



## **NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE ASSOCIATION**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2009**

#### **NERRA**

The National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, understanding, and science-based management of our nation's estuaries and coasts. Since 1987, NERRA has been committed to promoting and advancing the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), a network of protected areas established for long-term research, education, and stewardship.

Through an effective partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Estuarine Reserves Division and the coastal states, the NERRS plays a critical role in sustaining the nation's estuaries and coastal communities. There are currently 26 Reserves located throughout the country, comprising more than one million acres of estuarine land and water. Reserves conduct research, monitoring, restoration, education, and training designed to improve our understanding and management of estuaries. This represents a unique collaboration among the scientific, management, and education communities working together on estuarine and coastal issues.

NERRA works to strengthen the NERRS and enable this network to better address growing challenges to our nation's estuaries and coasts. NERRA provides a unified voice for the National Estuarine Research Reserves on estuarine and coastal issues. NERRA also offers an effective forum for the exchange of ideas and information, and promotes partnerships, professional development, and support for the NERRS.

NERRA is directed by the vision and expertise of the managers of the National Estuarine Research Reserves. In addition, representatives from the research, stewardship, and education communities serve on the governing board and contribute knowledge from their professional sectors.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

This Strategic Plan sets out NERRA's mission and vision as well as the goals and objectives that will guide the organization over the next three years. The Strategic Plan 2006-2009 was prepared by the NERRA Strategic Committee, including Ken Berk, Angela Corridore, Paul Dest, Mike Graybill, and Terry Stevens. The Plan was approved by the NERRA Board at the 2005 NERRA Fall Board Meeting in Naples, Florida on December 12, 2005. An electronic copy of the NERRA Strategic Plan is available at [www.nerra.org](http://www.nerra.org). This Plan will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure it remains current and relevant to address the organization's evolving priorities.

## **NERRA'S MISSION**

To inspire the protection of our nation's estuaries and to promote conservation-based research, education, and stewardship through the National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

## **NERRA'S VISION**

Healthy estuaries and coastal watersheds where human and ecological communities thrive.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **GOAL 1**

Increase awareness, use, and support for the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and its estuarine research, education, and stewardship programs.

#### ***Objectives:***

- a. Increase visibility and credibility of the NERRS and ensure agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other partners are utilizing the NERRS' expertise in coastal and estuarine research, education, and stewardship.
- b. Enhance outreach and partnership activities for increased governmental and community support, including maintaining and developing new partnerships to enrich the programmatic strengths of the NERRS.
- c. Strengthen the ability of the NERRS to provide timely, accurate, and reliable information on estuarine and coastal management and to increase estuarine and coastal literacy.
- d. Provide input to the NERRS on emerging trends in coastal and estuarine science, education, and conservation, and make suggestions on changes to address these trends.

### **GOAL 2**

Ensure Congress recognizes the value of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and invests in stewardship of the nation's estuaries and coasts.

#### ***Objectives:***

- a. Support legislation that enhances the health of coastal and estuarine ecosystems and the economic vitality and quality of life in coastal communities, and particularly advocate for reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act.
- b. Support annual Congressional appropriations for NERRS operations and construction and acquisition to meet the growing programmatic, infrastructure, and habitat needs of the NERRS.
- c. Support the authorization of, and funding for, the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program to enable more land to be protected in the nation's coastal zone, particularly those areas within the watersheds of the National Estuarine Research Reserves.
- d. As funding is available, advocate for the expansion of the NERRS into additional coastal and Great Lakes states.

### **GOAL 3**

Establish NERRA as a respected voice for the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and a leading nonprofit organization focused on estuarine and coastal issues.

#### ***Objectives:***

- a. Enhance NERRA's organizational leadership to accomplish its mission as the nonprofit partner of the NERRS.
- b. Develop and maintain an effective Board of Directors and Executive Committee by recruiting and retaining active officers and maintaining contacts with former Board members.
- c. Provide active support for professional staff to implement NERRA's mission and operate an effective organization.
- d. Provide relevant and timely communications to members regarding national estuarine and coastal policy issues and NERRA activities.
- e. Coordinate international, national, and regional initiatives focused on estuaries and coasts.
- f. Maintain a long-term, reliable funding base to provide for NERRA's stability and growth.