



Get the solutions flowing

turning talk into action
for natural water infrastructure

Water is life. Without water there would not be life on Earth. We all depend on water – people, business and ecosystems. At the same time, people and business also impact water, creating problems of water scarcity, excessive floods and pollution. We use it, waste it and degrade it without realizing its true value and often take the resource itself and the services it provides for granted.

Wetlands take care of water. Wisely using our wetlands is an essential component of delivering sustainable water management. Wetlands provide natural infrastructure that delivers a wider range of services and benefits than corresponding man-made infrastructure: they can regulate water quantity, contribute to flood regulation and increase resilience to storms in deltas and coastal areas.

Often, they provide a basis for local food security and livelihoods that can be of national and even regional economic significance. Whether considered alone or as a complement to man-made infrastructure, they are an important but often overlooked component of river and coastal zone planning and management.

As the loss and degradation of wetlands of all kinds continues to accelerate worldwide, we place our water resources at greater risk and make ourselves more vulnerable to natural hazards. Therefore, it is vital and urgent to integrate these values into decision-making at all scales and across sectors.

The UN International Year of Water Cooperation provides the opportunity to explore needs and opportunities and to turn our talk into action.

Throughout 2013, there will be efforts around the world to highlight successful water cooperation initiatives. Burning issues for water management will be identified and commitments made to implement solutions. This worldwide focus on water solutions will provide an opportunity to capitalize on the momentum created at the World Water Forum (2012) and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), to develop and manage water resources more sustainably.

The adoption and implementation of integrated water resource management (IWRM) is the recognised global solution to manage water sustainably. This involves managing both the supply and demand of water within a watershed while considering the use of water by different stakeholders and the various roles that natural ecosystems play in the water cycle.

“Good water management for clean natural water and biodiversity is a collective responsibility of entrepreneurs, civil society and government”

Alexandra van Huffelen,
Vice Mayor of Rotterdam City

Joining forces for action: Wetlands International, the City of Rotterdam and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development

all have a strong interest in the future of water – and share the ambition to galvanize action to ensure a sustainable future for business, society and the environment. In 2013, we will work together on a campaign to increase awareness of the importance of wetlands as natural water infrastructure. We will play a convening and facilitating role to help generate practical solutions and mobilise shared action for improved water management, which recognises and capitalises on the role of ecosystems as natural water infrastructure.

“I deeply believe that progressive businesses need to look at their externalities to understand and manage their impacts and dependencies on natural resources, and the way these interact with societies and economies. I strongly encourage all companies to start accounting for the real value of the water they are using, and wetlands they impact and depend on; and to do it now, before it is too late.”

Peter Bakker, President, WBCSD

We invite you to become part of this exciting journey by becoming a collaborating partner, as an individual or as an organisation. This will require you to make at least one new commitment for action in 2013, linked to our campaign goals.

Date:
Thursday,
January 31st
2013

Time:
12:00 – 18:30

Jointly
hosted by





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'Restoration of Chilika Lake
has multiplied fisheries' catches seven-fold'

Starting the journey: on the occasion of World Wetlands Day,

at the start of the UN International Year of Water Cooperation, we cordially invite you to participate in an international agenda-setting event in Rotterdam, that will help shape priorities for action and key messages to other fora.

In this event we aim to identify the key partnerships, actions and approaches needed to overcome the current obstacles to building natural infrastructure more systematically and integrally into water management investments. We will draw on existing knowledge, case studies and solutions and invite participants to highlight possible routes to mobilise action.

We need you to inform, challenge and inspire the debate on bringing natural infrastructure into the mainstream:

- What are the blockages and challenges?
- What sort of cooperation do we need and how do we build it?
- What are the knowledge gaps?
- What are the risks and uncertainties?
- To what extent is there a business case for investing in natural water infrastructure?

Participants will discuss and share experiences in an informal round-table setting, to contribute proposed solutions and to interact with a high level Panel. Through traditional and social media platforms, we will take the event to a wider global audience who can take part, share the conclusions and drive the agenda forward.

Speakers include:

- Alexandra van Huffelen, Vice-Mayor of Rotterdam City
- Wim Kuijken, Delta Commissioner
- Joppe Cramwinckel, Director for Water, World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- Jan Ernst de Groot, Chair of Wetlands International

Participants include selected International and Netherlands-based senior representatives from government, corporates, research institutions, river basin authorities and civil society, who share an interest in this agenda in terms of policy, research or practice.

"Wetlands International is driven by the knowledge that conservation and restoration of wetlands is a vital strategy to improve water security. Investment in water-related natural infrastructure can provide a cost-effective opportunity, for example to ensure adequate water retention and increase coastal resilience. We hope this event will help to stimulate more joined up thinking by government, businesses and civil society to bring ecosystem approaches more centrally into water resource management"

Jan Ernst de Groot,
Chair, Wetlands International

The outcome of this agenda-setting event

will be used as input to the high-level dialogue meetings planned as part of the UN International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013.

Throughout 2013 we will provide and ask for suggestions on what each collaborating partner can do. We will showcase commitments, potential solutions and case studies, linked to the UN Campaign.

By the end of the year, we will take stock of the collective efforts made to improve water management through wetland conservation and restoration and communicate and share the successes and lessons learned.

Building on the agenda set through this event, during 2013, we will join forces again in Rotterdam in early 2014 to bring the results to the attention of a wider audience.

Date: Thursday, January 31st, 2013

Time: 12:00 – 18:30, including lunch and cocktails

Venue: Van Nelle Ontwerpfabriek,
Van Nelleweg 1, Postbus 13229,
3004 HE Rotterdam

Link to map of venue <http://ontwerpfabriek.nl/Evenementen/Contactenroute/Routebeschrijving.aspx>

Please RSVP to Bianca.bouwman@wetlands.org
by Monday, January 14th, 2013

Full programme, panel and participants information available mid-January

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