

Visioning Plenary Address (Thursday, June 25, 2009)

World Estuary Alliance: An International Program Emphasizing the Potential and Benefits of 'Natural Systems' in Sustainable Delta & Estuary Development

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Abstract

This presentation will focus on efforts to combine nature conservation and human development in delta & estuary development.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) recently announced the launch of a World Estuary Alliance (WEA) in 2010. WEA will be an international program that focuses on the value of healthy estuaries and maximizes the potential and benefits of 'natural systems' in sustainable delta & estuary development.

WWF and others are looking for an alternative response to threatened freshwater supply, marine ecosystems and human development in estuary regions.

Vision: Densely populated estuaries will need to act on climate change. The partners of the World Estuary Alliance believe human development and nature conservation go together while coping with climate change.

Objectives: The objectives for the WEA are:

- Raise awareness of the ecological & economic value of healthy estuaries
- Distribute knowledge and science on best practices
- Stimulate implementation of best practices in member-estuaries

The WEA program invites and facilitates representatives from authorities and knowledge institutes, as well as private sector (initiatives) that are active in projects that support the WEA program and vision, by means of:

Program involvement

International project visibility

Collective estuary vision development

Use of an international research network

A multi-disciplinary research agenda and strategic analysis

A structure to use in creation of estuary and urban development strategy

Encouragement of international cooperation (public/private partnership)

Cooperation and interrelated action between WEA member regions

Communication (PR, Activities and Publications)