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PRESS RELEASE

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Delaware Bay Celebrated as “Site of Hemispheric Importance” for Shorebirds at 25-Year Anniversary Event

Henry M. Paulson, Jr., Conservationist and 74th Secretary of the U.S. Treasury to Give Keynote Address

Bivalve, Port Norris, NJ—March 22, 2011—On May 9, 2011, a 25-year anniversary event will celebrate the international conservation efforts for shorebirds of the Delaware Bay and the many people who have worked to keep shorebirds in our lives. Hosted by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) and a coalition of Delaware Bay conservation groups, the event will be held at the restored oyster shipping sheds and wharves of the [Bayshore Discovery Project](#), Bivalve, Port Norris, NJ. Henry M. Paulson, Jr., conservationist and 74th Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, will be the keynote speaker.

Twenty-five years ago, biologists, citizens and political leaders came together to recognize Delaware Bay as a Site of Hemispheric Importance for migrating shorebirds, marking the beginning of WHSRN. Since then, this international conservation strategy of designating important breeding, stopover, and wintering areas for shorebirds has grown steadily and now

includes 84 sites in 13 countries spanning the entire hemisphere, from Canadian Arctic to the tip of South America.

The event will highlight the continuing importance of the Delaware Bay's natural resources, not only as one of the world's top shorebird stopover sites but also as a source of recreation and economic growth for millions of residents of New Jersey, southeastern Pennsylvania, and Delaware. The Bay's estuary includes more than 400,000 acres of wetlands, stretching along the southwestern coast of New Jersey and the coast of Delaware. As a major stop on the Atlantic Flyway, the Delaware Bayshore is a staging ground for migratory shorebirds of six species, including Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Semipalmated Sandpiper.

The Bayshore and adjacent forest also provide world-famous stopover habitat for migratory passerines and raptors, and an ecotourism industry valued in the tens of millions of dollars. In addition, several species of waterfowl congregate in large numbers off-shore during the winter months.

The Delaware Bay WHSRN Site of Hemispheric Importance was dedicated in May 1986 by proclamation of the Governors of New Jersey (Thomas Keane) and Delaware (Michael Castle). This year's 25th anniversary event recognizes the vision and dedication of the founders and early conservationists involved in WHSRN, widely recognized as the most effective flyway-scale shorebird network in the world. The event also recognizes WHSRN's role today and that of a coalition of conservation groups working to ensure Delaware Bay's future.

Looking ahead to the event, Mr. Paulson expressed that he is pleased to take part in the celebration. "Delaware Bay is an important piece of our nation's rich natural heritage," says Paulson. "The collective efforts of partners like the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and South Jersey Bayshore Coalition are to be applauded for the conservation of this treasured place."

"Delaware Bay is vital to human well-being and the natural world," says Charles Duncan, who directs WHSRN's Executive Office and leads the Shorebird Recovery Project at Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. "We celebrate those visionaries who, 25 years ago, created WHSRN as a voluntary approach to protecting the Bay and connecting it with other important sites. The people of Delaware and New Jersey can feel proud about the vision and effort that have gone into the stewardship of this important site. In doing so, we are reminded again of the Bay's continuing importance and the threats it faces. At the same time, troubling new data about declines in shorebird populations across the Hemisphere are an urgent call to action to ensure that the treasures of our coastlines and interior wetlands continue in a vibrant future for generations to come."

"After 25 years, shorebird protection has grown more difficult and vital to the survival of many shorebird species like the Red Knot," adds Larry Niles of the Shorebird Project and former chief of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Endangered and Nongame Species Program. "This event is truly a celebration of the extraordinary international conservation

efforts for shorebirds of the Delaware Bay stopover and the many people that have worked together to create real change.”

Niles appeared in the PBS *Nature* film *Crash: A Tale of Two Species* which explored conservation efforts in Delaware Bay for the Red Knot shorebird, whose existence depends on horseshoe crabs. The film was written, produced, and narrated by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Allison Argo.

The anniversary milestone event will bring together conservationists, political leaders, scientists, birders, land managers, media, and a variety of other attendees who have an interest in the stewardship of Delaware Bay. In addition to the former Secretary of the U.S. Treasury as keynote speaker, other prominent speakers will include conservationist and National Book Award winner, Phillip M. Hoose, who will read from his forthcoming book for young readers entitled *B-95: A Year in the Life of the Moonbird*. Guests will enjoy a special reception with hearty fare along with other festivities that are being planned.

To learn more about this event, and to register, visit www.manomet.org

About WHSRN: The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network is the oldest hemispheric-scale voluntary conservation collaborative in the world. Its mission is the conservation of shorebird species and their habitats through a network of key sites in the Americas. WHSRN currently comprises 84 sites in 13 nations, some 31 million acres. The Executive Office of WHSRN is a key program of Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences’ hemispheric-scale [Shorebird Recovery Project](#). Learn more about WHSRN at www.whsrn.org.

About South Jersey Bayshore Coalition: The South Jersey Bayshore Coalition is a group of nonprofit organizations working to preserve the cultural heritage and environmental integrity of the Bayshore along the southwest coast of New Jersey. The Coalition promotes protection by building state and local awareness, appreciation and understanding of the region’s vital natural and historic resources. In addition to its focus on cultural and historic heritage, the Coalition is committed to promoting sustainable agriculture; preserving wildlife habitat; protecting ground and surface water quality and quantity; and to promoting compatible economic revitalization. For more information, visit www.sjbayshore.org.