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Contact:  
MK LeFevour  
520.622.5485  
mkl@ser.org

**JAMES ARONSON RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD**

TUCSON: On August 8, 2007, James Aronson, co-founder of the Restoring Natural Capital Alliance, was presented with the prestigious Communications Award by the Society for Ecological Restoration International for his work as a passionate and effective advocate of ecological restoration. Aronson is the sixth winner of the Communications Award since it was established in 1998.

“In the history of the field of ecological restoration, there are few people who have been more passionate than James Aronson about spreading the word about the need for ecological restoration,” said George Gann, Chair of the Board of the Society for Ecological Restoration International. “Dr. Aronson has traveled across the world to speak and write and teach about the importance of restoring ecosystems and biodiversity, which constitute the natural capital that in assures the flows of nature’s goods and services for the benefit of people. Not only has he been dedicated, but he has also been extremely effective in enriching the public conversation about restoration.”

Based in France, where he works for the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), the U.S.-born Aronson coordinates the Restoring Natural Capital Alliance, an international network of nonprofit, non-governmental organizations that offer locally appropriate solutions to resolve environmental and economic development problems simultaneously, in underdeveloped countries and industrialized countries alike. The Alliance has projects in the Mediterranean Basin, Africa, Madagascar, Australia, and Latin America. Related programs are under development in China and India as well.

In addition to his pioneering work communicating the mission and importance of the Restoring Natural Capital Alliance around the world, Aronson also serves as editor of the Society for Ecological Restoration International/ Island Press Book Series. During a period of just five years, he has facilitated the publication of 13 seminal books on restoration ecology, in collaboration with Don Falk, associate editor of the series, and Barbara Dean, executive editor from Island Press. He has also written/edited several books on restoration and related topics and published numerous articles in scientific and popular journals. His most recent book, co-edited with Suzanne Milton and James Bignaut, is *Restoring Natural Capital: Science Business and Practice* (Island Press, 2007)

Aronson was honored to receive the Communications Award. He said, “It represents a very

welcome recognition that communication with scientists, practitioners and, above all, the general public is critical to the success of ecological restoration as a science, a profession, and social movement. For me, personally, it is something to live up to, and to continue pursuing energetically, across as many geographical, linguistic, political and cultural frontiers as possible.”

Aronson said that as the world faces the challenges of global climate change, desertification, and loss of biodiversity, communication is going to be a vital factor for gaining support and financing for ecological restoration. “We must communicate across the deep and wide scientist and non-scientist divide, and across the gulf separating hardcore conservationists and mainstream economists,” Aronson said. “The upbeat message is that there are many ways in which restoration can improve people’s lives and increase resilience to the tide of climate change and other profound global changes. This is fundamentally an optimistic, positive and can-do message, unusual in environmental thinking, which tells us that unprecedented losses of natural capital and biodiversity, which we have brought upon ourselves, can be rolled back. The science and practice so well represented by the Society for Ecological Restoration International offers a challenge to remake our world. People are eager to respond to it, but to respond they have to hear about it first.”

Aronson said the essence of the message he has been trying to communicate across the globe is: “We need an economy in which nature matters and an ecology in which people matter.”

For more information on the Restoring Natural Capital Alliance and the Society for Ecological Restoration International/ Island Press Book Series, please visit [www.rncalliance.org](http://www.rncalliance.org), [www.ser.org](http://www.ser.org) and [www.islandpress.org](http://www.islandpress.org).

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Founded in 1988, the Society for Ecological Restoration International is a membership organization with members in 37 countries as well as 14 independent chapters across the globe. The mission of the Society is to promote ecological restoration as a means of sustaining the diversity of life on Earth and reestablishing an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture.