

JO BONNER

1ST DISTRICT, ALABAMA

ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN WHIP

REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

.....
SERVING BALDWIN, CLARKE,
ESCAMBIA, MOBILE, MONROE AND
WASHINGTON COUNTIES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2009

APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE
LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
EDUCATION

ETHICS

RANKING MEMBER

.....
ALAN C. SPENCER
CHIEF OF STAFF

Mr. Matt Menashes
Executive Director
NERRA
444 North Capitol Street Northwest
Suite 322
Washington, DC 20001-1529

Dear Mr. Menashes:

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my support for NERRA's application for funding through NOAA's Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration National and Regional Partnership Grant Program.

Should NERRA be awarded funding through NOAA, I understand they will use the funding to support restoration in reserves, like Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Weeks Bay, located in Baldwin County, Alabama, is known for its pristine water quality, invaluable recreational attributes, ecological integrity, and function as a nursery area for an abundance of seafood organisms. Restoration of damaged or degraded areas is vitally important to maintain and improve the overall integrity of this system. Restoration at Weeks Bay is an ongoing effort in coastal Alabama. The opportunity of funds to achieve projects such as these could go a long way to assist the preservation of coastal habitat and promote an increase in biodiversity. Funding would also provide for current and future benefits to inter-jurisdictional fisheries through the preservation of their wetland spawning, feeding, and nursery habitats; provide direct habitat conservation and water quality benefits to Mobile Bay; and provide essential support to the environmental quality of the Gulf of Mexico through its continued production of fish, wildlife, or other natural resources or through its unique habitats. Over 90 percent of the species associated with the commercial and recreational fisheries of Alabama are dependent on coastal wetland habitat for at least a portion of their life history requirements. Restoration projects funded within reserve boundaries would improve these vital estuarine areas and continue to provide reference sites for future research.

It is my pleasure to support NERRA in any way possible, and I am hopeful that the application will be successful. If you feel that I may be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to let me know.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely,



Jo Bonner
Member of Congress

JB:bj