



SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT FUNDING TAPPED



The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP) in Corpus Christi, Texas, received \$1.5 million for Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) as part of a settlement between a pipeline company, the State of Texas, and the U.S. Department of Justice. The company agreed to this settlement after it had more than 300 spills of crude oil, gasoline, and other oil products between 1990 and 1997 in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Louisiana, and Alabama.

THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM IN ACTION

Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program

The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program received funds likely because the company's largest spill, a 100,000-gallon oil spill in 1994, caused a 12-mile slick within the area served by the CBBEP on Nueces and Corpus Christi bays. Two additional factors may have contributed to the selection of the estuary program as a recipient of these funds. First, the CBBEP has a long history of public involvement, including strong relationships with both industry and state government; the program was well known by both the pipeline company and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Second, all parties to the settlement recognized that the CBBEP could implement

habitat restoration projects with very low overhead costs.

The CBBEP used the SEP funds to secure an additional \$2.5 million in matching funds, and completed three land acquisition and habitat protection projects:

- They worked with The Nature Conservancy of Texas, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the City of Corpus Christi, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve land with high ecological value or development pressure through either acquisition or conservation easements.
- The estuary program also partnered with the Texas General



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COLLABORATIVE

Land Office to protect six existing rookery islands and restore approximately six acres of colonial waterbird rookery island habitat in Nueces Bay.

- In conjunction with the Texas General Land Office and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the CBBEP planted smooth cord grass along eroding shorelines to reduce erosion and create marsh habitat.

The CBBEP experience underscores the importance of the NEP management approach, and highlights the importance of public outreach and stakeholder involvement.

In order to direct the funding to CBBEP, the State of Texas, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the pipeline company had to conclude CBBEP was a suitable recipient. While the program's

location in the area affected by the 1994 oil spill undoubtedly influenced the decision, its track record of communication with the business community and a history of success in project implementation were also deciding factors.

A streamlined planning process made it possible for CBBEP to deliver a spending plan for \$1.5 million in project funding within one month in order to meet a deadline set by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

With project implementation required within 18 months of funding, the pressure was on and CBBEP was able to tap the capabilities of its partners in order to meet the deadline.

Visit www.cbbep.org to learn more about this and other CBBEP efforts.

EPA's National Estuary Program (NEP) is a unique and successful coastal watershed-based program established in 1987 under the Clean Water Act Amendments. The NEP involves the public and collaborates with partners to protect, restore, and maintain the water quality and ecological integrity of 28 estuaries of national significance located in 18 coastal states and Puerto Rico.

For more information about the NEP go to www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries.

