



Finding what works in conservation



Solution Search

Reducing Our Risk: Innovation for Disaster Preparation



Photo: Blackfoot Challenge



Brett Jenks
Rare, President & CEO

It's easy to get demoralized reading about the world's environmental challenges: overfishing our oceans, elephant and rhino poaching in Africa, drought in western U.S. states. Yet, focusing our energy on the problems can blind us to the potential of emerging solutions.

To illuminate promising community-led solutions and help get them on a path to replication, Rare launched Solution Search in 2011. Since that first contest, Solution Search has uncovered nearly 250 solutions to problems like overfishing and community climate resilience, attracting more than 450 million media impressions along the way. Many of these benefited from the exposure they received and are now making their way into community and program strategies.

Having focused on our first two Solution Searches on international challenges, this year we decided to explore a theme closer to home. 2015 marks the ten-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, and we were wondering: how well-prepared is the United States for extreme weather hazards? What are communities, corporations, and local and national governments doing to reduce the risks or weather-related disasters? We designed our third Solution Search to find out.

The entries submitted, and especially the finalists here, represent what's working in the U.S. – American ingenuity at its finest. We are proud to share them with you in hopes that their promising approaches can make their way across the country and reduce the risk to future weather hazards.



**IN THE
UNITED STATES...**

500 people killed as a result of weather-related disasters in 2012

\$1b in losses caused during each of eight major weather events in 2014

123 million people live in counties on the shoreline

THE TEN FINALISTS

Photo: Blackfoot Challenge



NEW YORK

AMERICAN LITTORAL SOCIETY

Since 2013, the American Littoral Society has spearheaded the Jamaica Bay Marsh Restoration Initiative in New York and restored over 40 acres of Jamaica Bay's salt marsh islands, which provide a buffer from extreme weather and water conditions and help protect New York City from changing conditions and natural disasters.



NEW YORK

BILLION OYSTER PROJECT

The Billion Oyster Project is a long-term restoration plan that teaches students at the Harbor School in New York to practice sustainability by aiding in the implementation of one billion live oysters to the harbor over the next twenty years. The oysters will help filter the harbor's water as well as provide more protection against storm surges. Those behind the project hope it will inspire future generations of conservationists.



MONTANA

BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE

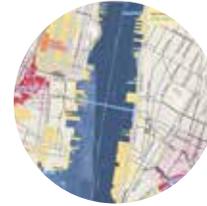
Blackfoot Challenge aims to inspire an effective voluntary active drought response in the Blackfoot Watershed in Montana, gathering support from all members of the community to participate in “shared sacrifice” and conserve water for the collective protection of natural resources and the betterment of the community as a whole.



ILLINOIS

CITY OF OTTAWA

To combat the loss of personal property, businesses, schools and lives due to flooding, the City of Ottawa’s government has purchased riverside land and altered it to return its natural floodplain function. Their successful floodplain management inspired Senator Sue Rezin to advocate for the Illinois Valley Flood Alliance, spreading the City of Ottawa’s message and methods.



NEW JERSEY

CLIMATE CENTRAL

Climate Central has created Surging Seas Risk Finder, an online tool that pulls data from predominantly federal sources to assess the risk of coastal flooding in a given community. It provides users with crucial information that can lead to better decision making and planning, especially in dealing with sea level rise and increasing numbers of severe storms that result in storm surge flooding.



FLORIDA

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

Based in Pensacola, FL, Project GreenShores has worked to create a living shoreline by adding sea grass, an oyster reef and salt marsh islands to a two-mile stretch of downtown Pensacola waterfront. They have been able to provide protection for public infrastructure, a natural habitat for coastal species, improved water quality and recreational opportunities that benefit the local economy.



LOUISIANA

MAKE IT RIGHT

Make it Right has used the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans to set a precedent for strong, easy-to-replicate, sustainable construction at a low cost. The organization has built homes that stand two feet or more above the Base Flood Elevation and has implemented the use of pervious concrete to reduce the amount of water in storm drains and allow residents to stay in their homes when they would otherwise have to evacuate.



VIRGINIA

RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES

Shoreline erosion exacerbates the problem of flooding caused by storm surge, and Restore America's Estuaries promotes the use of living shorelines, rather than hard structures such as bulkheads or sea walls, to fix this problem. Living shorelines are not only more sustainably sourced, but they also offer protection from erosion and a defense against floodwaters and storm surge.



ARIZONA

THE FLAGSTAFF WATERSHED PROTECTION PROJECT

The Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project, a partnership between the City of Flagstaff, State of Arizona and Coconino National Forest, engages in ecologically sound forest restoration activities including prescribed burning and hand thinning in order to minimize the short-term problem of wildfires and the long-term flooding that occurs afterward.



LOUISIANA

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS—CHART

Sixteen percent of Louisiana adults are not literate to a level of comprehending written news stories and instructional material. UNO-CHART has developed the Risk Literacy program, a set of educational materials that explain the risks associated with storms and provides information on preparing for and evacuating in the instance of heavy storms in plain terms with many graphic representations of the information, as well as an edition in Spanish.

JUDGES

Thank you to our judges
for their time and expertise.



Jim Cantore
Meteorologist,
The Weather Channel



Rev. Mitchell Hescox
President & CEO,
The Evangelical
Environmental Network



Sir John Hood
President & CEO,
The Robertson Foundation



Anthony J. Kuczinski
President & CEO,
MunichRe America



Dr. Jane Lubchenco
Former NOAA Administrator



Henry Paulson
Former U.S. Treasury Secretary



Michael C. Sapnar
President & CEO,
TransRe



Matt Silverman
President of
Baseball Operations,
Tampa Bay Rays

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This contest was made possible through the generous support from these organizations.

Photo: Blackfoot Challenge

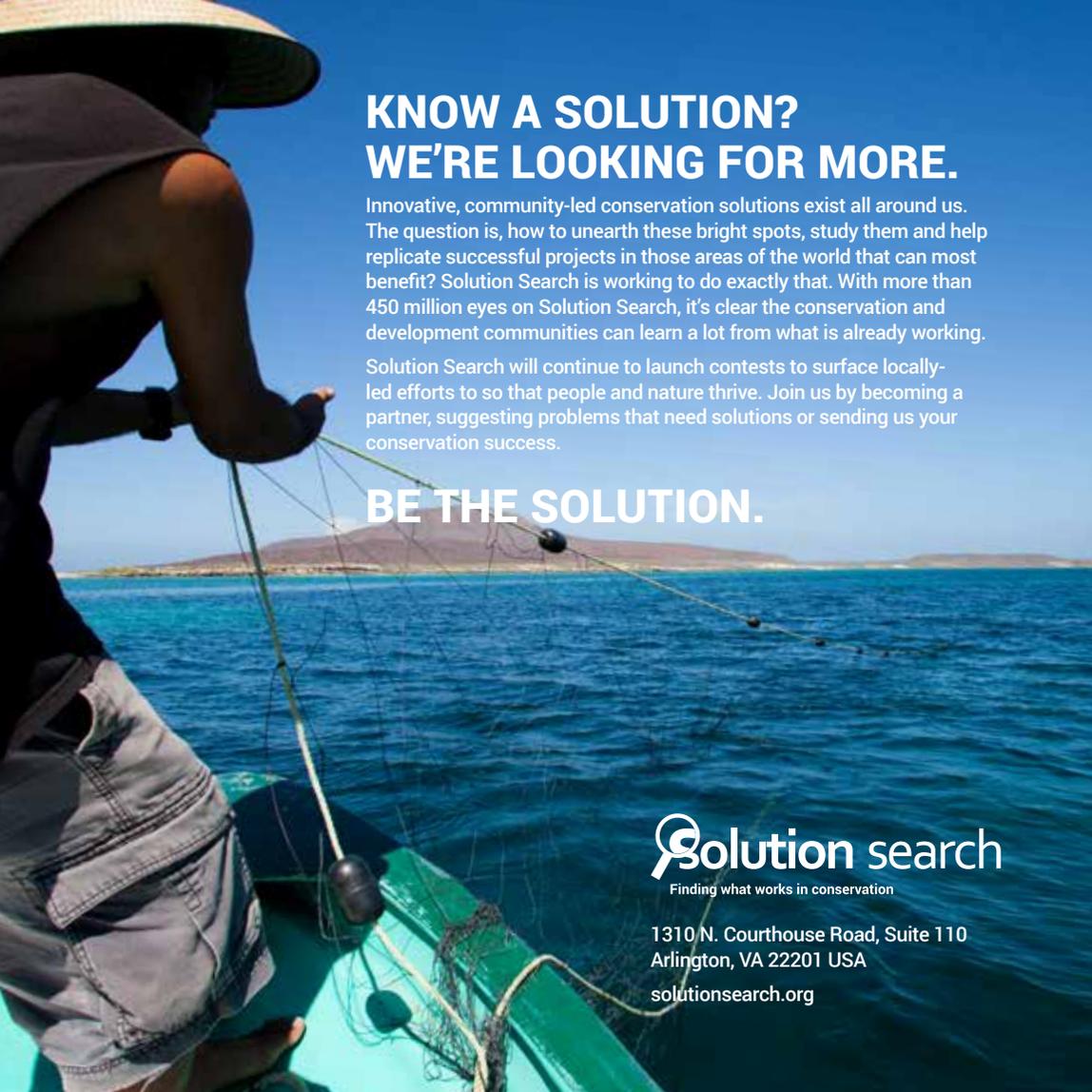
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KNOW A SOLUTION? WE'RE LOOKING FOR MORE.

Innovative, community-led conservation solutions exist all around us. The question is, how to unearth these bright spots, study them and help replicate successful projects in those areas of the world that can most benefit? Solution Search is working to do exactly that. With more than 450 million eyes on Solution Search, it's clear the conservation and development communities can learn a lot from what is already working.

Solution Search will continue to launch contests to surface locally-led efforts to so that people and nature thrive. Join us by becoming a partner, suggesting problems that need solutions or sending us your conservation success.

BE THE SOLUTION.



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