

25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE NATIONAL WETLANDS AWARDS

National Wetlands Awards Past-Recipient Spotlight: Jan Goldman-Carter



Photo by Rachel Kramer

Jan Goldman-Carter, the 1993 recipient in the nonprofit category, has been a great asset to the nonprofit community for her dedication to wetlands over the years. She began her career as a biologist working on wetlands protection through the Clean Water Act (CWA) and continued this work after becoming an attorney. Currently working for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Jan has worked with various conservation groups since 1987 and has published numerous articles on wetlands conservation.

Jan grew up in Miami, Florida, spending much of her childhood exploring the beaches, mangroves, and Everglades of south Florida, as well as the springs, rivers, and estuaries further north. Threats to these fragile ecosystems in the 1960s and 1970s provided the initial motivation for Jan's wetland conservation work. "The Everglades, of course, were first impacted by the Corps of Engineers' drainage and construction of the Tamiami Trail," Jan says, "but threats to the Everglades ecosys-

tem continue to mount." She attributes her life-long interest in wetland conservation to her family, "a family that was always out on the water and really loved the waters of Biscayne Bay and the Everglades."

While working as an attorney at NWF, she witnessed thousands of acres of wetlands being wiped out each year due to poor environmental scrutiny in development. This prompted her to take action and get involved in some of the most well-known cases on wetlands regulation. She worked on the 1990 *North Carolina Wildlife Federation*

"The wetlands award was an affirmation that my work was recognized, that it was appreciated among my colleagues, who I have a great deal of respect for."

v. Tulloch case, which challenged the drainage of hundreds of acres of North Carolina wetlands without a CWA §404 permit. She later wrote an amicus brief on behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and in support of broad CWA jurisdiction in the *Rapanos v. United States* case.

In states across the country, Jan has fought to ensure that streams, lakes, and wetlands are protected under the CWA. She has advised

wetlands advocates in Indiana, Minnesota, and other states on state regulations for water quality and wetlands protection. This has required the collaboration among those in the science, sportsmen, and environmental communities to emphasize the importance of smaller streams and wetlands and to advocate for their protection under the CWA. "We tend to think about the big estuaries and the iconic waters and forget that the bulk of the watershed, most of the waters in every watershed that is intact, are these small, headwater and intermittently flowing streams and their associated wetlands. Without them you can't have a healthy Chesapeake Bay or Gulf of Mexico and that recognition is inherently a matter of science," Jan explains. Her work for the past 10 years has been to integrate the science, law, and policy to protect these smaller streams, creeks, and wetlands.

Speaking about the National Wetlands Award, Jan says, "It's very inspiring . . . when a farmer or an embattled state regulator or a mayor or a habitat manager you know shares his story." Jan has been motivated by the awards program to continue working toward wetlands conservation and restoration. "It's very hard to protect wetlands in the face of relentless development pressures and it tends to be kind of a thankless task. The wetlands award was an affirmation that my work was recognized, that it was appreciated among my colleagues, who I have a great deal of respect for." ■—Hinal Patel