

Leaders Urge Prioritization of Wetland Restoration to Fight Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss

Panelists at SER2021 highlight economic benefits of wetland restoration and conservation

WASHINGTON DC, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, June 22, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Top academics and NGO experts joined leaders from the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to highlight the vital importance of wetland restoration for addressing the dual planetary crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

“While it’s important to look at all ecosystems, wetlands are particularly important,” said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. “Particularly for the ecosystem functions and services they provide, such as recycling and moderation of water for freshwater ecosystems to thrive and as essential habitats for migratory species.”

Peatlands are particularly crucial in the fight against climate change. They are powerful carbon sinks - estimates suggest that peatlands store the same amount of carbon that is contained in all terrestrial biomass and twice as much as in all the world’s forest biomass. And, when degraded, they emit vast quantities of greenhouse gases. While peatlands can and are being restored, it is a long-term, not a short-



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Director, Convention on Biological Diversity



#SER2021 - the 9th World Conference on Ecological Restoration

term process.

“We need to be sure our restoration action takes special care and notice of irrecoverable carbon – these are vast stores of carbon that could be released due to human activity and, if lost, cannot be restored by 2050,” said Dianna Kopansky, Coordinator of UNEP-led Global Peatlands Initiative, Speaking at [SER2021](#), the 9th World Conference on Ecological Restoration.

Ms.Kopansky and Ms. Mrema were speaking on a high-level plenary panel at SER2021 titled, UN Decade on Restoration: Responding to Climate Destabilization and Wetland/Biodiversity Loss, alongside Professor Brendan Mackey of Griffith University, Professor William Moomaw of Tufts University and Jane Madwick, CEO of Wetlands International.

The panel highlighted the proven benefits of restoring wetlands for biodiversity conservation, food and water security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster prevention.

“Wetlands are the standout ecosystems in terms of biodiversity and in their contribution to Earth’s life support,” said Jane Madwick, CEO of Wetlands International. “Looking to the future, it seems undeniable that we must safeguard the remaining more-or-less intact wetlands and their resilience, plus regenerate others on a big scale for a safe, biodiverse and liveable planet.”



Jane Madwick, CEO,
Wetlands International

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Elizabeth Maruma Mrema

Approximately 25% of all wetland species currently face extinction. And there are proven economic benefits of wetland restoration. The World Resources Institute estimates that for each \$1 USD invested, restoration can generate up to \$30 USD in economic benefits over time, and halting the decline of ecosystem services could prevent losses of \$10 trillion in global income by 2050.

The very recent report from a co-sponsored Workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([IPBES-IPCC](#))

emphasized: “Restoring carbon- and species-rich ecosystems on land and in the ocean is also highly effective for both climate change mitigation and biodiversity, with large adaptation co-benefits.”

Bethanie Walder, Executive Director of SER, said of the findings: "Not only are the climate change and biodiversity crises two sides of the same coin, but ecological restoration can no longer be thought of as separate from the vital work needed to address these two issues in order to protect human health and societal wellbeing."

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About the [Society for Ecological Restoration](#)

The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) advances the science, practice and policy of ecological restoration to sustain biodiversity, improve resilience in a changing climate, and re-establish an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture. An international non-profit organization with over 4,000 members in more than 85 countries, we actively promote participatory, knowledge-based approaches to restoration. Learn more about our work at www.ser.org.

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