



Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Coastal Education Center  
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September 10, 2009

Matt Menashes  
Executive Director  
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association  
Suite 322  
444 North Capital Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Matt,

The Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve (JC NERR) strongly supports the NERRA proposal to advance habitat restoration via NOAA's Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration National and Regional Partnership Grants Program. The JC NERR is generally regarded as one of the least disturbed estuarine areas in the northeastern United States and reserve staff welcome an opportunity to partner and receive support as a restoration reference site.

Habitat restoration is a top priority in the mid-Atlantic region. As stated in management plans for the JC NERR and Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program, restoration priorities include assessment of previous restoration projects, support for restoration of priority sites, and incorporation of sea-level rise and other climate-change concerns (*e.g.*, wetland migration and submergence) into restoration planning.

As the managing partner of the JC NERR, the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences at Rutgers University has conducted many restoration science projects throughout coastal areas of New Jersey and Delaware. Strong interest exists to compare habitat utilization patterns between reference sites and estuarine restoration sites. Habitat restoration and restoration science also provide a prime opportunity for reserve volunteers to become engaged as active stewards of the coastal environment.

Along with the intrinsic value of the environmental services associated with marshes, socio-economic benefits can be realized from marsh restoration projects such as recreational use and coastal tourism activities. Healthy and resilient marsh ecosystems also play a key role in protecting coastal land uses.

The JC NERR looks forward to working with you on this restoration initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael P. De Luca".

Michael P. De Luca  
Manager