

WETLANDS AND RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS

WETLANDS SERVE AS NATURE'S PROTECTORS.

- Over **90% of natural disasters** are caused by floods, droughts, storm surges and other water-related hazards. Healthy wetlands form a buffer against the increasing number of these events.
- Wetlands are **natural sponges**. Salt marshes, mudflats, mangroves and other wetland habitats store water during floods and preserve surface water during droughts.
- The clean water, food and other services that healthy wetlands provide **help communities cope** immediately following a natural disaster and enhance their sustainable long-term recovery.
- The value of wetlands in countering disasters is seldom understood and appreciated. As a result, they're too rarely considered in disaster **risk reduction** policies and programs.
- The practice of draining wetlands for agriculture, forestry and urbanization drastically reduces the capacity of these ecosystems to help **protect against flooding and drought**.
- Sustainably managing wetlands, and restoring those already degraded, can help reduce the impact of natural disasters and **support long-term recovery**. Maintaining healthy wetlands means that a community can deal with a disaster better the next time.
- Including wetlands in **disaster planning strategies** is imperative as extreme weather events become more frequent and widespread.
- Following Hurricane Katrina, the State and the City of New Orleans restored marshes and other wetlands to **act as buffers** between the sea and the city.

