPA for evaluating Section 404 permit applications required by Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.
- 1980 - Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980; This Act declares that fish and wildlife are of ecological, educational, esthetic, cultural, recreational, economic and scientific value to the Nation. The purposes of this Act are to encourage all Federal departments and agencies to utilize their statutory and administrative authority, to the maximum extent possible and consistent with each agency's statutory responsibilities, to conserve and to promote conservation of non-game fish and wildlife and their habitats, in furtherance of the provisions of this chapter, and to provide financial and technical assistance to States to conduct inventories and conservation plans for conservation of non-game wildlife (16 U.S.C.2901(b)).
- 1985 - Food Security Act of 1985 (Farm Bill); "Swampbuster" provision provided, in general, that producers converting wetlands after December 23, 1985 would no longer be eligible for commodity price supports, loans, crop insurance, disaster payments, and storage payments.
- 1986 - Emergency Wetlands Resources Act; Promoted conservation through intensified cooperation among private interests and government agencies, and through increased acquisition efforts. Required development of a National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan. It authorized acquisition of wetlands consistent with the Plan, and created revenue options for doing so. Included support for National Wetlands Inventory mapping initiative.
- 1986 - Tax Reform Act of 1986; Eliminated favorable treatment of capital gains from land conversion and restricted landowners' ability to write off drainage costs, thereby reducing incentives for the sale or conversion of wetlands (Wiebe et al., 1995).
- 1989 - North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989; Increased protection and restoration of wetlands under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. A percentage of funds were obligated to wetland projects in Canada and Mexico, with the rest in the U.S. Funded in part by taxes on hunting equipment and by hunting fines.
- 1990 – Issuance of the national no-net-loss of wetlands goal after the completion of a national wetlands policy forum.
- 1990 - Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act; Provided cost-share funding for restoration of coastal wetlands and funding for North American Waterfowl Management Plan projects.
- 1990 - Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990; Established the Wetlands Reserve Program for purchase of easements on wetlands. Included a number of provisions or amendments to existing programs that affected wetlands, such as changes to Swampbuster and Conservation Reserve Program, and creation of the President's Water Quality Initiative.

- **1990 - Water Resources Development Act; Required federal agencies to develop action plan to achieve no-net loss of wetlands. Prohibited U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from the use of 1989 Manual for Delineation of Wetlands, resulting in standardized use of the 1987 manual.**
- **1993 – Issuance of the Administration’s Wetland Plan that provided for some 40 actions for federal, state, and tribal wetlands protection.**
- **1998 – Clean Water Action Plan created with aim at achieving cleaner water and healthier watersheds by strengthening public health protections, targeting watershed protection efforts at high priority areas, and providing communities with new resources to control polluted runoff and enhance natural resource stewardship.**
- **1998 - The President issues executive Order on Coral Reef Protection to provide additional awareness and protection for federal agency activities that may affect wetlands.**

• **2000 - Estuaries and Clean Waters Act of 2000; This Act authorizes the Secretary of Interior, in cooperation with the States, Secretary of the Army and other Federal agencies, to conduct an inventory and study of the Nation’s estuaries, to facilitate estuary protection, conservation and restoration in a manner that maintains the balance between conserving the natural resources and natural beauty of the Nation and the need to develop these estuaries for further growth and development of the Nation. Considerations of this study are to include: (1) wildlife and recreational potential of estuaries, their ecology, their value to the marine, anadromous and shell fisheries, and their esthetic value; (2) their importance to navigation, value for flood, hurricane, and erosion control, mineral value, and value of submerged lands; and, (3) the value of such areas for more intensive development for economic use as part of urban, commercial and industrial development (16 U.S.C. 1222).**

• **On August 2000, new measures were announced to protect U.S. beaches, coasts, and ocean resources. The President of the United States signed a new executive order that directs the Departments of Commerce and the Interior to develop a scientifically based national system of marine protected areas (MPAs) and to establish, under the leadership of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a Marine Protected Area Center to coordinate the effort. Under the plan, fishing, oil and gas exploration, mining, dumping, and other potentially damaging activities would be banned in these areas. Although more than 1000 areas within US waters are now protected to some degree by federal or state governments, they represent only about 1 percent of the ocean under U.S. jurisdiction.**

The May executive order directed the Commerce and Interior departments to develop a plan within 90 days to manage and permanently protect the coral reefs that ring the 1200-mile-long chain of Northwest Hawaiian Islands. This reef ecosystem is home to diverse and unique forms of marine life, including several species of threatened or endangered sea turtles and the only remaining population of the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. The President also instructed the Environmental Protection Agency to take steps to reduce pollution of beaches, coasts, and ocean waters.

- **2002 – The President proposes a watershed initiative for 21 watersheds in the U.S.**

Has your government reviewed and modified, as appropriate, its policies that adversely affect intertidal wetlands (COP7 Resolution VII.21)? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening?

If **Yes**, what were the conclusions of this review? and what actions have been taken subsequently? **To date, reviews of policies adversely affecting intertidal wetlands have been carried out on a regional level, such as at the Chesapeake Bay and Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of ocean and coastal policies, which include coastal wetlands.**

The Oceans Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-256), an Act of the U.S. Congress, became law on August 7, 2000, and went into effect on January 20, 2001. The Act establishes a 16-member Commission on Ocean Policy to undertake an 18-month study and to make recommendations to the President and Congress for a national ocean policy for the United States.

The Act charges the Commission to conduct a detailed review of existing and planned U.S. ocean and coastal programs and activities. The Commission is to provide recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy on a broad range of issues, ranging from the stewardship of marine resources and pollution prevention to enhancing and supporting marine science, commerce, and transportation.

The purpose is to establish a commission to make recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy that will promote:

- (1) protection of life and property**
- (2) stewardship of ocean and coastal resources**
- (3) protection of marine environment and prevention of marine pollution**
- (4) enhancement of maritime commerce**
- (5) expansion of human knowledge of the marine environment**
- (6) investments in technologies to promote energy and food security**
- (7) close cooperation among government agencies**
- (8) U.S. leadership in ocean and coastal activities.**

Scope of the recommendations.

The Commission's report is required to include the following, as relevant to ocean and coastal activities: an assessment of facilities (people, vessels, computers, satellites); a review of federal activities; a review of the cumulative effect of federal laws; a review of the supply and demand for ocean and coastal resources; a review of the relationships between federal, state, and local governments, and the private sector; a review of the opportunities for the investment in new products and technologies; recommendations for modifications to federal laws and/or the structure of federal agencies; and a review of the effectiveness of existing federal interagency policy coordination.

The Commission is to give equal consideration to environmental, technical, economic, and scientific factors. In addition, the recommendations may not be specific to the lands or waters within a single state.

Public Meetings

The Commission is required to hold public meetings. The Commission must hold at least one meeting in each of 6 specified areas around the country. At these meetings, the commission will be hearing testimony on local, national and international ocean and coastal issues which includes tidal wetlands.

Role of states

The Commission must provide a copy of their draft report to the Governor of each coastal state. The Governors' comments will be included in the Commission's final report. The President shall develop his National Ocean Policy in consultation with the states.

Biennial Report

Beginning in September 2001, the President submits to Congress a biennial report of all federal programs related to coastal and ocean activities, including:

- a description of each program
- the current level of funding for the program
- linkages to other federal programs
- a projection of the funding level for the program for each of the next 5 fiscal years

Funding

The Oceans Act authorizes \$6 million for the Commission to complete its work. (Congress appropriated \$3.5 million to the Commission in a separate fund in fiscal year 1999. Congress appropriated another \$1 million to the same fund for fiscal year 2001. All \$4.5 million remains available to the Commission. The remaining funding currently is pending as part of appropriations for fiscal year 2002.)

Previous Actions

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 established a program for states to voluntarily develop comprehensive programs to protect and manage coastal water resources. There are now 29 coastal states and territories with federally approved coastal management programs. The Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments

(CZARA) of 1990 specifically charged coastal states and territories with upgrading their runoff pollution control programs to protect coastal waters. CZARA Management Measures Guidance addresses the protection and restoration of wetlands and riparian areas. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a permit program to regulate the discharge of dredged and fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands. EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers jointly administer this program.

In June 1998 the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (CRTF) was established by the President through Executive Order #13089 on Coral Reef Protection to lead the U.S. response to the growing, global environmental crisis of destruction of coral reefs. Chaired by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, the CRTF is composed of the heads of 11 federal agencies and the Governors of 7 states, territories or commonwealths with responsibilities for coral reefs. The CRTF is responsible for overseeing implementation of the Executive Order, and developing and implementing coordinated efforts to:

- map and monitor U.S. coral reefs;
- research the causes and solutions to coral reef degradation;
- reduce and mitigate coral reef degradation from pollution, over fishing and other causes;
- implement strategies to promote conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs internationally.

Proposed national actions and targets: There are several policy instruments that advance wetland conservation in the country. In 1989, the President adopted the short-term goal of “no net loss of wetlands” and the long-term goal of increase in quality and quantity of the nation’s wetlands based upon the comprehensive report of the National Wetlands Policy Forum, a group with representation from the private sector, non-profit interests, and State Governors. These policies were endorsed, expanded and refined by a 1993 Plan entitled “Wetlands Protection, a Fair, Flexible and Effective Approach,” and by the 1998 Clean Water Action Plan, which addressed wetlands protection along with other water quality challenges, and included 14 specific key actions to improve the conservation and restoration of wetlands.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Multiple agencies**

Operational Objective 2.2: To integrate conservation and wise use of wetlands in all Contracting Parties into national, provincial and local planning and decision-making on land use, groundwater management, catchment/river basin and coastal zone planning, and all other environmental planning and management.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.2.2 Promote the inclusion of wetlands in national, provincial and local land use

planning documents and activities, and in all relevant sectoral and budgetary provisions. [CPs]

- **Achieving integrated and cross-sectoral approaches to managing wetlands within the broader landscape and within river basin/coastal zone plans is another of the Convention’s highest priorities in the next triennium.**
- **Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to be promoting, and actively implementing, the management of wetlands as integrated elements of river basins and coastal zones, and to provide detailed information on the outcomes of these actions in the National Reports for COP8.**

Is your country **implementing** integrated river basin and coastal zone management approaches? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

If integrated management approaches are being applied in part of the country, indicate the approximate percentage of the country’s surface area where this is occurring and to which river basins and coastal areas this applies. **The entire country is considered in national integrated management schemes. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates there are more than 3,000 local watershed groups nationwide. However, a modest percentage of actual surface area is included in active integrated management plans. The U.S. has identified and based its integrated management planning using key elements of the Watershed Approach.**

The Clean Water Action Plan proposes a watershed approach built on several key elements:

Protect and Restore Wetlands

This Action Plan sets a goal of attaining a net increase of 100,000 wetland acres per year by the year 2005. This goal will be achieved by ensuring that existing wetland programs continue to slow the rate of wetland losses, improving federal restoration programs, and by expanding incentives to landowners to restore wetlands.

Unified Watershed Assessments

States, tribes, and federal agencies currently set priorities for watershed action in many different ways. For example, state water quality agencies are developing lists of impaired water bodies, defining source water protection areas for drinking water, identifying coastal protection priorities, and defining priority areas for agricultural assistance programs. Similarly, federal, state and tribal natural resource agencies set their priorities for watershed restoration and protection in various ways to meet their mandates for natural resource conservation. These processes are designed to meet valid objectives, but too often opportunities to work together to meet common goals are

overlooked.

This Action Plan creates a strategic opportunity for states and tribes, in cooperation with federal land and resource managers on federal lands, to take the lead in unifying these various existing efforts and leveraging scarce resources to advance the pace of progress toward clean water. As a number of states and tribes have demonstrated, they can meet existing requirements more efficiently and develop more coordinated and comprehensive priorities on a watershed basis.

Unified watershed assessments are a vehicle to identify:

- watersheds targeted to receive resources to clean up waters that are not meeting water quality goals;
- pristine or sensitive watersheds on federal lands where core federal and state programs can be brought together to prevent degradation of water quality; and
- threatened watersheds that need an extra measure of protection and attention.

Watershed Restoration Action Strategies

The Action Plan encourages states and tribes to work with local communities, the public, and federal environmental, natural resource, and land management agencies to develop strategies to restore watersheds that are not meeting clean water and natural resource goals. Watershed Restoration Action Strategies spell out the most important causes of water pollution and resource degradation, detail the actions that all parties need to take to solve those problems, and set milestones by which to measure progress.

Watershed Pollution Prevention

Protecting pristine or sensitive waters and taking preventive action when clean water is threatened by new activities in the watershed can be the most cost-effective approach to meeting clean water goals. This Action Plan encourages states, tribal, and federal agencies to bring core programs and existing resources together to support watershed pollution prevention strategies to keep clean waters clean.

Watershed Assistance Grants

Federal agencies provide small grants to local organizations that want to take a leadership role in building local efforts to restore and protect watersheds. These grants ensure that local communities and stakeholders can effectively engage in the process of setting goals and devising solutions to restore their watersheds.

Natural Resource Stewardship

Nearly 70 percent of the United States, exclusive of Alaska, is held in private ownership by millions of individuals. Fifty percent, or 907 million acres, is owned by farmers,

ranchers, and their families. Another 400 million acres are federal lands. Most of the rainfall in the country falls on these lands before it enters rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. Effective management of these croplands, pastures, forests, wetlands, rangelands, and other resources is key to keeping clean water clean and restoring watersheds where water quality is impaired.

This Action Plan commits all federal natural resource conservation and environmental agencies to focus their expertise and resources to support the watershed approach described above. In addition, these agencies work with states, tribes, and others to enhance critical natural resources essential to clean water.

Federal Land Stewardship

More than 800 million acres of the United States, including Alaska, is federal land. These lands contain an immense diversity and wealth of natural resources, including significant sources of drinking water and public recreation opportunities.

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and USDA developed a Unified Federal Policy to enhance watershed management for the protection of water quality and the health of aquatic systems on federal lands and for federal resource management. Federal land managers aim to improve water quality protection for over 2,000 miles of roads and trails each year through 2005 and decommission 5,000 miles each year by 2002. Federal land managers will also accelerate the cleanup rate of watersheds affected by abandoned mines and will implement an accelerated riparian stewardship program to improve or restore 25,000 miles of stream corridors by 2005.

Protect Coastal Waters

Federal agencies, led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), are working in partnership to improve the monitoring of coastal waters, expand research of emerging problems like *Pfiesteria*, amend Fishery Management Plans to address water quality issues, and ensure the implementation of strong programs to reduce polluted runoff to coastal waters.

Provide Incentives for Private Land Stewardship

This Action Plan relies on a substantial increase in the technical and financial assistance available to private landowners as the primary means of accelerating progress toward reducing polluted runoff from agricultural, range, and forest lands.

USDA, working with federal, state, tribal, and private partners, will establish by 2002 two million miles of conservation buffers to reduce polluted runoff and protect watersheds, direct new funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to support watershed restoration, and develop as many new agreements with states as practicable to use the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to improve watersheds. The Plan also envisions new and innovative methods to provide incentives for private landowners to implement pollution prevention plans, including risk

management protection for adoption of new pollution prevention technologies and market recognition for producers that meet environmental goals.

In addition, DOI expanded its existing Partners for Wildlife Program, which restores degraded fish and wildlife habitats and improves water quality through partnerships with landowners. The program provides technical and financial assistance, and gives priority to threatened and endangered species.

Informed Citizens and Officials

Effective management of water resources requires reliable information about water quality conditions and new tools to communicate information to the public. Federal agencies, led by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), will work with states and tribes to improve monitoring and assessment of water quality, focusing on nutrients and related pollutants. Federal agencies will also work with states and tribes to develop and use state-of-the-art systems, such as EPA's Index of Watershed Indicators on the Internet, to communicate meaningful information to the public about water quality conditions in their communities.

Watershed Forum

Despite the billions of dollars invested over the last several decades in reducing pollutants from point sources, many problems remain such as siltation, nutrients, pathogens, and metals, as well as critical habitat loss. Local citizens are increasingly forming partnerships to help address the complex problems affecting their water resources. The proliferation of these groups is changing the nature of environmental protection. These watershed partnerships provide those people, who depend on aquatic resources for their health, livelihood, or quality of life, with a voice in decision making processes and a responsibility in the management of these resources.

The National Watershed Forum (Forum) was held June 27 – July 1, 2001 in Arlington, Virginia. It was an unprecedented event in which 480 community leaders and senior decision makers from around the country gathered together to give voice to the future of our nation's watersheds. Geographically, politically, and culturally diverse individuals shared their visions and explored new directions for cooperative action to sustain watersheds into the next century and beyond. The Forum was intended to forge stronger partnerships and collaboration, help empower communities to continue their progress in improving the health of their watersheds, and educate government agencies about the efforts of the growing watershed movement. Indeed, it did give local watershed partnerships, private sector and government leaders a unique opportunity to identify and start taking important steps together to improve the nation's waters.

The agenda for the Forum was organized in large part around nineteen issue-specific discussion groups. Delegates participated in facilitated dialogues within each discussion group to develop recommendations for local, state, regional, tribal and federal policies and actions to address issues of concern relative to their group's topic. The delegates

focused on collaborative approaches – getting industry and environmentalists; local, state, tribal, and federal agencies; scientists; and local citizens to work together to identify and solve the problems facing our nation’s watersheds. A diverse panel, comprised of leaders from the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and government agencies heard a summary of some of the Forum’s wide-ranging recommendations on the afternoon of the second day.

National Watershed Forum Discussion Groups, topics include:

- Funding and Technical Support
- Structure and Function of Watershed Groups
- Participation and Partnerships Education and Outreach
- Leadership and Facilitation
- Source Water Protection
- Instream Flows
- Data Collection, Monitoring, Research Needs, and Information Management
- Watershed Planning and Evaluation
- Smart Growth
- Habitat
- Endangered Species
- Jurisdiction and Coordination
- Total Maximum Daily Load

Coastal Zones

The Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) is authorized by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 and administered at the federal level by the Coastal Programs Division (CPD) within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM). The CPD is responsible for advancing national coastal management objectives and maintaining and strengthening state and territorial coastal management capabilities. It supports states through financial assistance (\$58 million in FY 2000), mediation, technical services and information, and participation in priority state, regional, and local forums.

The CZMP's unique state-federal partnership leaves day-to-day management decisions at the state level in the 33 states and territories with federally approved coastal management programs. Currently, 95,331 national shoreline miles (99.9%) are managed by the Program. Of the remaining 108 miles, 45 lie within Indiana, which is in the process of program development, and the rest within Illinois, which is not participating. State and federal coastal zone management efforts are guided by the CZMP's Strategic

Framework, which is organized around three major themes: Sustain Coastal Communities, Sustain Coastal Ecosystems, and Improve Government Efficiency.

The National Estuary Program was established in 1987 by amendments to the Clean Water Act to identify, restore, and protect nationally significant estuaries of the United States, and is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Unlike traditional regulatory approaches to environmental protection, the NEP targets a broad range of issues and engages local communities in the process. The program focuses not just on improving water quality in an estuary, but on maintaining the integrity of the whole system--its chemical, physical, and biological properties, as well as its economic, recreational, and aesthetic values.

The National Estuary Program is designed to encourage local communities to take responsibility for managing their own estuaries. Each NEP is made up of representatives from federal, state and local government agencies responsible for managing the estuary's resources, as well as members of the community--citizens, business leaders, educators, and researchers. These stakeholders work together to identify problems in the estuary, develop specific actions to address those problems, and create and implement a formal management plan to restore and protect the estuary.

Although the USEPA administers the National Estuary Program, program decisions and activities are carried out by committees of local government officials, private citizens, and representatives from other federal agencies, academic institutions, industry, and estuary user-groups. Estuaries are selected for inclusion in the NEP through a nomination process. Nominations must be submitted to USEPA during designated nomination periods by the Governor(s) of the state(s) where the estuary is located.

Once selected for inclusion in the national program, each NEP must create decision-making committees made up of relevant stakeholders to identify and prioritize the problems in the estuary. Most NEPs choose a management framework that includes a Management Committee to oversee routine operation of the program; a Policy Committee made up of high-level representative from federal, state, and local government agencies; a Technical Advisory Committee to guide technical decisions; and a Citizens Advisory Committee to represent the interests of estuary user-groups and the public. Together, the committees develop a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for protecting the estuary and its resources.

The objective of each NEP is to create and implement a CCMP that addresses the whole range of environmental problems facing the estuary, as well as the economic and social values of the estuary. By providing grants and technical assistance, EPA helps state and local governments achieve these goals. EPA also shares "lessons learned" among all the individual estuary programs as well as other coastal communities.

If **Yes**, are wetlands being given special consideration in such integrated management approaches? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

Has your country undertaken any specific pilot projects to implement the *Guidelines for*

integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management (COP7 Resolution VII.18).? **Yes**

If **Yes**, please describe them briefly. **Many projects in the U.S. on varying scales integrate principles similar to Ramsar's Guidelines for integrating wetlands conservation and wise use into river basin management. One example of a watershed protection plan on a large scale is the Chesapeake Bay Program, which implements a watershed approach, giving special attention to wetlands.**

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most biologically diverse estuary, home to more than 3,600 species of plants, fish and animals. For more than 300 years, the Bay and its tributaries have sustained the region's economy and defined its traditions and culture. It is a resource of extraordinary productivity, worthy of the highest levels of protection and restoration.

Accordingly, in 1983 and 1987, the states of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government, signed historic agreements that established the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem.

Aspects of the plan which specifically address wetlands include:

- Achieve a no-net loss of existing wetlands acreage and function in the signatories' regulatory programs.**
- By 2010, achieve a net resource gain by restoring 25,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands. To do this, we commit to achieve and maintain an average restoration rate of 2,500 acres per year basin wide by 2005 and beyond. We will evaluate our success in 2005.**
- Provide information and assistance to local governments and community groups for the development and implementation of wetlands preservation plans as a component of a locally based integrated watershed management plan.**

Establish a goal of implementing the wetlands plan component in 25 percent of the land area of each state's Bay watershed by 2010. The plans would preserve key wetlands while addressing surrounding land use so as to preserve wetland functions.

- Evaluate the potential impact of climate change on the Chesapeake Bay watershed, particularly with respect to its wetlands, and consider potential management options.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **The Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) jointly oversee the development and implementation of Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Programs, or CNPCPs. Unified Federal Policy for Ensuring a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management includes participation of Department of Agriculture; Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Department of Defense; Department of Energy; For the Department of the Interior; Army Corps of Engineers; and**

Environmental Protection Agency. Regarding the Chesapeake Bay Program, the states of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

Operational Objective 2.3: To expand the Guidelines and Additional Guidance on Wise Use to provide advice to Contracting Parties on specific issues not hitherto covered, and examples of best current practice.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.3.1 Expand the Additional Guidance on Wise Use to address specific issues such as oil spill prevention and clean-up, agricultural runoff, and urban/industrial discharges in cooperation with other bodies. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - Following COP7, the Bureau, with other appropriate collaborators, will produce a series of Wise Use handbooks, based on the outcomes of Technical Sessions at COP7.**
- **(added by the Ramsar Bureau pursuant to Resolution VII.14 *Invasive Species and wetlands*) CPs are requested “to provide the Ramsar Bureau with information on databases which exist for invasive species, information on invasive species which pose a threat to wetlands and wetland species, and information on the control and eradication of invasive wetland species.”**

Does your country **have** resource information on the management of wetlands in relation to the following which could be useful in assisting the Convention to develop further guidance to assist other CPs :

- oil spill prevention and clean-up? **Yes**
- agricultural runoff? **Yes**
- urban/industrial discharges? **Yes**
- invasive species? **Yes**
- other relevant aspects such as highway designs, aquaculture, etc.? **Yes – See below.**

In each case, if the answer was **Yes**, has this information been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre (see 2.3.2 below)? **No**

US EPA’s Office of Wastewater Management provides information in the form of industrial permitting fact sheets and outreach materials for each of the above topics, including sections on wetlands.

· Urban/industrial discharges:

Many government agencies, NGOs, private firms, and educational institutions have resource information on urban/industrial discharges. One example is EPA’s newly created resource manual titled “Protecting Natural Wetlands: A Guide to Stormwater Best Management Practices”

US EPA’s “Guiding Principles for Constructed Treatment Wetlands: Providing Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat“ was developed by the Interagency Workgroup on

Constructed Wetlands (US Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Bureau of Reclamation). The document includes:

- **Guiding principles for siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of constructed treatment wetlands**
- **Information on current Agency policies, permits, regulations, and resources**
- **Invasive species:**

It is well-recognized that invasive species are a problem. Last year three divisions in US EPA--Wetlands Division; Oceans and Coastal Protection Division; and Watersheds Division--put together a white paper on invasive species, but there is not yet a focused, national plan out of EPA or the Corps. In accordance with the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.), the U.S. Government has designated certain plants as noxious weeds, including those invasive to wetlands. The U.S. Natural Resources and Conservation Service maintains a Federal Noxious Weed List--but not exclusively for wetlands. Many states, federal agencies, education centers, non-governmental organizations maintain lists of wetlands invasive species in the US on a regional level, but the information systems are not under one umbrella database. Some states put together lists which they use quite extensively--in the Northeast, for instance, the U.S. EPA coordinates a workgroup of states which deals with regional invasive species issues.

- **Other relevant aspects such as highway designs, aquaculture, etc:**

EPA published "Guidance Specifying Management Measures for Sources of Nonpoint Pollution in Coastal Waters" to be used by states to implement management measures economically achievable measures that reflect the greatest degree of runoff pollution control to control the addition of runoff pollutants to coastal waters. The Guidance also includes best management practices, technologies, processes, siting criteria, and operating methods for roads, highways, and bridges that states can use to implement the management measures. States can use alternative management measures if they provide the same or a greater degree of pollutant control as the management measures in the Guidance. States were to begin implementing their CNPCPs in 1996 and are expected to achieve full implementation by 2004.

The following are examples of products produced by or for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) :

- **Guidelines for the Development of Wetland Mitigation Areas. NCHRP Report number 379. This manual provides guidance and information on techniques, procedures, and materials to design, plan, construct, and monitor, wetlands. It covers soil, hydrology, vegetation, site modifications, problem correction, design requirements, and construction management.**

· **A Guidebook for Application of Hydrogeomorphic Assessments to Riverine Wetlands. Report number WRP-DE-11.** This document provides the basic outline and guidance for regionalization of functional assessment models applicable to riverine wetlands under the HGM functional assessment methodology. It explains the basis and principals behind the HGM method, describes the riverine wetlands classes, and gives general functional models for different wetlands functions which riverine wetlands perform which should be evaluated under the Clean Water Act's Section 404 permitting program.

The Federal Highway Administration and other government agencies involved in managing impacts to wetlands and other natural resources have made notable progress in implementing mitigation "banking" procedures and projects. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) specifically identifies the following as eligible for Federal-aid participation under the National Highway System and Surface Transportation Program (Sections 1006, 1007):

- (1) banking of wetlands mitigation concurrent or in advance of project construction;
- (2) contributions to statewide and regional efforts to conserve, restore, enhance and create wetlands;
- (3) development of statewide and regional wetlands conservation and mitigation plans.

Resource information is available for states looking to implement such plans. More than 20 State Highway Agencies have developed wetland mitigation banking agreements and/or programs, and have actively begun developing banks.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Multiple agencies.

2.3.2. Publicize examples of effective application of existing Guidelines and Additional Guidance on Wise Use. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Promoting and improving the availability of such resource materials is a priority under the *Convention's Outreach Programme* (Resolution VII.9)**
- **Global Target - By COP8, to have included in the Wise Use Resource Centre 500 appropriate references and publications as provided to the Bureau by CPs and other organizations.**

Further to 2.31. above, has your country, as urged by the Outreach Programme of the Convention adopted at COP7 (Resolution VII. 9), **reviewed** its resource materials relating to wetland management policies and practices? No

If **No**, what has prevented this being done? Reviews are conducted on a continual basis but have not been formally organized in a Ramsar context. Conferences, workshops,

publications, websites, and products from government-led committees, and many other forms of outreach are consistently used as vehicles to review resource materials relating to wetlands management and practices.

If **Yes**, have copies of this information been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau? **No**

If **No**, what has prevented this being done? **Most of the materials are available on the Internet and are accessible to all.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)**

Operational Objective 2.4: To provide economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands for environmental planning purposes.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.4.1 Promote the development, wide dissemination, and application of documents and methodologies which give economic evaluations of the benefits and functions of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Given the guidelines available for this activity (see below: *Economic Valuation of Wetlands* handbook), this will be an area of higher priority in the next triennium.**
- **Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to be incorporating economic valuation of wetland services, functions and benefits into impact assessment and decision-making processes related to wetlands.**

Does your government **require** that economic valuations of the full range of services, benefits and functions of wetlands be prepared as part of impact assessments and to support planning decisions that may impact on wetlands? **In some cases.**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

If this applies in some, but not all cases, what is the expected timeframe for this to be required in all cases? **Where applicable, the time frame depends on the size and scope of a given project or set of connected projects. All new Federal projects need to quantify environmental benefits. Larger projects tend to get in-depth analyses, but most do not. The Corps needs to include economic valuations in the public interest review for every permit issued for 404 authorization.**

If **Yes**, has the inclusion of economic valuation into impact assessment resulted in wetlands being given special consideration or protection. **Yes If Yes, please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

Operational Objective 2.5: To carry out environmental impact assessments (EIAs) at wetlands, particularly of proposed developments or changes in land/water use which have potential to affect them, notably at Ramsar sites, whose ecological character “is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference” (Article 3.2 of the Convention).

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>2.5.2 Ensure that, at Ramsar sites where change in ecological character is likely as a result of proposed developments or changes in land/water use which have potential to affect them, EIAs are carried out (with due consideration of economic valuations of wetland benefits and functions), and that the resulting conclusions are communicated to the Ramsar Bureau and fully taken into account by the authorities concerned. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - In the next triennium, CPs will ensure that EIAs are applied to any such situation and keep the Bureau advised of the issues and the outcomes of these EIAs.
<p>Has an EIA been carried out in all cases where a change in the ecological character of a Ramsar site within your country was likely (or possible) as a result of proposed developments or changes in land/water use? No Reply</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this from occurring? Unknown. All of the Ramsar sites within the US are protected through some park or refuge system, and have generally been removed from threats of pollution or development due to their protected status.</p>
<p>If Yes, has this EIA, or have these EIAs, given due consideration to the full range of environmental, social and economic values of the wetland? (See also 2.4.1 above) No Reply</p>
<p>AND: Have the results of the EIA been transmitted to the Ramsar Bureau? No</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this from occurring? Some projects have been proposed where changes in the ecological character of Ramsar sites were likely, but these have not been carried out. One project adjacent to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Georgia, threatening its ecological character, is not currently proceeding. Thus, an EIA has not been done. In addition, a project has been proposed that would cause adverse changes at Caddo Lake, Texas.</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets: [Redacted]</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: [Redacted]</p>

<p>2.5.3 Carry out EIAs at other important sites, particularly where adverse impact on wetland resources is likely, due to a development proposal or change in land/water use. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to require EIAs under legislation for any actions which can potentially impact on wetlands and to provide detailed reports on advances in this area in their National Reports for COP8.

Are EIAs required in your country for **all** cases where a wetland area (whether a Ramsar site or not) may be adversely impacted due to a development proposal or change in land/water use? **No**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **EIAs are required in many, but not all cases.**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is the primary federal law requiring environmental assessments. Under NEPA, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required for “major federal projects that significantly affect the quality of the human environment.” An Environmental Assessment (EA) is frequently done for federal projects to determine whether a project’s environmental impacts, including to wetlands, are significant enough to warrant a more detailed EIS. Note that EAs and EISs are similar to Ramsar’s EIAs.

EAs and EISs for wetlands often are triggered by issuance of federal permits under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The federal CWA requires permits for discharge of dredged or fill material into “waters of the United States,” which encompasses many, but not all (e.g. drainage activities). State permits do not themselves trigger the federal EIS requirement, although many states have NEPA-like laws requiring an environmental assessment.

If **Yes**, are such EIAs required to give due consideration to the full range of environmental, social and economic values of the wetland? (See COP7 Resolution VII.16, also 2.4.1 & 2.5.2 above.) **Yes**

Are EIAs “undertaken in a transparent and participatory manner which includes local stakeholders” (COP7 Resolution VII.16)? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring?

Proposed national actions and targets: **Possible review of certain NEPA regulations may occur in the near future.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **Lead responsibility for protecting wetlands at the federal level is shared by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). State-level protection programs typically are housed in state environmental or natural resources agencies.**

2.5.4 Take account of Integrated Environmental Management and Strategic Environmental Assessment (at local, provincial and catchment/river basin or coastal zone levels) when assessing impacts of development proposals or changes in land/water use. [CPs]

(Refer to 2.5.3 above) In addition to the assessment of the potential impact of specific projects on wetlands, has your country **undertaken** a review of all government plans, programmes and policies which may impact negatively on wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If Yes , has this review been undertaken as part of preparing a National Wetland Policy or similar instrument? (refer 2.12 above) No
Or as part of other national policy or planning activities? Yes – Several Executive Orders have directed all federal agencies to consider the impacts of their activities on wetlands, floodplains, and coral reefs. (See Section 2.1.2)
Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: [REDACTED]

Operational Objective 2.6: To identify wetlands in need of restoration and rehabilitation, and to implement the necessary measures.

Actions - Global and National Targets
2.6.1 Use regional or national scientific inventories of wetlands (Recommendation 4.6), or monitoring processes, to identify wetlands in need of restoration or rehabilitation. [CPs, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The completion of such inventories is a continuing area of priority for the Convention. Global Target - Restoration/rehabilitation inventories to be completed by at least 50 CPs by COP8.
Has your country completed an assessment to identify its priority wetlands for restoration or rehabilitation? (COP7 Resolution VII.17) For some places.
If No , what has prevented this from being done? Please elaborate.
If this has been done for only part of the country, please indicate for which areas or river basins. Although major efforts have been made by multiple government bodies (federal, state, and local levels) to prioritize wetlands and wetland complexes for restoration and/or rehabilitation, the efforts continue to be ongoing as more information is gathered and assessed. Legislation is a factor in determining vulnerability to certain types of wetlands in particular regions of the country, and therefore as legislation evolves in the US pertaining to wetlands, priorities shift regarding urgency for restoration or rehabilitation.
Some states which have made gains in prioritizing wetlands for restoration or rehabilitation include Florida, North Carolina, and Maryland. USEPA's Region 4, which covers the southeastern corner of the nation, has also made significant gains. The National Estuary Program has 28 sites across the country. (see Section 2.2.2) The Mississippi Delta and Florida Everglades have been prioritized on a national level, as well as areas of the Chesapeake Bay. Note that this is not a complete list of efforts.
If Yes (that is, an assessment has been completed), have actions been taken to undertake the restoration or rehabilitation of these priority sites? No Reply
If No , what has prevented this from being done? The prioritization process is managed

regionally. There are many reasons for engaging in restoration in the U.S. Numerous programs address restoration such as the Wetlands Reserve Program, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Conservation Reserve Program, National Estuary Program, etc. The varied incentives and the regulations have not been harmonized into a centralized prioritization/implementation process because of the sheer number of these efforts and the goal of making these decisions on a watershed basis.

If Yes, please provide details. [REDACTED]

Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: [REDACTED]

2.6.2 Provide and implement methodologies for restoration and rehabilitation of lost or degraded wetlands. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Partners]

- There is considerable information resource on this subject, although it is not as readily accessed as desirable.
- Global Target - The addition of appropriate case studies and information on methodologies, etc., to the Convention's Wise Use Resource Centre (refer to 2.3.2 above also) will be a priority in the next triennium.

Refer to 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. Does your country have resource information on the restoration or rehabilitation of wetlands? Yes

If Yes, has this been forwarded to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre and for consideration by the STRP Expert Working Group on Restoration? Yes

If this material has not been forwarded to the Bureau, what has prevented this from occurring? Please elaborate.

Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: multiple agencies

2.6.3 Establish wetland restoration / rehabilitation programmes at destroyed or degraded wetlands, especially in association with major river systems or areas of high nature conservation value (Recommendation 4.1). [CPs]

- The Convention will continue to promote the restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands, particularly in situations where such actions will help promote or retain the 'health' and productivity of waterways and coastal environments.
- Global Target - By COP8, all CPs to have identified their priority sites for restoration or rehabilitation and for projects to be under way in at least 100 CPs.

Refer to 2.6.1 above.

Operational Objective 2.7: To encourage active and informed participation of local communities, including indigenous people, and in particular women, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Actions - Global and National Targets

2.7.1 Implement Recommendation 6.3 on involving local and indigenous people in the management of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium, the implementation of the Guidelines on local communities' and indigenous people's participation (COP7 Resolution VII.8) is to be one of the Convention's highest priorities. By COP8, all CPs to be promoting local stakeholder management of wetlands.**

Is your government **actively** promoting the involvement of local communities and indigenous people in the management of wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, describe what special actions have been taken (See also 2.7.2, 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below) (COP7 Resolution VII.8). **Some examples include USEPA's Tribal Grants Program, as well as the Five Star restoration program involving local communities, and USEPA's volunteer monitoring program. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was enacted in 1989 to encourage voluntary, public-private partnerships to conserve North American wetland ecosystems. In addition, NOAA's Wetlands Restoration program also involves local partners. The National Estuary Program (NEP) is designed to encourage local communities to take responsibility for managing their own estuaries. Committees made up of representatives from federal, state and local government agencies responsible for managing the estuary's resources, as well as members of the community--citizens, business leaders, educators, and researchers, advise each NEP. These stakeholders work together to identify problems in the estuary, develop specific actions to address those problems, and create a formal management plan to restore and protect the estuary.**

All levels of government must work together to determine how to best protect wetland resources and what the appropriate roles and programs are for each type of government. EPA supports the strengthening of State, Tribal, and local roles in wetlands protection. The EPA and other agencies that work with local governments to protect wetlands use different tools to bolster local capacities to protect and manage wetlands appropriately.

One of the ways State and Tribal governments can strengthen their roles in wetlands protection is to "assume" permitting authority under the Clean Water Act, Section 404 program. This means that States or Tribes have the authority to issue Section 404 permits. This program regulates the discharge of dredged and fill material in wetlands and other waters. To date, Michigan and New Jersey have assumed such authority, and several States and Tribes are working toward this end. EPA will work with any entities interested in assuming such authority.

Other options available to States and Tribes to strengthen their roles in wetlands protection include:

- undertaking comprehensive State Wetland Conservation Plans;**
- obtaining State Program General Permits from the Corps for discharges of dredged and fill material in wetlands;**
- developing wetland water quality standards;**
- training state and tribal staff to more effectively use the Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification program to protect wetlands;**
- incorporating wetlands protection into other State and Tribal water programs.**

Regional and local participation in wetland protection can also be strengthened through comprehensive resource planning that targets specific geographic areas. Examples of such areas are river corridors for which governments and communities have identified many objectives for their use. Regional and local governments can also protect watersheds (a watershed is the area in which all water, sediments, and dissolved materials flow or drain from the land into a common body of water) and identify in advance suitable and unsuitable sites for discharges.

EPA helps by providing information and program guidance and by sponsoring national forums on State program development. Financial assistance is also available from EPA to pursue some of these activities through EPA's State, Tribal, and Local Wetlands Protection Grants Program.

Inter-Government/Inter-Tribal Organizations, Local Governments, Not for Profit Organizations, States, Territories, and Tribes are eligible to receive 104(b)3 Wetland Program Development Grants. The 104(b)3 Wetland Program Development Grants support a variety of wetland project types. These include Assessment/Monitoring, Data Management, Education/Outreach, Endangered Species, Enforcement/Compliance, Mitigation, Regulation, Research, Restoration, CWA Section 404 Assumption, State/Tribal Wetlands Conservation Plans, Training, Water Quality, Watershed Planning/Coordination, Wetland Policy and Planning.

EPA has developed additional technical assistance opportunities that foster the capacity to manage wetlands and watersheds in Indian country (Native American lands). USEPA has conducted a series of regional workshops to provide information on technical assistance and funding opportunities to manage wetlands and watersheds in Indian country. These workshops assisted tribes in developing capacity to operate programs to protect natural resources.

The workshops assisted Tribes that previously may not have possessed the capacity to apply or secure awards through the 104(b)3 Wetland Program Development Grant process. The outreach, education, technical assistance, and advice on funding opportunities delivered through the regional workshops such as those held in the Pacific

northwest and for Oneida has provided Tribes with greater capacity to compete for wetland program development assistance in the future.

In 2000 the EPA compiled a document presenting case studies that feature various components of Tribal wetland programs and describes the experiences of various Tribes and Native organizations in their efforts to protect wetlands. Given the geographical and political diversity of the Tribes and Native organizations featured in the case studies, this report covers a range of topics, depending on the types of wetlands, the range of impacts affecting Tribal wetlands, and the resources available to Tribes to implement programs and projects to protect their wetlands.

In 1984 EPA issued its Indian Policy and Action Plan, which described the Agency's government-to-government relationship and overall commitments to environmental protection in Indian country. According to the 1984 Indian Policy and Action Plan for Indian country, EPA recognizes Tribal governments as the primary parties for setting standards, making environmental policy decisions, and managing [environmental] programs . . . consistent with Agency standards and regulations.

In 1994 EPA Administrator Carol Browner reaffirmed the Indian Policy and Action Plan. She also announced Actions for Strengthening EPA's Tribal Operations, including a commitment that each EPA program would establish a strategy for achieving Tribal environmental work plans. EPA's Strategic Plan, released in 1997, describes programmatic and quantitative measures for improving water quality nationwide, including both states and Indian country. To support attaining the objectives of the Strategic Plan in Indian country, EPA's Office of Water published *Protecting Public Health and Water Resources in Indian Country: A Strategy for EPA/Tribal Partnership*.

Two common themes found in EPA's state and Tribal policies and programs are capacity building and partnerships. EPA believes that the protection of public health and environmental resources can be most effectively achieved when efforts are designed and carried out at the local level and are based on collaborative partnerships between local, regional, state, and national stakeholders. EPA's Wetlands Division has historically used this strategy of encouraging capacity building and fostering partnerships in its efforts to promote the protection and wise use of the nation's wetland resources.

Tribal-Specific Eligibility Criteria

For Tribes to assume many of EPA's major grant or regulatory programs, they usually must go through a process called "Treatment in a Manner Similar to a State," also known as TAS. TAS was first put into place in the 1986 and 1987 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and Clean Water Act (CWA). These amendments allowed EPA to develop a process by which Tribes could apply for grants and program authority. EPA established a TAS process for eligibility under various programs according to the criteria identified in the SDWA and CWA.

To be eligible for TAS, a Tribe must meet the following criteria:

- The Tribe must be federally recognized.
- The Tribe must have or be able to exercise substantial governmental powers.
- The Tribe must have or have been delegated jurisdiction over the area in question.
- The Tribe must have the financial, physical, and human resource capability to implement a program effectively.

In the initial years of the TAS process, many Tribes and EPA staff found the process to be overly burdensome. EPA has increasingly improved its own capacity to help Tribes meet the eligibility requirements, and in 1994, the Agency developed the "TAS Simplification Rule". Under this rule, EPA eliminated the need to meet all four criteria each time a Tribe applies for a program. In general, once a Tribe has been deemed eligible for one EPA program, it need only establish that it has jurisdiction and capability for each subsequent program. This requirement is necessary because each program might require different skills and activities to provide protection that meets the requirements of specific statutes and regulations. EPA Wetland Programs in Indian Country EPA began to provide financial support to Tribal wetland programs in 1990 with the establishment of the EPA Wetland Development Grant Program. EPA established the program to support state and Tribal efforts in the development and implementation of wetland protection programs. In 1997 the program was expanded to include assistance to local governments.

Goals of Tribal Wetland Programs:

The goals of Tribal efforts to protect wetland resources are based in part on an acknowledgment that Tribal cultures have existed and evolved in the context of the natural environment. Respect for and wise use of the environmental resources on which Tribal societies depend is at the foundation of all their wetland programs, which generally aim to protect economic, ecological, aesthetic, recreational, medicinal, and spiritual values. Historically, Indians have viewed human life as part of the natural environment, not in opposition to it. Today, non-Indians are coming to realize that the concept of intergenerational equity should be central in environmental preservation and restoration philosophy.

EPA also houses the American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) that coordinates the Agency-wide effort to strengthen public health and environmental protection in Indian Country, with a special emphasis on building Tribal capacity to administer their own environmental programs. AIEO oversees development and implementation of the Agency's Indian Policy and strives to ensure that all EPA Headquarters and Regional Offices implement their parts of the Agency's Indian Program in a manner consistent with Administration policy to work with Tribes on a government-to-government basis and USEPA's trust responsibility to protect Tribal health and environments. AIEO's responsibilities also include:

- providing multi-media program development grants to Tribes;

- negotiating Tribal/USEPA Environmental Agreements that identify Tribal priorities for building environmental programs and also for direct, EPA program implementation assistance;
- developing tools to assist Tribal environmental managers in their decisions on environmental priorities;
- developing training curricula for USEPA staff on how to work effectively with Tribes; and
- working to improve communication between the Agency and its Tribal stakeholders in a number of ways, including assistance to Agency Offices as they consult more closely with Tribes on actions that affect Tribes and their environments, and support for regular meetings of the Agency's Tribal Operations Committee.

AIEO created a handbook intended to provide a central location for federal sources of both technical and financial assistance available to Tribes for environmental management. Many Tribes have limited environmental staffs that are faced with the challenge of addressing a broad range of environmental issues. Unlike State environmental programs that have received annual federal funding for many years, Tribal environmental programs generally must compete annually for their funds. With 554 federally recognized Tribes, there simply is not enough money to go around. Therefore, Tribal environmental staffs spend a large part of their time applying for grants and searching for sources of federal assistance. This document is an effort to assist Tribal staff in their search and hopefully save them valuable time. The handbook can also assist federal, regional, State and Local government employees in becoming better informed about the sources of environmental assistance available in order to improve customer service to the Tribes.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

2.7.2 Encourage site managers and local communities to work in partnership at all levels to monitor the ecological character of wetlands, thus providing a better understanding of management needs and human impacts. [CPs]

- **The Convention's Outreach Programme (COP7 Resolution VII.9) seeks to give such community participation higher priority as an education and empowerment tool of the Convention.**

Does your government **actively encourage or support** site managers and local communities in monitoring the condition (ecological character) of Ramsar sites and other wetlands? (Also refer to Operational Objective 5.1.) Yes

If **No**, what prevents this from occurring? Please elaborate.

If **Yes**, does this include both site managers and local communities, where they are not the same people? Yes **USEPA's Wetland Division has as one of its priorities, monitoring and assessing the ecological character or biological integrity of the nation's wetlands.**

To date, it has done so by, 1) directly providing support and technical assistance to States and Tribes in order to develop the proper technical tools that will better enable them to do this through the funding pilot projects, transfer of technical information, and publication of technical materials, and 2) by establishing a working group with its 10 regional wetland coordinators to develop programmatic and administrative direction to enable them to, in turn, work with their states and tribes.

The task of assessing and monitoring our nation's waters, including wetlands, has been delegated to the state level by the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). The federal government and particularly the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) provides guidance and assistance to States and Tribes to carry out the mandates of the CWA. Management of wetlands in the form of regulatory protection is accomplished primarily on the federal level by the US Army Corp of Engineers, with oversight by the USEPA, and is supplemented by several strong state wetland management programs. Relatively few states delegate wetland management to their county or municipal governments.

Local community involvement in the monitoring of their wetlands would most likely be accomplished through non-profit land management organizations or in concert with state agencies using volunteers, perhaps provided by local watershed or land trust groups, to supplement their data. Most municipal or even county governments do not have the funds or expertise to provide this information.

In November 1999, USEPA's National Wetlands Program made the establishment of comprehensive state and tribal wetland monitoring programs a national priority. A workgroup representing the Wetlands Division in the Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds and all ten USEPA regions was established the next spring to develop a national wetland monitoring strategy. Coordinating activities will increase monitoring efficiency and help ensure that chemical, physical and biological data are scientifically sound and geographically comparable. The use of sound data is essential to a comprehensive assessment of ecological health and achievement of the goals of our program and the Clean Water Act.

Funds are available to state, local, and tribal organizations to establish wetland monitoring programs. In conjunction with the Assessment and Watershed Protection Division, the Wetlands Division at USEPA is determining the scope of assistance it will provide for volunteer wetlands monitoring programs. This effort will aid States, Tribes, and non-governmental organizations in providing the skilled personnel to carry out necessary wetlands monitoring tasks.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Water encourages all citizens to learn about their water resources and supports volunteer monitoring because of its many benefits. Volunteer monitors build awareness of pollution problems, become trained in pollution prevention, help clean up problem sites, provide data for waters that may otherwise not be assessed, and increase the amount of water quality information available to decision makers at all levels of government. Among the uses of volunteer data are delineating and characterizing watersheds, screening for water quality problems, and measuring baseline conditions and trends.

USEPA sponsors biennial national conferences that bring together volunteer organizers,

state and local agencies, environmental groups, school groups, and business; manages an electronic bulletin board forum for volunteers; supports a national newsletter for volunteer monitors; prepares and regularly updates a directory of volunteer monitoring programs; and publishes manuals on volunteer monitoring methods and on planning and implementing volunteer programs.

Many of USEPA's ten regional offices are actively involved in volunteer monitoring. Their support activities include providing technical assistance related to data quality control; serving as contacts for volunteer programs in the region; managing grants to state agencies that include provision for volunteer water monitoring and public participation; and providing information exchange services for volunteers. Some offices hold regional workshops to bring volunteers together and build partnerships.

Future USEPA activities in support of volunteer monitoring will include publishing national conference proceedings; developing methods manuals for volunteer stream monitoring; developing guidance on the preparation of quality assurance plans; and continuing to encourage cooperation and information exchange within the volunteer monitoring community and among volunteers and state, local, and federal agencies.

USEPA is soon releasing its newest publication, "Volunteer Wetland Monitoring: An Introduction and Resource Guide". The publication is intended to provide an introduction to why and how people monitor wetlands, and also to briefly describe handbooks and manuals that offer detailed information on wetland monitoring for the layperson. The publication also offers advice on approaching wetland monitoring.

AND, where such monitoring occurs, are the findings being used to guide management practices? **No**

If No, what prevents this from happening? **On an institutional, national level, wetland monitoring and assessment in the US is in its infancy. For instance, the 2000 National Water Quality Inventory, only 8% of our nation's wetlands, was assessed to determine their quality. "Assessment" in this context does not necessarily mean "monitored," where measurements are taken in the field. Only 0.2% of our wetlands were reported to be actually monitored in the field. In some limited instances the information gained from this type of rigorous, methodical monitoring is being used to guide management practices.**

In the U.S., States that are developing this type of capacity include Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Washington. Unfortunately, at this point in time, it seems that most of the wetland monitoring that occurs here is done on an ad hoc basis when a particular wetland is the subject of a regulatory permit action.

Proposed national actions and targets: **[REDACTED]**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, States.**

2.7.3 Involve local communities in the management of wetlands by establishing wetland management committees, especially at Ramsar sites, on which local stakeholders, landowners, managers, developers and community interest groups, in particular

women's groups, are represented. [CPs, Partners]

- **Global Target - Ramsar site management committees operating in at least 100 CPs, and including non-government stakeholder representation.**

Are there wetland site management committees **in place** in your country? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to such being established? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, for how many sites are such committees in place? **It is difficult to calculate an accurate number of wetland site management committees for the entire U.S., as committees range in size, scope, and legal authority across a broad spectrum, and may have both varying and multiple organizational sources (such as an educational institute, a government agency, an NGO, or simply motivated local community members). This variability means there is no complete database housing a precise number of wetland sites naming their management committees.**

AND: How many of these are Ramsar sites? **Of the 17 Ramsar sites in the U.S., only a few rely on the Ramsar Guidelines for Wise Use Principles to manage their wetlands. This is due to the fact that each site is already protected land through other means—such as Fish and Wildlife Reserves—and therefore have their own site management guidelines.**

However, one example of ongoing successful application of Ramsar Guidelines at a U.S. Ramsar wetland site is Caddo Lake, Texas. This Ramsar site is home to the Caddo Lake Institute initiative, which aims to create a new organizational form to implement Ramsar guidance to maximize local participation in wetland management. The Institute model seeks to synthesize Ramsar organizational features into a new, site-level framework tentatively called a “Wetland Communities Clearinghouse” for adapting and applying Ramsar principles.

If successful, a Caddo Lake Clearinghouse delegation may attend COP8 in order to learn, to explain lessons learned, and to invite others to adapt its goals of “acting globally, by acting locally.” The Institute was one of the four NGO co-authors of the Ramsar Guidelines on participation by local communities and indigenous peoples.

Immediately after its adoption in 1999, the Institute began its site-level efforts to implement this Ramsar guidance on local participation. This was accomplished by providing technical support on issues that these communities found important and identifying their Ramsar nexus to demonstrate the relevance and utility of knowing about Ramsar and its guidance. The following examples of this evolutionary approach are summarized below.

1. 1999-2000. Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Under the rubric of appropriate economic development, local communities worked with the Institute in 1999-2000 to support the conversion of 7,200 acres of a local Army facility into a National Wildlife Refuge. The Ramsar nexus was that the refuge was noted as an unfinished conservation need in the 1998 Ramsar Information Sheet for the “Caddo Lake Wetland Site First Enlargement.”

2. The establishment of the Caddo Lake Ramsar Wetland Science and Education Center was a part of the US/Institute “Brisbane Pledge” to the Ramsar nations at COP6

(1996). Local communities supported this initiative, including the Institute’s lease of obsolete Army Facilities for reuse for this purpose. Local support of this center has been recognized in the US Senate, and the 2002 Interior Appropriation Bill (discussed in the section relating to US Government support to implement Ramsar Guidance on local participation.)

3. In 2000, concerns about explosive growth of water hyacinth resulted in calls for the Institute to help find locally acceptable solutions. This resulted in organization of the “Lake Management Working Group” of local residents, and subsequently, their study and presentation to others of management alternatives. This also led to support for state funding to resume safe herbicide suppression, which had previously been too controversial to support a local consensus.

4. In 2001, the threat by a nearby municipality to divert and sell significant amounts of Caddo Lake’s freshwater inflows resulted in widespread local agreement for the need for a permanent community-based framework to move from reactive to proactive management based on sound science.

The above examples trace the beginnings of the Caddo Lake Ramsar site’s innovation of a new Ramsar-like organizational model to implement Ramsar Guidance.

Like the Ramsar program itself, the Caddo Lake Framework is designed to evolve in response to locally perceived needs, rather than control from elsewhere. It has evolved from a series of single-issue initiatives to a permanent “wetland communities clearinghouse framework.” This framework includes key elements of the Ramsar organizational framework. It hosts monthly coordinating “Conferences of the Parties” (COPs) attended by 70 residents and three institutional members. The institutional members include the Institute, the City of Uncertain, Texas, and the Greater Caddo Lake Association, with over 1000 lake resident members.

Like the Ramsar international organization, these Parties make policy by consensus or by vote at COPs; they appoint a Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) to review technical issues, as well as representatives to the Standing Committee to act between COPs. Currently the Institute performs the role of the Ramsar Bureau, at the will of the COPs.

(Also see Section 3.2.3 regarding educational centers)

AND: Of these committees, how many include representatives of local stakeholders? **Caddo Lake, and unknown quantity of others.**

AND: Of these, how many have women’s groups represented? **Caddo Lake, and unknown quantity of others.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **[redacted]**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **[redacted]**

2.7.4 Recognize and apply traditional knowledge and management practice of indigenous people and local communities in the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to 2.7.1 above. • Global Target - This will be addressed in the next triennium, possibly in partnership with the Convention on Biological Diversity and Convention to Combat Desertification, which have already initiated work in this area.
<p>Has your government made any special efforts to recognize and see applied traditional knowledge and management practices? Yes</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this from occurring? [REDACTED]</p>
<p>If Yes, please provide details of how this traditional knowledge was recognized and then put into practice. USEPA led a major effort to produce “Tribal Wetland Program Highlights”. Eleven case studies are presented which highlight the experiences of tribal organizations and feature varying components of Tribal programs, including tools and strategies currently employed to protect and restore wetlands and watersheds. These case studies are presented so that Tribes, as well as state and local governments, can learn from the experience of others.</p> <p>USEPA facilitated a technical assistance opportunity for a Tribe through a cooperative agreement with the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA). An SfAA Environmental anthropologist provided technical assistance to the Tribe, focusing specifically on social and cultural dimensions of wetland restoration. The project was founded on the premise that effective environmental protection is grounded at the local level and additionally, that Native American communities face special issues in accommodating traditional values with conventional, state and federally mandated natural resource management paradigms. This project will contribute broadly to the identification of barriers to meaningful community participation in the planning and problem solving processes tied to wetland protection and restoration on Native American lands.</p> <p>(Also see section 2.7.1)</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: USEPA</p>

Operational Objective 2.8: To encourage involvement of the private sector in the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

<p>Actions - Global and National Targets</p>
<p>2.8.1. Encourage the private sector to give increased recognition to wetland attributes, functions and values when carrying out projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - In the next triennium, the efforts to work in partnership with the private sector will be further increased and the Bureau will seek to document and make available case studies on some of the more effective and innovative approaches. By COP8, the target is to have private sector support for wetlands conservation in more than 100 CPs.

Have **special efforts been made** to increase the recognition of wetland attributes, functions and values among the private sector in your country? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, describe these special efforts. **Federal, state, and local agencies, private landowners (both industrial and nonindustrial), conservation groups, and not-for-profit organizations can partner with local communities and schools to share the costs of financial and technical assistance to protect and conserve wetlands. The programs listed below are examples of special efforts put forth by various groups and agencies to improve the quantity and quality of wetlands in local communities and benefit wetlands on a biologically-based, landscape-level scale.**

Joint Ventures are non-regulatory, voluntary public/private partnerships “composed of individuals; corporations; conservation organizations; and local, State, and provincial agencies drawn together by common conservation objectives.” Joint Venture partnerships also have the potential to expand internationally, particularly in North America. These regional partnerships are part of the larger North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), which includes the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), Partners in Flight, the Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, and others. Joint Ventures implement the goals of NAWMP by developing and funding hands-on conservation projects, and also benefit other wetland wildlife species. Joint Venture projects provide habitat for wetland and adjacent upland wildlife such as waterfowl, amphibians, invertebrates, small mammals, and songbirds. In addition to natural resource benefits such as improved water quality, filtered pollutants, and reduced soil erosion, Joint Venture partnerships and projects create unique advantages for private landowners to partner with public agencies.

Other private landowners, such as farmers, ranchers, non-industrial forest landowners, and other large landholders, also make significant wetland conservation contributions throughout the U.S. by participating in USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs such as:

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program to restore wetlands. Participating landowners can establish conservation easements of either permanent or 30-year durations or can enter into restoration cost-share agreements where no easement is involved. In exchange for establishing a permanent easement, the landowner receives payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100 percent of the restoration costs for restoring the wetland. The 30-year easement payment is 75 percent of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site and 75 percent of the restoration cost. The voluntary agreements are for a minimum 10-year duration and provide for 75 percent of the cost of restoring the involved wetlands. Easements set limits on how the lands may be used in the future. Restoration cost-share agreements establish wetland protection and restoration as the primary land use for the duration of the agreement. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land. Around U.S.\$1billion have been obligated for the program.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): The Environmental Quality

Incentives Program works primarily in locally identified conservation priority areas where there are significant problems with natural resources, including wetlands and water quality and quantity. High priority is given to areas where State or local governments offer financial, technical, or educational assistance, and to areas where agricultural improvements will help meet water quality objectives. Activities must be carried out according to a conservation plan.

EQIP offers contracts that provide incentive payments and cost sharing for conservation practices, such as manure management systems, pest management, erosion control, and other practices to improve and maintain the health of natural resources.

Small Watershed Program: The Small Watershed Program works through local government sponsors and helps participants solve natural resource and related economic problems on a watershed basis. Projects include watershed protection, flood prevention, erosion and sediment control, water supply, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, wetlands creation and restoration, and public recreation in watersheds of 250,000 or fewer acres. Both technical and financial assistance are available.

Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP): The Stewardship Incentive Program provides technical and financial assistance to encourage non-industrial private forest landowners to keep their lands and natural resources productive and healthy. Qualifying land includes rural lands with existing tree cover or land suitable for growing trees and owned by a private individual, group, association, corporation, Indian tribe, or other legal private entity. Eligible landowners must have an approved Forest Stewardship Plan and own 1,000 or fewer acres of qualifying land. Authorizations may be obtained for exceptions of up to 5,000 acres.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP): The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provides financial incentives to develop habitat for fish and wildlife on private lands. Participants agree to implement a fish and wildlife habitat development plan and USDA agrees to provide cost-share assistance for the initial implementation of fish and wildlife habitat development practices. USDA and program participants enter into a cost-share agreement for fish and wildlife habitat development. This agreement generally lasts a minimum of 5 years from the date that the contract is signed.

Another substantial effort has come through the golf and the environment program headed by the EPA. Starting in 1995, the EPA Wetlands Division joined an existing initiative to find common ground between the golf industry and the environmental community, and to advance golf course environmental responsibility. This initiative has consisted of a series of meetings including representatives of organizations such as American Farmland Trust, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, National Wildlife Federation, United States Golf Association, and Golf Digest. The first round of meetings yielded a carefully crafted set of Environmental Principles for Golf Courses in the United States that was endorsed by over 20 organizations, including the EPA. These Principles have been published in booklet form and are available to the public. A videotape describing the Golf and Environment project is also available.

The second round of meetings of the Golf and Environment Steering Committee

now underway involves efforts to implement the Principles. Specifically, the group is working on an "Industry- wide Measurement System" so that the golf industry can track and report its environmental progress over time, and a "Collaboration Guide" which will suggest how golf course managers and communities can work together to ensure the ecological sustainability of golf courses.

The Five Star Restoration Grant Program was organized in 1998 by a partnership through the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC), National Association of Counties (NACo), and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Clean Water Action Plan designated this program to provide ongoing financial assistance on a competitive basis to support community-based projects and foster local natural resources stewardship. The plan calls for innovative, collaborative approaches to restore and sustain the health of our nation's waters. Through this program and its emphasis on partner diversity, including landowners of the private sector, grants serve as catalysts for the improvement and enhancement of riparian and riparian corridors. Since its inception, the Five Star Program has awarded nearly \$1,500,000 to nearly 200 restoration projects across the United States.

One of the key actions in the 1998 Clean Water Action Plan calls for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to work with its River Corridors and Wetlands Restoration Partners on community-based wetlands restoration projects in 500 watersheds. The National Association of Counties, the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Wildlife Habitat Council have joined together with EPA to organize the Five Star program as an effort in the Plan. US EPA's Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds of the Office of Water, and the National Marine Fisheries Service's Community-based Restoration Program for selected projects in coastal areas provide major funding for the program.

EPA's grants are modest, averaging about \$10,000 per project. However, when combined with the contributions of partners, projects that make a measurable difference in communities become possible. At the completion of Five Star projects, each partnership will have experience and a demonstrated record of accomplishment, and will be well positioned to take on other projects. Aggregating over time and space, these grassroots efforts will make a significant difference in our landscape and the welfare of our communities.

In FY00, approximately 50 or more projects were initiated. Those projects were selected from over 500 applications, involving over 2,500 grass roots organizations in all 50 States and from several Tribes. Additional funding sources are being sought to respond to this overwhelming level of interest. For a contribution between \$5,000 and \$20,000, other organizations can sponsor a Five Star project. This is a particularly good opportunity for groups that seek to leverage their investments. On average, for each dollar of sponsor funds, five additional dollars in matching contributions are provided by restoration partners in funding, labor, materials, equipment or in-kind services.

(Also see Section 2.6.3 for special attention to restoration efforts.)

There is still progress to be made in environmental awareness and educational outreach resources for wetland programs. Financial restrictions or general lack of financial

incentives often prevent private landowners from participating in wetland projects and can contribute to reluctance to voluntarily participate in special efforts to protect, create, enhance, or restore wetlands for various reasons. Landowners in the private sector are typically concerned about economic loss associated with wetlands or associated protection of wetlands. Other landowners or managers do not want to lose development rights. Some landowners are concerned about “extra” or “harsh” regulations placed on wetlands/protected wetlands. Obtaining administrative or managerial support is also an obstacle for some land managers. Although cost-share and technical assistance may be available, without education and outreach, many private landowners are not even aware of many opportunities applicable to their wetlands and associated uplands.

AND: Have these efforts been successful? **Yes**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, how do you judge this success? Financial support for management or monitoring? Active involvement in management or monitoring? (Refer to 2.8.3 below) Application of Ramsar’s Wise Use principles by private sector interests? (Refer to 2.8.2 below)? Other criteria? **Success for private-public partnerships is often measured in both quantitative and qualitative levels. Quantitative measures can include the number of acres involved, funding obtained, decreased costs, increased revenues from recreational activities, and results from scientific research (such as reduced erosion rates or levels of contaminants or increased numbers of native plants, animals, overall biodiversity). Qualitative measures can include those of socio-economic nature such as improved community relations, improved employees/community morale, diverse partnerships, improved environmental education resources, and increased environmental awareness.**

The USDA Farm Bill Programs, through partnerships between NRCS and private landowners, have also made significant contributions to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of wetland habitats. Some of these accomplishments are listed below and include:

- **Since the authorization of WRP in the 1990 Farm Bill, landowner interest in WRP has resulted in the enrollment of over 912,000 acres in permanent easements (76%), 30-year easements (18%), or 10-year cost-share agreements (6%).**
- **An additional 500,000 acres of unfounded projects have been offered for enrollment into the program.**
- **Current WRP enrollments consist of former bottomland hardwood wetlands and riparian floodplain habitats (55%), emergent wetland and open water complexes (15%), and non-wetland buffer areas (30%).**
- **Potential benefits of WRP for wetland-associated wildlife are substantial, particularly in regions such as the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley and Central Valley of California where significant enrollments have occurred.**
- **WHIP provided cost-share for restoration of critical aquatic habitat such as coldwater streams and rare terrestrial habitats in riparian, oak savanna, longleaf pine, and prairie ecosystems.**

- The distribution of funding in 1998 and 1999 resulted in 4,600 projects affecting 672,000 acres in 1998 and 3,855 projects on 721, 249 acres in 1999. WHIP projects averaged 146 (1998) or 187 (1999) acres in size and \$4,600 in cost-share.

- WHIP was extremely popular with private landowners and conservation partners because it targeted wildlife and addressed important management needs identified at the local level that were not eligible for cost-share under other USDA programs.

Under EQIP, over 5,200 wetland wildlife management and wetland restoration practices are currently planned. These practices have the potential to improve wetland wildlife habitat quality and quantity. While many of these EQIP wetland practices have yet to be installed, the potential for local wildlife habitat improvement through these practices is significant.

Listed below are a few examples of how partnerships between members of the private sector, specifically corporations, and various government and other agencies successfully improved wetlands to improve habitat for wildlife and other values. A few examples below reflect NAWMP regional Joint Venture efforts to involve private landowners in the Gulf Coast Region and include:

Texas Prairie Wetlands Project, Texas, USA:

- Partners include Houston Lighting & Power (HL&P) and Formosa Plastics
- Multi-agency project; provides a technical and financial incentive to private landowners for wetland habitat development or improvement.
- Title held by HL&P, which donated 100 acres for wetland development and also manages the project.

DuPont, Victoria, Texas, USA:

- DuPont developed a 40-50 acre multi-purpose wetland on its property to address tertiary and auxiliary wastewater treatment needs, provide “green space” on-site for its employees, and serve as a “field lab” for an on-site education facility.
- A 150-acre wetland was developed exclusively for wildlife under the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project.

Vulcan Materials Company, Trinity, Alabama, USA:

- Working with Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge to improve habitat for birds and other wildlife in the Central Hardwoods Bird Conservation Region of the United States.

Wolfweed Reservoir Project, San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge, Texas, USA:

- Funding partners include Phillips Petroleum Company through its Sweeny Refinery and Petrochemical Complex near the refuge.
- Designed to establish a reliable water source for management of moist soil impoundment wetlands and coastal marsh enhancement.
- Title held by FWS, which also manages the project area.

Listed below are brief descriptions of Five Star Program projects, including private landowners:

Koch Petroleum Group, L.P., Corpus Christi, Texas, USA, a 2000 Five Star grantee, has completed their Koch Wetland Restoration Project in Corpus Christi, Texas. With the assistance of community partners such as the Texas State Aquarium, Robstown High School, and Texas Parks, Koch has successfully restored an 8.5-acre wetland to a functioning, healthy wetland habitat. The educational value of the site has increased with the new trails, footbridge, signs, and butterfly gardens. Koch has permanently protected the 120.5-acre habitat by placing it under a conservation easement with the Coastal Bend Land Trust and naming the site “Koch Wildlife Learning Preserve.”

Rinker Materials Corporation, Florida, USA, partnered with Bethune Academy, Valencia Community College, Southeastern Environmental Solutions, and Audubon Society of Florida to conduct wetland reclamation activities. The ongoing project benefits the surrounding habitat at Engstrom Lake in the Green Swamp, an area of Critical State Concern, in Clermont, Florida. Through its year-long efforts, the partners have succeeded in restoring significant wildlife habitat, which had faced deterioration by the operation of a sand mine. The project team decided to perpetuate the Engstrom Lake project by opening the area to local students as an outdoor classroom.

Phillips Petroleum Sweeny Refinery and Petrochemical Complex, Sweeny, Texas, USA, has successfully completed its Little Linnville Wildlife Area Wetland Enhancement Project. The 2000 Five Star project involved a 14-acre wetland expansion. The total area at Phillips Petroleum Sweeny Refinery now amounts to 100-acres of prairie, wetlands, and woodlands, and will also be used as an outdoor classroom..

Proposed national actions and targets: A key action in the 1998 Clean Water Action Plan calls for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to work with its River Corridors and Wetlands Restoration Partners on community-based wetlands restoration projects in 500 watersheds.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: In the U.S., there are several government agencies that have regulatory requirements and/or voluntary programs regarding wetlands. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Army, along with various federal and state agencies and local governments, help regulate wetland use. Many nongovernmental, conservation, and not-for-profit groups and organizations, including the Wildlife Habitat Council, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy, also make significant contributions to protecting, conserving, and restoring wetlands throughout the U.S. by educating the public and increasing awareness of environmental issues/concerns, facilitating productive relationship between public-private sectors, and publicly recognizing the efforts of all participants.

2.8.2 Encourage the private sector to apply the Wise Use Guidelines when executing development projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - In the next triennium the application of this tool for promoting**

Wise Use will be a priority under the Convention. By COP8, the target is to have more than 50 CPs which have completed reviews of their incentive measures.

Refer to 2.8.1 above. Has your government **completed** a review of its “existing, or evolving, policy, legal and institutional frameworks to identify and promote those measures which encourage conservation and wise use of wetlands and to identify and remove measures which discourage conservation and wise use” (COP7 Resolution VII.15)? **Yes**

If **No**, what has been the impediment to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, what actions have been taken to introduce “incentive measures designed to encourage the wise use of wetlands, and to identify and remove perverse incentives where they exist” (COP7 Resolution VII.15). **Many separate reviews continue in ongoing efforts of multiple agencies working with wetlands. The Clean Water Action Plan remains a guiding framework through which efforts are made to encourage wise use of wetlands, and to discourage damaging practices. One of the most successful programs which has provided incentives for wetlands restoration has been the Wetlands Reserve Program. (also see Section 2.8.1)**

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is the Nation’s premier wetlands restoration program. It is a voluntary program that offers landowners the means and the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the program as well as provides technical and financial support to help landowners who participate in WRP.

Wetlands Reserve Program:

- **Is a voluntary program offered nationwide.**
- **Offers payment, based on the agricultural value, for wetlands that have previously been drained and converted to agricultural uses.**
- **Pays up to 100 percent reimbursement for restoration costs.**
- **Lets landowners retain control of access—no public access is required.**
- **Lets landowners maintain ownership of land—they have the right to hunt, fish, trap, and pursue other appropriate recreational uses.**
- **Allows for land, including any easement, to be sold.**
- **Provides additional benefits for the entire community, such as improved water quality; enhanced habitat for wildlife; reduced soil erosion; reduced flooding; and improved water supply.**

AND: Have these actions been effective? **Yes/No**

If **No**, why not? **Although summary reports and research calculate successes in numbers such as “acres restored,” or “acres involved,” or “funding obtained,” or “dollars spent or allocated,” for a particular program, the quality of the resulting wetlands are difficult to measure and may be in question. For example, created, restored, or enhanced wetlands may or may not match the hydrologic, or biological values and functions of a natural, protected wetland.**

If Yes , please describe how.
AND if Yes , COP7 Resolution VII.15 requested Parties to share these “experiences and lessons learned with respect to incentive measures and perverse incentives relating to wetlands, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources generally, by providing these to the Ramsar Bureau for appropriate distribution and to be made available through the Wise Use Resource Centre of the Convention’s Web site”. Has this been done? No
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

2.8.3 Encourage the private sector to work in partnership with site managers to monitor the ecological character of wetlands. [CPs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action will be promoted further in the next triennium.
Refer to 2.7.2 above. In addition, have any special efforts been made to encourage the private sector involvement in monitoring? No
If No , what has prevented this from happening? Standardized monitoring for the biological integrity, and other qualitative criteria of wetlands nationwide is still in its infancy. Regional and site-specific monitoring are ongoing in many places, but not yet through the private sector.
If Yes , describe these special efforts.
AND: How successful has this been? Please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

2.8.4 Involve the private sector in the management of wetlands through participation in wetland management committees. [CPs]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - As indicated under 2.7.2 and 2.7.3 above, the establishment of cross-sectoral and stakeholder management committees for wetlands, and especially Ramsar sites, will be a priority in the next triennium.
Refer to 2.7.3 above

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**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 3
TO RAISE AWARENESS OF WETLAND VALUES AND FUNCTIONS
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND AT ALL LEVELS**

Operational Objective 3.1: To support and assist in implementing, in cooperation with partners and other institutions, an international programme of Education and Public Awareness (EPA) on wetlands, their functions and values, designed to promote national EPA programmes.

Actions - Global Targets

3.1.1 Assist in identifying and establishing coordinating mechanisms and structures for the development and implementation of a concerted global programme of EPA on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to Operational Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 below

3.1.2 Participate in the identification of regional EPA needs and in the establishment of priorities for resource development. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Has your country **taken any action** to help with the identification of regional EPA needs and in the establishment of priorities for information/education resource development? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from happening? **[REDACTED]**

If **Yes**, please provide details, and as appropriate, provide samples to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre's clearing house for Wetland Communications, Public Awareness, and Education (CEPA) (COP7 Resolution VII.9). **A coordinated effort has not taken place among all of the governmental agencies and private organizations based in the US who work in the Western Hemisphere. However, the US has continuously supported the "Wetlands for the Future" program through contributions and proposal reviews, and the US delegation did ask the CPs represented at the Regional Meeting in Honduras in September, 2001 about their priorities for EPA regional needs. (See 4.2.6 in Part II)**

Proposed national actions and targets: **[REDACTED]**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S.FWS, State Department, USEPA**

3.1.3 Assist in the development of international resource materials in support of national EPA programmes [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 3.1.2 above also. Has your country **taken any action** to assist with the development of international wetland CEPA resource materials? **Yes**

If **Yes**, please provide details, and as appropriate, provide samples to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre's clearing house for Wetland CEPA (COP7 Resolution VII.9). **As the United States provides funding for the Wetlands for the Future program which fosters training and south-south exchanges in Latin America and the Caribbean, resource materials appropriate to such trainings have been developed through said efforts to support the training workshops. (see Section 4.2.6)**

The Division of International Conservation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supported the production of the "Guia de Periodismo Sobre Humedales de Centroamerica", authored by the Rainforest Alliance. This book has been distributed widely in Central America and provides useful information to the media about the importance of wetlands and how to promote their conservation through the production of outreach materials.

One example of domestic information which is available, and may be of use to other contracting parties, is the USEPA website, which has information on US laws and regulations, functions and values, events and programs, outreach and education, as well as links to other sites, all of which are accessible to anyone who is connected to the Internet. USEPA's wetlands page includes a Spanish version, providing a service both to the Spanish speaking population in the US as well as to those in countries where Spanish is spoken.

If No, what has prevented this from happening? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

3.1.4 Support international programmes that encourage transfer of information, knowledge and skills between wetland education centres and educators (e.g., Wetland International's EPA Working Group, Global Rivers Environment Education Network (GREEN), Wetland Link International). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 3.2.4 also. Does your country support any international programmes that encourage transfer of information, knowledge and skills among wetland education centres and educators?
Yes

If No, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If Yes, please provide details. **The United States provides funding for the Wetlands for the Future program which fosters training and south-south exchanges in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the Division of International Conservation of the Fish and Wildlife Service has partnered with the Centro Neotropical de Humedales to promote training of wetland managers in South America. The program leader, Elier Tabilo, is a wetland expert from Chile. Ducks Unlimited also has a training program for wetland managers in Latin America and their neotropical program director, Montserrat Carbonell, holds workshops for waterfowl biologists throughout the region.**

Is your country specifically supporting the Wetlands Link International initiative (COP7 Resolution VII.9)? **No Reply**

If No, what is preventing this from happening? **Please elaborate.**

If Yes, please provide details.

AND indicate which Wetland Centres (refer 3.2.3 below), museums, zoos, botanic gardens, aquaria and educational environment education centres (refer 3.2.4) are now participating as

part of Wetlands Link International. [REDACTED]

Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: [REDACTED]

Operational Objective 3.2: To develop and encourage national programmes of EPA on wetlands, targeted at a wide range of people, including key decision-makers, people living in and around wetlands, other wetland users and the public at large.

Actions - Global and National Targets

3.2.1 Encourage partnerships between governments, non-governmental organizations and other organizations capable of developing national EPA programmes on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8 to see the global network of proposed CP and non-government focal points for Wetland Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) in place and functioning effectively in the promotion and execution of the national Outreach Programmes in all CPs. To secure the resources to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme.**

Did your Government **inform** the Ramsar Bureau by 31 December 1999 of the identity of its Government and Non-Government Focal Points for wetland CEPA (COP7 Resolution VII.9)?

Yes

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

Has your country **established** an "appropriately constituted Task Forces, where no mechanism exists for this purpose (e.g., National Ramsar Committees), to undertake a review of national needs, capacities and opportunities in the field of wetland CEPA and, based on this, to formulate its National Wetland CEPA Action Plans for priority activities which consider the international, regional, national and local needs" (COP7 Resolution VII.9). **No Reply**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, please provide details of the organizations, ministries, etc., represented on this Task Force. **The U.S. has an active National Ramsar Committee which is committed to fostering education and public awareness of the importance of wetland conservation.**

AND: Has a National Wetland CEPA Action Plan been finalized by 31 December 2000?

No

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **In the U.S., thousands of individuals at all levels are involved in wetland conservation and management activities, from private citizens working to protect local sites, to multiple agencies in State and Federal Government working at regional and national scales. Creating a comprehensive plan that addresses the CEPA needs of everyone would present great bureaucratic challenges, and would probably not gain much support at this time. Furthermore, the need for such a plan in the U.S. is not clear, due to the fact that countless CEPA**

activities are already taking place throughout the country.

If **Yes**, is the Action Plan being implemented effectively? **No Reply**

If **No**, what is preventing this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, what are the priority target groups of the Action Plan and the major activities being undertaken?

AND: Has a copy of this plan been provided to the Ramsar Bureau? **Yes/No**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

3.2.2 On the basis of identified needs and target groups, support national programmes and campaigns to generate a positive vision of wetlands and create awareness at all levels of their values and functions. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - see 3.2.1 above.**

3.2.3 Encourage the development of educational centres at wetland sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - The Convention will aim to have more than 150 active education centres (and similar venues - see 3.2.4 below) promoting the principles of the Convention by COP8 and to ensure that all CPs have at least one such centre.**

Has your country **encouraged** the establishment of educational centres at wetland sites? **Yes**

If **No**, what has been the impediment to such action being taken? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, how successful has this been? **Where applied, the experience has been quite successful. The establishment of the Caddo Lake Ramsar Wetland Science and Education Center was a part of the U.S. / Caddo Lake Institute “Brisbane Pledge” to the Ramsar nations at COP6 (1996). Local communities supported this initiative, including the Institute’s lease of obsolete Army Facilities for reuse for this purpose. Local support of this center has been recognized in the US Senate, and the 2002 Interior Appropriation Bill.**

Caddo Lake’s “Wetland Communities Clearinghouse” (see Section 2.7.3) defines the mission of the Caddo Lake Ramsar Wetland Science Center Program, as: (1) to support local Caddo Lake Ramsar Site communities in implementing participation and other Ramsar guidance at Caddo Lake and (2) to provide outreach and assistance to other Ramsar Communities who may wish to adapt the model to implement the guidance.

To establish “civilian control’ of the science, the program’s research grants are to be “coordinated” through a Research Coordination Network (RCN) by the Clearinghouse to assure that research is prioritized and designed to serve and inform community-based management. Likewise, the facility is to house and provide a shared learning venue for community participants as well as the Research Coordination Network (RCN)

participants.

Similarly, the Center's visitor education function—for casual tourists or visitors and other wetland communities—is to show the value of local adaptation of world class Ramsar guidance, especially local management participation. Finally, the Center Program's Outreach mission contemplates mixed teams, composed of knowledgeable community members and their science advisors, who would provide requested orientation and support to other US, and international, Ramsar wetland communities.

Another notable effort to encourage wetland learning centers is the Coastal America Partnership. In 1996 the Coastal America Partnership established a network of Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers. The network combines the resources of federal agencies with marine educational centers. Most Learning Centers are aquariums, but marine science centers and a fishing museum are also part of this network. The goal of each Learning Center is to educate and involve the public in protecting our nation's coastal ecosystems, including wetlands.

The network of Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCS) has been quite successful. The number of Learning Centers across the country has grown from two in 1996 to fourteen in 2001. Millions of people visit the Learning Centers each year. Partnerships with the federal agencies have enhanced each center's unique access to expert speakers, exhibit information, educational publications, teaching materials, field trip sites, and scientific data from around the country.

AND: How many such centres are in place? and at what sites? **From well-resourced research centers that are part of institutions of higher learning to under-resourced sites with minimal educational information, many wetland sites in the US serve as educational centers.**

The network of Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers includes:

- Alaska Sea Life Center, Seward, AK
- Dauphin Island Sea Lab, AL
- Florida Aquarium, Tampa, FL
- Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, OR
- International Game Fish Association Hall of Fame and Museum in Dania Beach, FL
- Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey Bay, CA
- Mystic Aquarium in Mystic, CT
- National Aquarium In Baltimore, MD
- New England Aquarium, Boston, MA
- New York Aquarium in Coney Island, NY
- Seattle Aquarium, Seattle, WA
- South Carolina Aquarium in Charleston, SC

• **Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, TX**

• **Waikiki Aquarium in Honolulu, HI**

Other examples of educational centers include: Duke University Wetland Center; USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center; Southeastern Louisiana University Wetlands Restoration Laboratory; Kaelepulu Pond at University of Hawaii, Manoa; Olentangy River Wetland Research Park at Ohio State University.

National Wildlife Refuges, which account for most of the Ramsar sites within the U.S., house education centers at wetland sites.

How many centres are being established? and at what sites? **[REDACTED]**

How many centres are being planned? and at what sites? **[REDACTED]**

Of the sites in place, how many are participating as part of Wetlands Link International (Refer 3.1.4 above)? and at which sites are they? **[REDACTED]**

Proposed national actions and targets: **[REDACTED]**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **[REDACTED]**

3.2.4 Work with museums, zoos, botanic gardens, aquaria and environment education centres to encourage the development of exhibits and programmes that support non-formal EPA on wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - see 3.2.3 above**

Do **all** museums, zoos, botanical gardens and similar facilities in your country **have exhibits** and/or programmes that support non-formal wetland CEPA? **Only for some facilities**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **[REDACTED]**

If such exhibits or programmes are in place for some facilities, how many and what types of facilities are they? **Some facilities exist throughout the country, such as at the National Zoo in Washington, DC. Another zoo with programs relating to wetlands is at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. It is home to the Chicago and Environmental Network (CEN) and Chicago Wilderness. The CEN is an environmental resource center for anyone interested in finding out about environmental volunteer opportunities, organizations, jobs, events, and resources in northeastern Illinois. Chicago Wilderness is the name given to designate the natural resources and lands stretching from southeastern Wisconsin, through northeastern Illinois, to northwestern Indiana, that contain a globally significant concentration of tallgrass prairies, woodlands, wetlands, and waters. Chicago Wilderness is also a collaboration of more than 130 organizations, including Brookfield Zoo, dedicated to the protection, restoration, and stewardship of these natural areas.**

If **Yes**, how many facilities does this apply to and how many of these are participating as part of Wetlands Link International (Refer 3.1.4 above)? and which facilities are they? **[REDACTED]**

Proposed national actions and targets: **One example of a proposed action is the New**

Interpretive Sign Series at the National Zoological Park, in which staff of the Bird House and the Office of Exhibits at the National Zoological Park, in Washington, DC, are developing a new interpretive sign series for the Zoo. The project is in a collaborative project with USEPA's Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds and is being funded through an interagency agreement with the Smithsonian Institution. The new sign series will use graphics, photographs, illustrations, and information to teach Zoo visitors about the connection between wetlands and migratory birds, etc. The project will potentially reach millions of visitors, conveying some very important environmental messages. The signs are scheduled to be installed in the wetlands exhibit area in late Autumn 2002 or early Spring 2003. According to recent Roper Poll surveys, Americans place significant trust in Zoos and Aquariums as a source of environmental information.

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

3.2.5 Encourage the inclusion of modules related to wetlands in the curricula at all levels of education, including tertiary courses and specialized training courses. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to see wetland issues incorporated into curricula in over 100 CPs.**

In your country are there modules related to wetlands in the curricula at all levels of education, including tertiary courses and specialized training courses? Only in some institutions

If **No**, what is preventing this from occurring? Please elaborate.

If this is the case for some levels of education, or some parts of the country, please provide details. **There are many government and nongovernment resources available for education on wetlands. One such organization that produces materials is the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA). The League's "American Wetlands Campaign" promotes local wetland stewardship activities and raising public awareness of the importance of wetlands. In addition to the Communities Working for Wetlands Conference, components of the American Wetlands Campaign include:**

American Wetlands Month: Thousands of Americans join each May in celebrating the uniqueness, beauty and importance of wetlands. The League offers American Wetlands Month kits on the Internet to help local groups initiate on-the-ground projects. The kits include fact sheets on wetlands, project ideas, contact information, case studies of projects from across the country, and links to many informative wetland sites. Each year, the League kicks off the month with an event related to a theme. In 2001, the theme was maintaining native species populations in wetlands, and in 2002 the theme focuses on unique wetlands.

Wetlands Conservation and Sustainability Workshops: Every year, introductory workshops are offered to volunteers, non-profit groups, government agency staff, and businesses across the country. Participants learn about wetland ecology, functions and values, regulations and permits, and wetland monitoring. Each workshop includes field time getting to know wetlands by examining hydrology, plants, soil, and surrounding

land uses.

Technical and Networking Assistance: Save Our Streams sells informative materials including the Handbook for Wetlands Conservation and Sustainability and the video Wetland Stewardship: A Call to Action. Other materials include: books, posters, cd-roms, internet sites, videos, and other materials and resources.

If **Yes**, have samples of this curriculum material been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **[REDACTED]**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **[REDACTED]**

Operational Objective 3.3: To improve the Ramsar Bureau's communications activities and to develop a Convention Communications Strategy, capable of further promoting the Convention and its wider application, and of raising awareness of wetland values and functions.

Actions - Global and National Targets

3.3.1 Review the Bureau's communications activities, especially those related to the creation and functioning of regional and national communication networks; develop new material and use of technology, and improve existing material. [Bureau]

Refer to 3.2.1 "To secure the resources to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme.". Has your government provided any voluntary contributions to increase the Bureau's capacity for implementing the Outreach Programme? **No**

If **Yes**, please provide details. **[REDACTED]**

Proposed national actions and targets: **[REDACTED]**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **[REDACTED]**

3.3.4 Seek the support of an electronic communications carrier to provide and maintain an electronic mail network and electronic bulletin board/ mailing lists linking the Contracting Parties, Standing Committee members, the STRP, the Bureau, and partner organizations. [All]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to gain a sponsor(s) for the Convention's Web site, to ensure that all CPs have Internet access, to increase the use of French and Spanish in the Ramsar Web site, and to see over 300 Ramsar site managers also communicating with the Bureau, and each other, via the Internet.**

The Standing Committee and Bureau will consider the issue of a sponsor for the Convention's Web site, and increased presence of French and Spanish materials on the Web site.

With respect to Ramsar site managers, has your government taken steps to provide for Internet links for these people? **Yes**

If No , what are the impediments to this action being taken? Please elaborate.
If Yes , how many Ramsar site managers have Internet access? All U.S. Ramsar site managers have Internet access. The U.S. Ramsar National Committee maintains a listserv and regularly posts communications to all site managers, committee members, and other interested participants. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established an e-mail network for National Wildlife Refuge managers at Ramsar sites and keeps these managers updated through frequent mailings. In addition, all site managers are on the Ramsar Bureau's listserv.
AND: Which Ramsar sites have this facility? All
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

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Please go to file 2.

National planning tool for the implementation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

(And the approved format for National Reports to be submitted for the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Spain, 2002)

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file 2

GENERAL OBJECTIVE 4

TO REINFORCE THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS IN EACH CONTRACTING PARTY TO ACHIEVE CONSERVATION AND WISE USE OF WETLANDS

Operational Objective 4.1: To develop the capacity of institutions in Contracting Parties, particularly in developing countries, to achieve conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Actions - Global and National Targets

4.1.1 Review existing national institutions responsible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]

Has your country reviewed the national institutions responsible for wetland conservation and wise use and the “designated national Administrative Authority for the Convention to ensure [that] these have the necessary resources to support the increasing demands being placed upon them by the growing expectations of the Convention” (COP7 Resolution VII.27)? **No**

If No, what is the impediment to this being done? **The United States has many institutions devoted to wetland conservation and a comprehensive review would be an enormous undertaking. There are over 36 federal agencies alone that conduct wetlands related activities, with six agencies -- the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency -- taking the lead for implementing wetlands-related programs. The activities of these 36+ agencies include acquiring, regulating, restoring, enhancing, monitoring, mitigating, mapping, inventorying, delineating, and conducting research relating to wetlands. These agencies carry out the more than 25 federal statutes that have been enacted relating to wetlands. The total funding associated each year with the agencies' efforts averages approximately \$800 million dollars, with a trend towards annual increases. Staffing associated with the agencies' activities number over 4,000 full-time-equivalent staff-years. Moreover, numerous national level non-governmental organizations work to promote wetland conservation as part of their focus on environmental protection and leverage additional millions of non-federal dollars in the process.**

If **Yes**, what were the conclusions and outcomes of the review? (Refer to 4.1.2 also). **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **multiple, including the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency.**

4.1.2 On the basis of such a review, identify and implement measures to:

- **increase cooperation and synergy between institutions;**
- **promote the continued operation of these institutions;**
- **provide appropriately trained staff, in adequate numbers, for these institutions. [CPs]**
- **Global Target - By COP8, to see coordinating mechanisms in place in all CPs, and more particularly to see National Ramsar Committees including government and non-government stakeholder representatives, in place in more than 100 CPs. In addition, by COP8, all CPs that have reported the existence of NRCs at COP7 to have evaluated their effectiveness (COP7 Resolution VII.27).**

Refer also to 8.1.9. Does your country have a National Ramsar Committee or similar body? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented the establishment of such a committee? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, is the committee cross-sectoral, including representatives of appropriate government ministries and non-government expert and stakeholder groups? **Yes**

What is the composition of this Committee? **The Committee consists of national level non-governmental organizations dedicated to wetland conservation. Currently there are 14 dues-paying members. These groups, along with their individual representatives, are:**

The Nature Conservancy, Paul Jackson

Ducks Unlimited, Dan Wrinn

CIESIN, Columbia University, Annette Wannapo

Wildlife Habitat Council, Bill Howard

Terrene Institute, Judy Taggart

Conservation Treaty Support Fund, George Furness

American Bird Conservancy, Gerald Winegrad

Caddo Lake Institute, Dwight Shellman

Seal Beach, Bruce and Corinne Munroe

<p>Stetson College of Law, Royal C. Gardner</p> <p>National Audubon Society</p> <p>Kansas Water Office</p> <p>Bolinas Lagoon, Ron Miska</p> <p>International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Don MacLauchlan</p> <p>In addition to the dues-paying members, several Federal agencies participate as nonvoting observers. Representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Department of State, Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Forest Service attend Committee meetings.</p>
<p>Has there been an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Committee? Yes</p>
<p>If No, what has prevented this from happening? Please elaborate.</p>
<p>If Yes, did the review show the Committee was proving to be effective? Yes</p>
<p>If No, why not? Please elaborate.</p>
<p>Refer also to 7.2.1 with reference to coordinating the implementation of international conventions.</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets: The U.S. National Ramsar Committee is managing a small grants program for U.S. Ramsar sites. Grants are given to sites that need assistance for educational materials, signage, trail construction and maintenance, community outreach, educational programs, etc. These grants are strengthening the abilities of the sites to do wetland conservation and are also increasing local awareness of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The small grants program is beginning its 3rd year in 2002.</p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: William Howard, President of the Wildlife Habitat Council, is the Chair of the Committee.</p>

Operational Objective 4.2: To identify the training needs of institutions and individuals concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands, particularly in developing countries, and to implement follow-up actions.

<p>Actions - Global and National Targets</p>
<p>4.2.1 Identify at national, provincial and local level the needs and target audiences for training in implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, to have training needs analyses completed in more than 75 CPs.
<p>Has a training needs analysis been completed? No</p>

If No , what has prevented this from happening? No review has been undertaken because the enormity of such an analysis in the United States would be prohibitive both in terms of financial and personnel resources. However, federal agencies recognize the importance of providing training at federal, state, tribal, local levels and to citizens to provide access to tools needed for collaborative watershed work.
If Yes , have the results of this analysis been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future? Yes/No
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes , how has this been done? Please elaborate.
AND: What impact has this had on the national training effort? Please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

4.2.2 Identify current training opportunities in disciplines essential for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, to have reviews of training opportunities completed in more than 75 CPs.
Has your country completed a review of the training opportunities which exist therein? No
If No , what are the impediments to this being done? In the United States, the opportunities for training in the conservation and wise use of wetlands are legion. Federal agencies, state agencies, universities and private non-profit groups all offer courses and workshops in topics related to wetland conservation.
If Yes , have the results of this review been used to provide direction for training priorities in the future? Yes/No
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes , how has this been done? Please elaborate.
AND: What impact has this had on the national training effort? Please elaborate.
Has this information on training opportunities been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Manager Training Opportunities? (Refer to 4.2.3 below also) Yes/No
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

4.2.3 Develop new training activities and general training modules, for application in all regions, concerning implementation of the Wise Use Guidelines, with specialized

modules covering [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - To launch a major wetland manager training initiative under the Convention, possibly in partnership with one or more of the Convention's International Organization Partners, which can promote and take advantage of these new training tools. Refer also to 4.2.4 below regarding the *Wetlands for the Future Initiative*.**

Following its review of training needs and opportunities, has your country developed any new training activities, or training modules? **Yes**

If Yes, please provide details. **As discussed above, training opportunities in wetland conservation abound in the United States. Courses and workshops are continually being developed. For example, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center coordinates with the Forest Service, the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and state fish and wildlife agencies to deliver training courses for conservation professionals. The U.S. Geological Survey National Wetlands Research Center also offers courses pertaining to mapping, vegetation, photo-interpretation, remote sensing and GIS. Among the hundreds of courses offered by these organizations are:**

Wetland Classification Training

Wetland Restoration and Enhancement

Riparian Management

Watershed Components and Processes

Watershed Rehabilitation

Stream Dynamics and Channel Design for Reclamation and Restoration

Erosion Prediction: Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation

Ground Water Hydrology

Non-point Source Pollution Control on Federal Lands

Riparian/Wetland Ecological Site Inventory

Aquatic Resource Monitoring for Natural Resource Specialists

Identifying and Controlling Runoff Pollution from Roads, Highways and Bridges

Identifying and Controlling Erosion and Sedimentation

Functional Assessment of Wetlands

Hydric Soils for Wetland Delineation

Wetland Plant Identification

Wetland Regulatory Program

Hydrogeomorphic (HGM) Approach to Wetland Functional Assessments

An Approach to Ecosystem Conservation

Interagency Working at a Watershed Level

Water and the Watershed

Engineering and Design of Constructed Wetlands for Water Quality Improvement

Groundwater Hydrology

Coastal Ecology

Ecological Resources: Identification, Analysis, and Evaluation

Fundamentals of Wetlands Ecology

Interdisciplinary Training for Ecosystem Restoration

Riparian Zone Ecology, Restoration, and Management

Wetland Development and Restoration

Wetland Mitigation Bank Development and Management

Wetlands Evaluation Procedures

A Framework for Stream Corridor Restoration

Introduction to GIS for Conservation Professionals

Introduction to GPS for Natural Resources Assessments and Surveys

Wetland Remote Sensing and Mapping

Wetland Photo Interpretation

Identification of Wetland Tree Species

Oil Spill Response

Shorebird Ecology and Management

Waterfowl Disease Workshop

Waterfowl Ecology and Management

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's Watershed Academy, located in the Office of Water, was formed to assist in the protection of water quality on a watershed basis by offering training courses and developing educational materials. The Academy provides training on watershed processes, functions, and management techniques, as well as publicizes watershed-related training programs developed by others. In addition, the Academy prepares watershed-related documents through its Information Transfer Series, provides watershed management facilitation services to help states and tribes implement watershed approaches, and has developed internet based training modules. The program, Watershed Academy Web, is a set of self-paced training modules that represents a basic but broad introduction to watershed

management. This program's goal is to provide useful information to local and state/tribal efforts aimed at improving the health of U.S. waters by protecting and managing their watersheds.

State agencies also offer training programs. For example, the Association of State Wetland Managers holds wetland training seminars and workshops every year and strives to add new material to their programs. The schedule for 2002 includes the following:

Annual State/Federal Cooperation Workshop. For State Agency Wetland Managers, Federal Agency staff and others. February 5-7 2002, Hall of the States, Washington, D.C. This three-day meeting includes discussions on state and federal legislative and policy/program activities such as mitigation, wetland water quality regulations, wetland restoration, and new wetland status and trends studies.

Wetlands 2002: Restoring Impaired Wetlands and Other Waters. Call for Papers and Invitation to Attend. The 2002 Annual meeting for the Association will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana October 7-9, 2002. The goal of the meeting will be to examine the successes and failures of science and policy related to restoration of wetlands and related waters and, most importantly, to point to methods for improving future success.

Wetlands and Global Warming. This is the third in a series of white papers and workshops on wetlands and global warming. A symposium on the topic is planned for the Society of Wetland Scientists Annual Meeting in Lake Placid, New York June 2-7, 2002.

State Wetland and Floodplain Legal Assistance Project. Spring 2002. This training project is designed to enhance understanding statutes, regulations, policies and court decisions concerning wetlands and floodplains. Products will include a white paper on the topic, a question and answer brochure and a seminar for state and local wetland and floodplain professionals.

Mid Atlantic Stream Restoration Workshop. Fall 2002. Workshop to build state, tribal, local government, federal, and private capabilities to restore streams, wetlands, riparian areas, and floodplains in the Mid Atlantic States.

AND: Has information on these training activities and modules been provided to the Ramsar Bureau for inclusion in the Directory of Wetland Manager Training Opportunities and the Wise Use Resource Centre? (Refer to 4.2.2 above also) **Yes/No**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **multiple**

4.2.4 Provide opportunities for manager training by: personnel exchanges for on-the-job training; holding pilot training courses at specific Ramsar sites; siting wetland manager training facilities at Ramsar sites; obtaining and disseminating information about training courses for wetland managers around the world. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - Refer to 4.2.3 above. Also to seek the resources from donors or interested CPs to establish *Wetlands for the Future Initiatives* for the Asia-Pacific, Eastern European, and African regions.**

Refer to 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3 above. Has training been provided for wetland managers:

- Through personnel exchanges for on-the-job training? **Yes**, among others, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conduct personnel exchanges for on-the-job training. There is no formal system in place to do personnel exchanges between refuges or programs. However, opportunities arise for personnel to do details in the Regional and Washington offices, work on ecosystem team projects, assist other stations when requested for law enforcement and other projects, interagency wildfire suppression, and numerous other opportunities. In the Fish and Wildlife Service, employees are strongly encouraged to transfer to other stations to obtain experience.
- Holding pilot training courses at specific Ramsar sites? **Yes**, Chesapeake Bay - Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences Tidal Wetlands Seminar - The annual VIMS Tidal Wetlands Education Seminar is an educational program offered each summer which provides technical information on basic ecological, management and procedural issues central to appropriate management of the Commonwealth's tidal wetland resources. The curriculum, offered in specific subject units, provides a standardized set of technical information in a consistent format and is deigned to provide structured technical training for wetland managers throughout Virginia. Also included are topics of current interest or importance relative to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.
- Siting wetland manager training facilities at Ramsar sites? **Yes**, Caddo Lake, Texas, is developing a training facility to promote community-based management for wetlands. The Caddo Lake Institute will use the Ramsar site for a "wetlands science academy" by creating a large outdoor classroom for environmental studies, focusing on wetland protection. The initiative is currently underway and should be fully operational within the next few years.
- Obtaining and disseminating information about training courses for wetland managers? **Yes**, The EPA's Watershed Academy was identified in one of the key action items in the Clean Water Action Plan to serve as a focal point to promote watershed-related training courses. This key action item states that "federal agencies will complete an inventory of watershed training programs. Relevant offerings will be promoted through the Watershed Academy and through other means as appropriate." The Inventory of Watershed Training Courses was developed in response to this action item. This Inventory has a number of purposes:
 - to help readers find training/educational opportunities on watershed protection

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to provide summaries and contact information for training sources consistent with the main principles of watershed approaches to inform watershed managers about federal and non-federal courses that are consistent with the above mentioned watershed approaches to be presented in a format that is easily updated, or able to be stored on electronic bulletin boards or home pages.
Has your country provided resources to support the establishment of <i>Wetlands for the Future</i> style programmes in any part of the world? (COP7 Recommendation 7.4) Yes
If Yes , please provide details. The United States, through the Department of State, provides financial support for the Wetlands for the Future program in Latin America and the Caribbean. The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service participates in proposal review and project development.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: multiple

4.2.6 Exchange information, technical assistance and advice, and expertise about the conservation and wise use of wetlands, also with regard to South-South cooperation. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
Refer to 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 4.2.1-4 above. Has your country specifically undertaken activities as indicated here which could be deemed to be South-South cooperation? Yes
If No , what has prevented this from happening? Please elaborate.
If Yes , please provide details. The United States provides funding for the Wetlands for the Future program which fosters training and south-south exchanges in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the Division of International Conservation of the Fish and Wildlife Service has partnered with the Centro Neotropical de Humedales to promote training of wetland managers in South America. The program leader, Elier Tabilo, is a wetland expert from Chile. Ducks Unlimited also has a training program for wetland managers in Latin America and their neotropical program director, Montserrat Carbonell, holds workshops for waterfowl biologists throughout the region.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of State

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 5**TO ENSURE THE CONSERVATION OF ALL SITES INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF WETLANDS OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE (RAMSAR LIST)**

Operational Objective 5.1: To maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>5.1.1 Define and apply the precise measures required to maintain the ecological character of each listed site, in the light of the working definitions of ecological character adopted at the 6th COP (1996) and amended by by Resolution VII.10 of COP7. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, each CP will seek to ensure that the measures required to maintain the ecological character of at least half of the Ramsar sites have been documented.
Have the measures required to maintain the ecological character of Ramsar sites in your country been documented? Yes
If No , what has prevented this being done? Please elaborate.
If Yes , has this documentation been developed as part of management planning and associated action at the sites? Yes
AND: Has a copy been provided to the Ramsar Bureau? Yes
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: Fish and Wildlife Service, in conjunction with all Ramsar site managers
<p>5.1.2 Conduct regular internal reviews to identify potential changes in ecological character, with input from local communities and other stakeholders; take remedial action and/or nominate the site for the Montreux Record. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to 2.5.2 - In the COP7 National Reports, 35 CPs reported Ramsar sites where some change in ecological character had occurred or was likely to occur in the near future. This was true for 115 sites in 33 CPs, and two other CPs stated that changes had occurred to all or some of their sites. In COP7 Resolution VII.12, these CPs were urged to consider nominating these sites to the Montreux Record. Global Target – In the period up to COP8, promote the application and benefits of the Montreux Record as a tool of the Convention through disseminating reports and publications on the positive outcomes achieved by a number of countries which have now removed sites from the Record.
Refer to 2.7.2 and 2.8.3 also. Are regular internal reviews undertaken to identify factors potentially altering the ecological character of Ramsar sites? Yes
If No , what are the impediments to this occurring? Please elaborate.
If Yes , have these reviews detected situations where changes in ecological character have occurred or may occur? Yes
If Yes , for how many sites was this case, which sites were they, and what actions were taken

to address these threats?

The Everglades National Park in Florida became a Ramsar site in 1987. However, due to enormous changes in the surrounding ecosystem, the site was listed in the Montreux Record in 1993. Presently, the United States has undertaken a massive, multi-year restoration effort of the Everglades and the entire South Florida ecosystem. A summary of this effort follows.

In response to public concern about development and continued ecosystem degradation, all levels of government have organized efforts to work towards a balanced and sustainable South Florida ecosystem.

In 1972 the Florida legislature passed several environmental and growth management laws, including the Land Conservation Act, which authorizes the issuance of state bonds for the purchase of environmentally endangered and recreation lands.

In 1983 Florida Governor Bob Graham launched the "Save Our Everglades" program — a partnership between the South Florida Water Management District and federal and state governmental agencies. Its goal is to work toward restoring the ecosystem so that by 2000 it looks and functions more like it did in 1900. The program affects a 9,000-square-mile area that includes the Kissimmee River Basin, Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades, the Big Cypress swamp, and the estuaries of Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay, and the Ten Thousand Islands. With strong public and political support, this program established the Kissimmee River Restoration Project and facilitated the congressional expansion of Big Cypress National Preserve in 1988 and Everglades National Park in 1989.

In 1985 the state of Florida also strengthened existing planning laws by adopting the "Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation." This regulation focuses on integrated approaches that foster orderly and sustainable state growth. It also requires that each local jurisdiction prepare a comprehensive plan that conforms to the goals and policies of the state law. The local plans must include the general distribution, location, and extent of general land uses, and they must be linked to the comprehensive plans of adjacent cities, counties, the region, and the state.

The 1987 Surface Water Improvement and Management Act (SWIM) requires each Florida water management district to develop plans to clean up and preserve rivers, lakes, estuaries, and bays affected by water districts. SWIM plans for Lake Okeechobee and Biscayne Bay were completed and implemented.

In contrast, the Everglades SWIM plan became the focus of intense litigation. In 1988

the United States, on behalf of Everglades National Park and Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, filed a lawsuit against the state of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District. The suit alleged that federally owned or leased lands in the Everglades were being damaged by agricultural runoff containing excessive phosphorous. The suit was largely settled in 1991. However, litigation continued when agricultural interests challenged the Everglades SWIM plan. A mediated solution addressing these competing concerns was incorporated into Florida's Everglades Forever Act, enacted in 1994. The act established a restoration plan and provides for a program of construction, research, and regulation. The plan also calls for designs to restore clean water in critical periods (hydroperiod) and to control the growth of exotic species. Finally, the act requires farmers to minimize the amount of nutrient-rich pollutants used on or discharged from farms (referred to as best management practices) and includes a schedule for constructing stormwater treatment areas (man-made marshes) that filter phosphorous from agricultural runoff before it reaches the Everglades.

In 1993 the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force was founded through an interagency agreement between the six federal departments involved in restoring and protecting the ecosystem. Congress formally established the task force in 1996 and broadened its membership to include federal and state agencies, local governments, and Miccosukee and Seminole tribal representatives. Chaired by the Department of the Interior, the task force coordinates and develops consistent policies, strategies, plans, programs, and priorities for restoring the South Florida ecosystem. The task force has appointed a Working Group to assist it in restoration activities. This Florida-based group coordinates programs developed by the task force, resolves technical issues, and implements a wide variety of restoration programs.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was authorized, through the 1992 and 1996 Water Resources Development Acts, to undertake a comprehensive review of the Central & Southern Project. The Corps was asked to develop a comprehensive plan to restore and preserve the natural ecosystem of South Florida, while still providing for urban and agricultural water and flood control needs. The major, long-term redesign of the regional water management system was formally presented to the U.S. Congress in July 1999. The plan calls for a series of water system improvement projects over more than 20 years, with an estimated cost of \$7.8 billion. It will also incorporate a number of projects that are already authorized or underway.

The Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida, appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles, served from March 1994 to May 1999, to "make recommendations for achieving a healthy Everglades ecosystem that can coexist and be mutually supportive of a sustainable South Florida economy and quality communities" and served as an advisory body to the Task Force. The commission consisted of 42 members from the business, agriculture, government, environmental, and public sectors. In 1995 the commission recommended an initiative titled "Eastward Ho! Revitalizing Southeast

Florida's Urban Core," which focused on developing strategies for slowing the urban sprawl that is claiming wetland and agricultural areas and bringing vitality back to older urban areas in southeast Florida. Recognizing the need for an advisory body, representing the diverse citizens and organizations with an interest in Everglades restoration and South Florida issues, Governor Jeb Bush created the Governor's Commission for the Everglades in July 1999. The Commission will review and provide recommendations on the implementation of the Central & Southern Florida Project Restudy, given practical recommendations to the Task Force, and help reconcile differences among stakeholder interests.

The National Park Service actively participates in the ecosystem restoration efforts at both the park level and at the regional level. Staff from the four South Florida parks are members of the Working Group, the first Governor's Commission, and other restoration groups. NPS park staffs are involved in establishing goals for ecosystem restoration, evaluating the design and implementation of restoration projects, conducting scientific research, and monitoring field conditions to measure progress toward restoration goals. Through ongoing interpretive and outreach programs, the South Florida parks are also committed to educating the public about the need for restoring the ecosystem.

AND: Were these sites where change in ecological character was detected, or may occur, added to the Montreux Record? **Yes**

If No, why not? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (interagency team composed of federal and state agencies, local governments, and Miccosukee and Seminole tribal representatives)**

5.1.3 Review and regularly update the Montreux Record (Resolutions 5.4, 5.5, and VI.1). [CPs, STRP, Bureau]

- **Global Target - CPs with Ramsar sites in the Montreux Record, and for which Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs) have been completed prior to COP7, are expected to have taken the actions necessary to warrant their removal from the Record before COP8.**

For those CPs with a site, or sites, included in the Montreux Record, and for which RAMs (previously Management Guidance Procedures, MGPs) have been completed, have all actions recommended by the RAM been undertaken for each site? **Yes/No**

If No, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If Yes, have these actions resulted in a restoration of the ecological character? **Yes/No**

AND: If Yes, has the site been removed from the Montreux Record following the completion of the necessary questionnaire (COP6 Resolution VI.1)? **Yes/No Additional comment?**

Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: [REDACTED]

Operational Objective 5.2: To develop and implement management plans for all Ramsar sites, consistent with the Convention’s Guidelines on Management Planning and emphasizing involvement of local communities and other stakeholders.

Actions - Global and National Targets

5.2.3 Ensure that, by the 8th COP (2002), management plans or other mechanisms are in preparation, or in place, for at least half of the Ramsar sites in each Contracting Party, beginning with pilot programmes at selected sites with input from local communities and other stakeholders. [CPs, Partners]

- **Global Target - By COP8, management plans will be in preparation, or in place, for at least three-quarters of the Ramsar sites in each CP and all CPs will seek to ensure that these are being implemented in full.**

Do all the Ramsar sites in your country have management plans **in place**? **No**

If **No**, how many sites do not have management plans in place and which sites are they? **The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 states that “the Secretary shall -- (1) propose a comprehensive conservation plan for each refuge or related complex of refuges...in the System.” During plan development, a review of any existing special designations like Wetlands of International Importance and the potential for any designations is conducted. The majority of the U.S. Ramsar sites are National Wildlife Refuges and all of these are in the process of preparing new, in-depth management plans to comply with the act. All refuges must have their plans completed by 2012.**

If plans are being prepared for some sites, please indicate which sites these are. **Izembek NWR, Cache-Lower White River NWRs, Ash Meadows NWR, Catahoula NWR, Pelican Island NWR, Okefenokee NWR, Eastern Neck NWR, Blackwater/Martin NWR, Presquile NWR, Bombay Hook NWR, Prime Hook NWR, Supawna Meadows NWR, Edwin B. Forsythe NWR, Cape May NWR, Cypress Creek NWR, Horicon NWR, Sand Lake NWR**

For those sites where management plans are in place, how many of these are being implemented fully, and which sites are they? **Everglades National Park (see section 5.1.2 above), Cheyenne Bottoms State Game Area, Connecticut River Estuary and Tidal Wetlands Complex, and Bolinas Lagoon.**

Where plans are not in place, or not being fully implemented, what has prevented this from being done? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in conjunction with other cooperators such as the National Park Service and state natural resource management agencies**

5.2.4 Promote the establishment and implementation of zoning measures related to larger Ramsar sites, wetland reserves and other wetlands (Kushiro Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]

For those sites where it is warranted, are zoning measures being used to regulate the activities allowed in different parts of the wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what is preventing these from being implemented? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, for which sites are these in place? **All U.S. Ramsar sites.**

AND: Are they proving a successful management tool? **Yes. Zoning permits sites to restrict visitor use to certain areas only, enabling strict protection of some sections for nesting birds, calving grounds, and other critical wildlife needs. It also allows the public to enjoy visiting a site without harming the wildlife or damaging the natural resources.**

Have you provided the Ramsar Bureau with information regarding such cases of zoning for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **multiple**

5.2.5 Promote the establishment and implementation of strict protection measures for certain Ramsar sites and other wetlands of small size and/or particular sensitivity (Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners]

- **This aspect of Ramsar site management was not considered in the COP7 National Reports and will have to be reviewed in time for COP8.**
- **Global Target - Provide for consideration at COP8 detailed information on the implementation of strict protection measures at small and/or sensitive sites.**

For those sites where it is warranted, are strict protection measures being used to regulate the activities allowed in different parts of the wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, what is preventing these from being implemented? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, for which sites are these in place? **Please refer to the answer to the zoning question, 5.2.4 above.**

AND: Is this proving to be a successful management tool? **See above.**

Have you provided the Ramsar Bureau with information regarding such cases for possible inclusion in the Wise Use Resource Centre? **No**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **multiple**

Operational Objective 5.3: To obtain regularly updated information on wetlands of international importance, in accordance with the approved standard format.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>5.3.1 Ensure that the maps and descriptions of Ramsar sites submitted to the Ramsar Database by the Contracting Parties at the time of designation are complete, in the approved standard format of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands, and provide sufficient detail to be used for management planning and monitoring of ecological character. [CPs, Bureau, Wetlands International]</p>
<p>5.3.2 Ensure that missing or incomplete data sheets and/or maps of listed sites are submitted as a matter of priority and in the shortest possible time, as a means to enhance the relevance and use of the Ramsar Database. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target – By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites for which appropriate sites descriptions and maps are still required.
<p>If yours is one of the CPs referred to in COP7 Resolution VII.12 as not having provided a Ramsar (Site) Information Sheet in the approved format, with a suitable map, in one of three working languages of the Convention, has this now be rectified? No</p> <p>If No, what is preventing this from being done? We are in the process of completing this request and should have the information to the Bureau by the end of the year.</p>
<p>5.3.3 Ensure that data sheets on Ramsar Sites are regularly updated, at least for every second meeting of the COP, so that they can be used for reviewing the achievements of the Convention, for future strategic planning, for promotional purposes, and for site, regional and thematic analysis (Resolution VI.13). [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Wetlands International]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By the end of 1999, for there to be no Ramsar sites designated before 31 December 1990 for which updated site descriptions are still required.
<p>If yours is one of the CPs referred to in COP7 Resolution VII.12 as not having provided an updated Ramsar (Site) Information Sheet for sites designated before 31 December 1990, has this now be rectified? No</p> <p>If No, what is preventing this from being done? We are in the process of completing this request and should have the information to the Bureau by the end of the year.</p>
<p>Proposed national actions and targets: </p>
<p>Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</p>

Operational Objective 5.4: To keep under review the content and structure, as well as the hardware and software, of the Ramsar Database, in order to ensure that it retains its relevance in light of evolving information and communication technology.

Actions - Global and National Targets
5.4.1 Assess data currently available in the database and identify any gaps in the data provided by Contracting Parties. [CPs, STRP, Bureau, Wetlands International] Refer to 5.2.2, 5.2.3, and 5.2.4 above.
5.4.4 Support the establishment of national wetland databases compatible with the Ramsar Database and develop a common protocol to facilitate exchange and interaction. [CPs, Partners] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, to have national wetland databases in over 50 CPs which are accessible globally.
Refer also to 6.1.1 and 6.1.2. Does your country have a national wetland database? No
If No , what is preventing such a database being established? The United States has many databases related to wetlands. Different agencies at the federal, state, and municipal levels maintain databases for the sites they manage. The National Wetlands Inventory of the Fish and Wildlife Service is working on completing a digital wetlands database for the United States (see item 6.1.2 below). In addition, non-governmental organizations such as the Heritage Program of The Nature Conservancy have developed comprehensive databases which include wetland sites.
If Yes , is this database generally available for reference and application by all ministries and stakeholders? Yes/No
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
AND: Is it available through the Internet? (COP7 Resolution VII.20) Yes/No
If Yes , please provide details. [REDACTED]
If No , why not? [REDACTED]
AND: Is it available on CD-Rom? (COP7 Resolution VII.20) Yes/No
If Yes , please provide details. [REDACTED]
If No , why not? [REDACTED]
Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: multiple

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE 6

TO DESIGNATE FOR THE RAMSAR LIST THOSE WETLANDS WHICH MEET THE CONVENTION'S CRITERIA, ESPECIALLY WETLAND TYPES STILL UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE LIST AND TRANSFRONTIER WETLANDS

Operational Objective 6.1: To identify those wetlands that meet the Ramsar criteria, and to give due consideration to their designation for the List.

Actions - Global and National Targets
6.1.1 Develop, regularly update -- especially in the case of Africa -- and disseminate regional wetland directories, which identify potential Ramsar sites. [CPs, Partners]
Refer to 6.1.2 and 6.2.1. Does there exist for your country a directory or similar listing of sites which are potential Ramsar sites? No
If No , what are the impediments to such a list of sites being prepared? There are many lists of potential Ramsar sites which are prepared by each agency and organization that manages wetland sites. For example, the Fish and Wildlife Service has a list of all of its refuges, many of which are already Ramsar sites or could be nominated as such. In addition, there are directories of national sites that include National Parks, National Forests, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Areas, National Recreation Areas, Historic Preservation Sites, as well as sites of non-governmental organizations including Audubon Wildlife Sanctuaries, Nature Conservancy Preserves and private research areas. Many of these sites include important wetland resources (such as the Okefenokee Swamp and Everglades National Park) as well as other types of wildlife habitats and cultural resources.
The United States Geological Survey prepared the "National Water Summary on Wetland Resources" in 1996 that describes the conditions, trends, availability, quality, and use of the water resources of the United States. The book presents specific information on the types and distribution, hydrologic setting, trends, and conservation on the wetland resources of each State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and several Pacific islands over which the United States has jurisdiction.
If Yes , when was it prepared and was it prepared taking into consideration the <i>Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance</i> (COP7 Resolution VII.11)? Yes/No
AND: How many potential Ramsar sites are identified within the important sites directory for your country?
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: multiple
6.1.2 Establish, update and disseminate national scientific inventories of wetlands which identify potential Ramsar sites and wetlands of provincial or local importance in the territory of each Contracting Party. [CPs, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - By COP8, to have national wetland inventories completed by over 50 CPs and the information housed in databases (Refer to 5.4.4) which are accessible globally

Does there exist a comprehensive national inventory (as opposed to a directory of important sites; see 6.1.1 above) for your country? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to such an inventory being prepared? **Please elaborate.**

If only some parts of the country have had inventories completed, please indicate which parts these are. **The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service produces information on the characteristics, extent, and status of the Nation's wetlands and deepwater habitats. This information is used by Federal, State, and local agencies, academic institutions, U.S. Congress, and the private sector. The Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986 directs the Service to map the wetlands of the United States. The NWI has mapped 89% of the lower 48 states, and 31% of Alaska. The Act also requires the Service to produce a digital wetlands database for the United States. About 39% of the lower 48 states and 11% of Alaska are digitized. Congressional mandates require the NWI to produce status and trends reports to Congress at ten-year intervals. In 1982, the NWI produced the first comprehensive and statistically valid estimate of the status of the Nation's wetlands and wetland losses, and in 1990 produced the first update. Future national updates scheduled for 2000, 2010, and 2020. In addition to the status and trends reports, the NWI has produced over 130 publications, including manuals, plant and hydric soils lists, field guides, posters, wall size resource maps, atlases, and state reports, and has had numerous articles published by professional journals.**

The NWI National Center in St. Petersburg, Florida, includes a state-of-the-art computer operation which is responsible for constructing the wetlands layer of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. Digitized wetlands data can be integrated with other layers of the NSDI such as natural resources and cultural and physical features, leading to production of selected color and customized maps of the information from wetland maps, and the transfer of digital (computer-readable) data to users and researchers world-wide. Dozens of organizations, including Federal, State, county agencies, and private sector organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, have supported conversion of wetland maps into digital data for computer use. Statewide databases have been built for 9 States and initiated in 5 other States. Digitized wetland data are also available for portions of 37 other States. Once a digital database is constructed, users can obtain the data at no cost over the Internet, or through the U.S. Geological Survey for the cost of reproduction.

NWI maintains a MAPS database of metadata containing production information, history, and availability of all maps and digital wetlands data produced by NWI. This database is available over the Internet. The six U.S. Geological Survey Earth Science Information Centers (ESIC) have on-line access to the database.

The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act requires that NWI archive and disseminate wetlands maps and digitized data as it becomes available. The process prescribed by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-16, "Coordination of Surveying,

Mapping, and Related Spatial Data", provides an avenue for increased NWI coordination activities with other Federal agencies to reduce waste in government programs. As chair of the Federal Geographic Data Committee's Wetlands Subcommittee, the NWI Project Leader is responsible for promoting the development, sharing, and dissemination of wetlands related spatial data. The Secretary of the Interior, chairs the Federal Geographic Data Committee. NWI continues to coordinate mapping activities under 36 cooperative agreements or memoranda of understanding. NWI is involved in training and providing technical assistance to the public and other agencies.

NWI maps and digital data are distributed widely throughout the country and the world. NWI has distributed over 1.7 million maps nationally since they were first introduced. Map distribution is accomplished through 34 state-run distribution centers covering 47 States; the U.S. Geological Survey centers at 1-800-USA-MAPS; the Library of Congress and the Federal Depository Library System; and most recently the National Wetlands Inventory Home Page on the Internet. The URL address for the Home Page is: <http://www.nwi.fws.gov>.

Users of NWI maps and digital data are as varied as are the uses. Maps are used by all levels of government, academia, Congress, private consultants, land developers, and conservation organizations. The public makes extensive use of NWI maps in a myriad of applications including planning for watershed and drinking water supply protection; siting of transportation corridors; construction of solid waste facilities; and siting of schools and other municipal buildings. Resource managers in the Service and the States are provided with maps which are essential for effective habitat management and acquisition of important wetland areas needed to perpetuate migratory bird populations as called for in the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Management Plan; for fisheries restoration; floodplain planning; and endangered species recovery plans. Agencies from the Department of Agriculture use the maps as a major tool in the identification of wetlands for the administration of the Swampbuster provisions of the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills. Regulatory agencies use the maps to help in advanced wetland identification procedures, and to determine wetland values and mitigation requirements. Private sector planners use the maps to determine location and nature of wetlands to aid in framing alternative plans to meet regulatory requirements. The maps are instrumental in preventing problems from developing and in providing facts that allow sound business decisions to be made quickly, accurately, and efficiently. Good planning protects the habitat value of wetlands for wildlife, preserves water quality, provides flood protection, and enhances ground water recharge, among many other wetland values.

Additional sources of data are maintained by the Service to complement the information available from the maps themselves. The Service maintains a National List of Vascular Plant Species that Occur in Wetlands. This list is referenced in the Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands, and in the Natural Resources

Conservation Service's procedures to identify wetlands for the Swampbuster provision of the Farm Bill. The recent report on wetlands by the National Academy of Sciences found the National List to be scientifically sound and recommended that the Service continue development of the list. The Service has developed a protocol to allow other agencies and private individuals to submit additions, deletions, or changes to the list. The National List and Regional Lists are available over the Internet through the NWI Homepage.

NWI digital data have been available over the Internet since 1994. In the first year alone 93,000 data files were distributed through anonymous file transfer protocol (FTP) access to wetland maps digital line graph (DLG) data. To date, over 250,000 electronic copies of wetland maps are in the hands of resource managers and the general public. One-third of the digital wetlands files downloaded off Internet went to government agencies at Federal, State, Regional, and local levels. Other users include commercial enterprises, environmental organizations, universities, and the military. Users from 25 countries from Estonia to New Zealand to Chile obtained NWI maps from the Internet. This excellent partnership provides information to any government, private, or commercial entity that requires assistance to address issues throughout the world.

A CD-ROM sampler of NWI products has been produced which includes an example of one raster map and digital vector data map for each of the 50 states (the digital vector data can be downloaded from the CD directly into a GIS program), a map status directory, the wetlands classification system, as well as photointerpretation, cartographic, and digitizing conventions. CD-ROMS were also produced for the States of Maryland, Minnesota, and the eastern portions of North and South Dakota that contained all the available digital vector data.

AND: What is the likely timeframe for completing the national inventory?

If a national inventory has already been completed, when was it finalized?

AND: Is the information housed where it is accessible to stakeholders and the international community? (COP7 Resolution VII.20) **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

Has national/subnational inventory information been provided to the Ramsar Bureau (if it is not accessible through the Internet)? **Yes/No**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

6.1.4 Support the work of Wetlands International and IUCN in updating information on population sizes of waterfowl and other taxa, and utilize these data in identification of potential Ramsar sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Does your country regularly gather waterbird population data? Yes
If No , what prevents this from happening?
If Yes , is this information provided to Wetlands International? No
If No , why not? Several agencies and organizations produce annual counts for waterbird populations, and the results are available on the internet. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service and various State and Provincial and private conservation agencies, count waterfowl (ducks and geese) populations in North America. The International Shorebird Survey, led by Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, brings together hundreds of volunteers to count shorebirds throughout North America. Other efforts involving a combination of volunteers and paid professionals, such as the Breeding Bird Survey (United States Geological Survey) and Christmas Bird Count (National Audubon Society) count all bird species, including waterbirds.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: multiple

Operational Objective 6.2: To increase the area of wetland designated for the List of Wetlands of International Importance, particularly for wetland types that are under-represented either at global or national level.

Actions - Global and National Targets
6.2.1 Promote the designation for the Ramsar List of an increased area of wetland, through listing by new Contracting Parties, and through further designations by current Contracting Parties, in particular developing countries, in order to ensure the listing of a representative range of wetland types in the territory of each Contracting Party and in each Ramsar region. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - As proposed in the Strategic Framework, the short-term target of the Ramsar List should be to achieve the designation of 2000 sites, in accordance with the systematic approach advocated therein, by the time of COP9 in the year 2005. In addition, by COP8 the target is to have at least 20 CPs that are applying a systematic approach to site selection nationally.
Refer also to 6.1.1, 6.1.2, and 6.2.3. Has your country taken a systematic approach to identifying its future Ramsar sites (as promoted in the <i>Strategic Framework for the List – COP7 Resolution VII.11</i>)? Yes
If No , what are the impediments to this being done? Please elaborate.
If Yes , has this included considerations to ensure the designation of a representative range of wetland types? Yes
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes , has this resulted in the designation of a representative range of wetland types? Yes

Proposed national actions and targets: **At least 15 different wetlands (Laguna Madre, Mexico and Texas; Great Salt Lake, Utah; Grasslands complex, California; J Clark Salyer NWR, North Dakota; Mono Lake, California; Illinois River, Illinois; Hawaii Coral Reef, Hawaii; Tomales Bay, California; Stillwater NWR, Nevada; Quivira NWR, Kansas; Gulf of Maine, Maine; Vaisoatoto Marsh, American Samoa; Palmyra Atoll, Oceania; Upper Mississippi NWR, Minnesota; Tijuana Slough NWR, California), covering a wide range of habitat types, are under development to be considered for Ramsar designation.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

6.2.3 Give priority attention to the designation of new sites from wetland types currently under-represented on the Ramsar List, and in particular, when appropriate, coral reefs, mangroves, sea-grass beds and peatlands. [CPs]

- **Global Targets - The long-term targets are set by the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (COP7 Resolution VII.11). Based on this, short-term targets for each wetland type will be derived [by the STRP].**

Further to 6.2.1 above: If your territory includes under-represented wetland types, has special attention been given to identifying suitable sites for designation? **Yes**

If **No**, what has prevented this from occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, has this included designations of wetlands including:

- coral reefs? **No**
- mangroves? **No**
- seagrass beds? **No**
- peatlands? **No**
- intertidal wetlands? (COP7 Resolution VII.21) **No**

Proposed national actions and targets: **Efforts are underway to designate a coral reef site in the State of Hawaii.**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

6.2.4 Pay particular attention to the designation of new sites currently enjoying no special conservation status at national level, as a first step towards developing measures for their conservation and wise use. [CPs]

- **This question was not considered in the National Reports for COP7. It will be included for consideration in the NRs for COP8.**
- **Global Target - All CPs to consider this approach to ensuring the long-term conservation and wise use of wetlands that are subject to intense human use.**

Has your country designated wetland sites for the Ramsar List which previously had no special conservation status? Yes
If No , what has prevented this from happening? Please elaborate.
If Yes , please provide details. Bolinas Lagoon, California, was designated as a Ramsar site in 1998. The area is managed and owned at the local county level, however, the Ramsar designation has elevated its conservation status to that of international importance.
AND: Are there plans for further such designations? Yes
If No , why not? Please elaborate.
If Yes , please elaborate. Numerous wetlands are being explored as potential Ramsar sites including areas that are privately owned by individuals or corporations and do not have an official State or Federal protected area designation.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

<p>6.2.5 Consider as a matter of priority the designation of transfrontier wetland sites. [CPs]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of transfrontier or shared wetlands is addressed in the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention (COP7 Resolution VII.19)</i> and the <i>Guidelines for integrating wetlands into river basin management (COP7 Resolution VII.18)</i>. Global Target - By COP8, for there to be over 50 transfrontier wetland sites designated under the Convention.
For those CPs which 'share' wetlands with other CPs, have all suitable sites been designated under the Convention? No
<p>If No, what has prevented this action being taken? The United States shares over 6 thousand miles of border with the neighboring countries of Canada and Mexico and it would be an enormous undertaking to designate all suitable transfrontier wetlands as Ramsar sites. However, efforts are underway to designate a transfrontier site between the United States and Mexico in the Laguna Madre region (see section 7.1.2 below).</p> <p>Moreover, in relation to the Great Lakes, which are the largest fresh water bodies in North America, an ecosystem approach for binational management has been adopted by the United States and Canada. An international commission was established in the 1970's to manage this vast region.</p>
If Yes , are there arrangements in place between the CPs sharing the wetland for the cooperative management of the site? Yes/No

If No , what has prevented such arrangements from being introduced? Please elaborate.
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 7
TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MOBILIZE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION AND WISE USE IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS AND AGENCIES, BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL**

Operational Objective 7.1: To identify international and/or regional needs for managing shared wetlands and shared catchments, and develop and implement common approaches.

Actions - Global and National Targets
7.1.1 Identify transfrontier wetlands of international importance (including those within shared catchment/river basins), and encourage preparation and implementation of joint plans for such sites, using a “catchment approach” (Recommendation 5.3). [CPs, Partners] Refer to 6.2.5 above.
7.1.2 Encourage twinning of transfrontier wetlands, and of other wetlands with similar characteristics, and use successful cases for illustrating the benefits of international cooperation. [CPs, Bureau, Partners] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the <i>Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention</i> (COP7 Resolution VII.19) and the <i>Convention’s Outreach Programme</i> (COP7 Resolution VII.9) promote site twinning as a mechanism for accelerating the flow of knowledge and assistance and promoting training opportunities. Global Target - By COP8 to have in place over 100 Ramsar site twinning arrangements. The Bureau will keep a record of which sites are twinned and make this available through the Convention’s Web site.
Does your country have Ramsar sites twinned with those in other CPs? No
If No , what has prevented this from happening? The United States and Mexico are working to designate each nation's respective section of the Laguna Madre ecosystem as twinned Ramsar sites. This region extends 227 miles along the lower south Texas and upper Tamaulipas coast. In 1998, the Texas Center for Policy Studies and Pronatura Noreste began a partnership on a project to promote conservation-based development in this binational region. The goal of the project is to work with local citizens to explore strategies for economic development that will promote the long-term protection of the

natural resources of the Laguna Madre. A Ramsar designation for the respective sections in the United States and Mexico is one of the project's objectives.

Progress is being made in designating this area as a binational site (because each country has a separate process for site review and approval, these sites would be designated independently but would then later be twinned). With a grant from the Division of International Conservation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pronatura Noreste prepared a nomination package for the Mexican region and presented it to the Government of Mexico for approval. The Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in Texas is leading the effort to nominate the section in the United States.

If Yes, please note how many such twinning arrangements are in place and indicate which sites are involved.

AND: Do these arrangements involve:

- sharing of information resources? Yes/No
- transfer of financial resources? Yes/No
- exchanges of personnel? Yes/No
- other activities? Please elaborate.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Instituto Nacional de Ecologia in Mexico

Operational Objective 7.2: To strengthen and formalize linkages between Ramsar and other international and/or regional environmental conventions and agencies, so as to advance the achievement of shared goals and objectives relating to wetland species or issues.

Actions - Global and National Targets

7.2.1 Participate in, or initiate, consultations with related conventions to foster information exchange and cooperation, and develop an agenda for potential joint actions. [SC, Bureau]

- **Global Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Ramsar Convention and the Convention to Combat Desertification which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.**

Refer also to 4.2.1. Does there exist a mechanism (such as an inter-ministry committee) at the national level with the charter of coordinating/integrating the implementation of international/regional conventions/treaties to which your country is a signatory? Yes

If No, what are the impediments to such a mechanism being introduced? Please elaborate.

If Yes, describe the mechanism and the conventions/treaties it is expected to consider.

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science chairs or

participates on all of the committees overseeing U.S. participation in environment-related treaties, conventions, and other meetings and negotiations. The OES Bureau also monitors U.S. environment-related contributions to UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, and major NGO's . It is the responsibility of the Bureau leadership to see that the U.S.'s international activities in these areas are properly coordinated.

This includes, among others, WSSD, CITES, CBD (the USG is not a signatory, but remains involved on key issues), Man and the Biosphere, Desertification, UNFF, and ITTO. The officials working on these issues are all in the same bureau within the Department of State and confer and coordinate on a regular basis.

AND: Has the mechanism proven to be effective? **Yes**

If No, why not? **Please elaborate.**

If Yes, please elaborate. **Because officials working on all of these issues work in the same office, meet regularly, and are under a single supervisor, overall coordination of the U.S.'s international effort is excellent.**

Proposed national actions and targets: **Within OES, the office of Ecology and Terrestrial Controls is formally tasked with seeking "to achieve conservation objectives in key sectors – such as forests, coral reefs, endangered species, invasives, and biosafety . . ."**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science**

7.2.2 Prepare project proposals together with other conventions and partner organizations, and submit them jointly to potential funding agencies. [CPs, SC, Bureau, Partners]

For eligible countries, have there been project proposals prepared and submitted to funding agencies which were intended to assist with implementation of the Ramsar Convention?
Yes/No

If No, what has prevented this from happening? **Please elaborate.**

If Yes, were such proposals successful in gaining funds? **Yes/No - Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

7.2.3 Strengthen cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular as regards inclusion of wetland concerns in national biodiversity strategies, and planning and execution of projects affecting wetlands. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- Global Target - To see the Joint Work Plan implemented in full and resulting in**

cooperative implementation of both Conventions at the international, national and local levels.
Further to 7.2.1 above: Has there been a review completed of the Joint Work Plan between Ramsar and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to establish the areas of priority for cooperative implementation of these Conventions? No
If No , what has prevented such a review being done? The U.S. is not a signatory to the CBD. However, we participate constructively as an observer. The officer responsible for Ramsar and the officer working on CBD within OES/ETC are part of the same work group and meet daily, so cooperation, though informal, is constant.
If Yes , what are the areas established as priorities for national cooperation between Ramsar and CBD implementing agencies/focal points?
Proposed national actions and targets:
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action:

7.2.4 Develop cooperation with the World Heritage Convention and UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), especially as regards wetlands designated as World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and/or Ramsar sites. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with the Man and the Biosphere Programme, leading to Joint Work Plans with the MAB Programme and with the World Heritage Convention which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local, levels.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.
7.2.5 Enhance Ramsar's contribution to international cooperation on shared wetland species, notably through cooperative arrangements with the Convention on Migratory Species, flyway agreements, networks and other mechanisms dealing with migratory species (Recommendation 6.4). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention propose an increase in the joint efforts between Ramsar and CMS (COP7 Resolution VII.19)</i> • Global Target - A Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, regional and national and local levels.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.
7.2.6 Develop Ramsar's contribution to wildlife trade issues affecting wetlands, through increased interaction with CITES. [Bureau]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Guidelines for international cooperation under the Ramsar Convention propose an increase in the joint efforts between Ramsar and CITES (COP7 Resolution</i>

<p>VII.19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with CITES, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which sees cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
Refer to 7.2.1 above
<p>7.2.7 Initiate links with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in view of the potential impacts on wetlands of climate change. [CP, Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - A Memorandum of Cooperation with UNFCCC, leading to a Joint Work Plan between the Conventions which encourages cooperative implementation of both at the international, national and local levels.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.
<p>7.2.8 Extend cooperation with conventions and agencies concerned with conservation and wise use of wetlands at regional level, and in particular: with the European Community, as regards application of its Habitats Directive to wetlands, and adoption and application of measures like the Habitats Directive for wetlands outside the states of the European Union; with the Council of Europe (Bern) Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats as regards the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy; with the Barcelona Convention and Mediterranean Action Plan in relation to the MedWet initiative; with the Western Hemisphere Convention; with UNEP programmes, in particular the Regional Seas Conventions; and with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). [CPs, Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - With the European Commission and SPREP, develop and sign a Memorandum of Cooperation and prepare and implement a Joint Work Plan. For Medwet, secure the long-term funding base for this important initiative and continue to develop new programmes of regional action. For the others referred to, and others which are appropriate, develop an appropriate working relationship.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.
<p>7.2.9 Develop relationships with other specialized agencies that deal with wetland-related issues, such as the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the World Water Council (COP7 Resolution VI.23). [Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - To progress to closer working relations with these and other relevant initiatives, as appropriate.
Refer to 7.2.1 above.

Operational Objective 7.3: To ensure that the development assistance community, and multinational corporations, follow improved wetland practices such as the Wise Use Guidelines in developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

Actions - Global and National Targets

7.3.2 Work with multilateral and bilateral development agencies and multinational corporations towards a full recognition of wetland values and functions (Recommendation 4.13), and assist them to improve their practices in favor of wetland conservation and wise use taking account of the *Guidelines for Aid Agencies for Improved Conservation and Sustainable Use of Tropical and Sub-Tropical Wetlands*, published by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (Recommendation 6.16). [Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - At the Bureau level, to consider ways and means to increase its ability to work more systematically in this area, so as to increase the level of donor agency support for wetland conservation and wise use activities, and to see an increasing number of multinational corporations adopting voluntary codes of conduct for protecting wetlands.**

While this action is directed at the Bureau principally, CPs also have a role to play in this area; refer to 7.4.2 below with respect to bilateral development agencies. For the multilateral donors: Is your government represented on the governing bodies or scientific advisory bodies of the multilateral donors, or the GEF? **Yes**

If **Yes**, has this person/agency/ministry been briefed on the obligations of your country under the Ramsar Convention, and the relevant expectations raised of each CP by the Strategic Plan and COP decisions? **Yes**

7.3.3 Interact with multilateral development agencies and through bilateral development programmes, to assist developing countries in meeting their Ramsar obligations, and report on actions taken and results achieved (Recommendation 5.5). [CPs]

Refer to 7.4.2 to 7.4.6 below.

Proposed national actions and targets: **See 7.4.2**

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Agency for International Development**

Operational Objective 7.4: To obtain funds to fulfil obligations contracted under the Convention, notably for developing countries and countries whose economies are in transition.

Actions - Global and National Targets

7.4.1 Allocate funds for conservation and wise use of wetlands in the budget of each Contracting Party. [CPs]

- **Global Target - By COP8, to see allocations for wetlands made by all CPs and also for specific wetland programmes in more than 40 CPs.**

Does your government allocate funds for wetland conservation and wise use activities? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this happening? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, is this:

- As a separate allocation to a Wetlands Programme (or similar)? **Yes**
- As part of a broader allocation for the environment? **Yes**
- As part of the programmes maintained by a range of Ministries? **Yes**

AND: What mechanisms are in place for determining priorities and coordinating the expenditure of these funds? **Congress uses statutory obligations—such as those outlined in the Clean Water Act—to guide its decision-making for allocating funds towards programs supporting wetlands conservation and wise use of wetlands. Federal government agencies must allocate funds towards this goal if it is to be achieved, and so their programs are prioritized to contribute to that goal. The Farm Bill is another piece of legislation that contains conservation goals and assigns grant monies toward wetland conservation through a program specifically aimed at supporting farmers' wise use of wetlands.**

There are discretionary and non-discretionary funds allocated to different branches of the government. Likewise, those branches have certain liberties to set their own programming priorities. The Environmental Protection Agency has identified three priority areas for Fiscal Year 2002: developing a comprehensive monitoring and assessment program; improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation; and refining the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources.

The Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs), initiated in Fiscal Year 1990, provide eligible applicants an opportunity to conduct projects that promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. While WPDGs can continue to be used by recipients to build and refine any element of a comprehensive wetland program, priority will be given to funding projects that address the three priority areas identified by EPA for FY02. This year, in addition to States, Tribes, local governments (S/T/LGs), interstate associations, and intertribal consortia, eligibility is broadened to include national non-profit, non-governmental organizations. This document governs the grant selection and award process for eligible applicants interested in applying for FY02 WPDGs.

There are a large number of government bodies at the federal and state level that participate in these actions. Large scale funding allocation begins with Congress, which allocates funding based on statutes such as the Clean Water Act to entities such as Department of Interior, EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, and others who in turn to set their own programming priorities based on current trends, jurisdictions, need, and

capacity. No one agency is responsible for leading this action, nor is there any one comprehensive committee or council. There are many, and they overlap.

Is it linked to a National Wetland Policy, Biodiversity Plan, Catchment Plan or something similar? **Yes** In 1998, the President of the United States announced a major new Clean Water Initiative to speed the restoration of the Nation's waterways. The Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP) forms the core of this Clean Water Initiative. The CWAP is an interagency effort. It emphasizes four key tools for achieving clean water goals: 1) a watershed approach, 2) strong federal and state standards, 3) natural resource stewardship, and 4) informed citizens and officials. The watershed approach is the key to setting priorities and taking action to clean up rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. Effective federal and state standards will protect public health, prevent polluted runoff, and ensure accountability. Stewardship allows agencies to apply their collective resources and technical expertise to State and local watershed restoration and protection. Providing information to the public, governments, and others about the health of watersheds and safety of beaches, drinking water, and fish forms the foundation of a sound and accountable water quality program. The CWAP consists of 111 key action items. The eight that apply specifically to wetlands include efforts to:

- 1) avoid wetland losses
- 2) review mitigation effectiveness and accountability
- 3) increase the acres of wetlands restored per year
- 4) develop a single wetlands status and trends report from the Federal government
- 5) issue technical guidance on restoration, creation, and enhancement of wetland functions
- 6) develop an interagency tracking system
- 7) improve access to information
- 8) provide technical and/or financial assistance to integrate habitat considerations into planning programs.

The Plan reaffirms the administration's commitment to conserve wetland resources. It embraces an interim goal of no overall net loss of the Nation's remaining wetlands resource base, and calls for a long-term goal of increasing the quality and quantity of the Nation's wetlands: 100,000 acres (40,470 ha) per year by the year 2005, as well as the restoration of 25,000 miles (40,000 km) of stream corridors in public lands.

To attain the long-term goal of increasing the quality and quantity of the Nation's wetlands, the Plan promotes the restoration of damaged wetland areas through voluntary, non-regulatory programs. A key element of the Action Plan is a new cooperative approach to watershed protection in which state, tribal, federal and local

governments, and the public identify watersheds with critical management needs and then work together to focus resources and implement effective strategies to solve problems.

Although the CWAP proposes new actions to strengthen efforts to restore and protect water resources, it also attempts to build on the foundation of existing clean water programs. The CWAP relies on existing frameworks, programs, and mechanisms by enhancing these and making them more effective. These programs include the Clean Water Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the 1985, 1990, and 1996 Farm Bills, the Interagency Working Group on Federal Wetlands Policy, the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, and the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: multiple

7.4.2 Include projects for conservation and wise use of wetlands in development plans funded by development assistance agencies, and ensure the latter consult the Ramsar administrative authority in each Contracting Party. [CPs]

- **Global Target - To see this trend continue such that all eligible CPs are receiving donor support for a range of major wetland-related projects by the time of COP8. In particular, to see this support being provided, as appropriate, for the priority areas of policy development, legal and institutional reviews, inventory and assessments, the designation and management of Ramsar sites, training and communications.**

If your country has a bilateral development assistance programme, does it allocate funds for wetland-related projects on a regular basis? **Yes**

If **No**, what are the impediments to this occurring? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, are these projects subjected to rigorous impact assessment procedures, which take account of the full environmental, social and economic values of wetlands? **Yes**

If **No**, why not? **Please elaborate.**

If **Yes**, is the Ramsar Administrative Authority consulted during the screening and assessment phases of the projects? **No**

If **No**, why not? **The world-wide scope of U.S. AID projects make it impractical to have every project that may impact wetlands reviewed by the Ramsar Administrative Authority. U.S. AID follows globally recognized environmental processes for establishing its priorities and implementing its projects.**

AND: Is there a formal consultative process in place (such as a National Ramsar Committee) which ensures that the development assistance agency is fully aware of the Ramsar Convention obligations of the country with respect to international cooperation? **Yes**

If No , why not? [REDACTED]
If Yes , please elaborate. U.S. officials at all levels of the process are kept informed regarding the U.S.'s Ramsar commitment through participation in the National Ramsar Committee, regular communications with officials in the field, and regional meetings of AID program officers.
Proposed national actions and targets: [REDACTED]
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Department of State, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Agency for International Development in cooperation.

<p>7.4.4 Mobilize direct funding support from multilateral and bilateral development assistance agencies to assist developing countries and countries whose economy is in transition, in the conservation and wise use of wetlands and in implementation of the present Strategic Plan. [CPs. Bureau]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Target - By COP8 for all the bilateral donors from appropriate CPs to have funds earmarked for wetland projects, and for all of these CPs to have in place mechanisms for consultation between the development assistance agency and their Ramsar Administrative Authority.
Refer to 7.4.2 above

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**GENERAL OBJECTIVE 8
TO PROVIDE THE CONVENTION WITH THE REQUIRED INSTITUTIONAL
MECHANISMS AND RESOURCES**

Operational Objective 8.1: To maximize achievement of Ramsar's mission and objectives by evaluating and, if necessary, modifying the Convention's institutions and management structures.

Actions - Global and National Targets
<p>8.1.9 Promote the establishment of National Ramsar Committees to provide the opportunity for input from, and representation of, governmental and non-governmental organizations, key stakeholders, indigenous people, the private sector and interest groups, and land use planning and management authorities (Recommendation 5.13). [CPs, Bureau, Partners]</p>
Refer to 4.1.2.
<p>8.1.10 Review the designated national focal point in each Contracting Party, with a view to increasing involvement in the work of the Convention from all agencies concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands. [CPs]</p>

Refer to 4.1.1

Operational Objective 8.2: To provide the financial resources required to carry out Ramsar activities.

Actions - Global and National Targets

8.2.1 Pay invoiced contributions to the Convention's core budget in full, and promptly at the beginning of each calendar year. [CPs]

- **Global Target - During this triennium to achieve full and timely payment of all dues by all CPs. The SC to prepare a proposal on sanctions for non-payment for consideration at COP8 (COP7 Resolution VII.28).**

Is your country completely up to date with its annual contributions to the core budget of the Convention? **Yes**

If No, what is the impediment to this being done? **Please elaborate.**

Proposed national actions and targets:

Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: **U.S. Department of State**

8.2.4 Give priority to funding for training programmes, education and public awareness work, development of the Ramsar Database, and the Convention's Communications Strategy. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

- **Global Target - To secure the resources needed to establish regional training initiatives (like *Wetlands for the Future*) in other regions, to allow the Bureau to progress the implementation of the Outreach Programme, and to support the proposed developments for the Ramsar Sites Database into a fully online and Web-based promotional and planning tool of the Convention.**

Refer to 3.3.1 (Convention Outreach Programme), 4.2.4 (Wetlands for the Future).

Operational Objective 8.3: To maximize the benefits of working with partner organizations.

Actions - Global and National Targets

8.3.1 Strengthen cooperative planning mechanisms with the partners and improve communications and information exchange, including exchange of staff. [CPs, Bureau, Partners]

Refer to 3.2.1 and 4.1.2. Does your country include representatives of the Convention's official International Organisation Partners (BirdLife International, IUCN, WWF, Wetlands International) on its National Ramsar Committees or similar bodies, where they exist? **Yes**

If No , what prevents this from occurring? [redacted]
Proposed national actions and targets: [redacted]
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: [redacted]

Operational Objective 8.4: To secure at least one million US dollars per annum for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetlands Conservation and Wise Use (Resolutions 5.8 and VI.6) and to allocate these funds effectively.

Actions - Global and National Targets
8.4.1 Develop a strategy for securing at least one million US dollars annually for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund, to be approved by the first full meeting of the Standing Committee after the 6th COP (1996) and proceed immediately to its implementation. [Bureau, SC, CPs, Partners]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Target - To establish a mechanism to ensure one million US dollars annually for the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (COP7 Resolution VII.28).
Refer also to 8.2.4. For developed countries, do you provide additional voluntary contributions to support the Small Grants Fund? Yes
If No , what prevents this from happening? Please elaborate.
If Yes , is an irregular or regular voluntary contribution? This is an irregular contribution that depends on annual U.S. Government priorities.
Proposed national actions and targets: [redacted]
Ministry, agency/department, or organization responsible for leading on this action: U.S. Department of State