



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA, Rhode Island Governor and Local Officials Launch Next Phase of Narragansett Bay Debris Cleanup

State of Rhode Island and federal officials joined with Clean the Bay this morning to celebrate the success of the first major sweep of some 1,000 tons of marine debris from Narragansett Bay and to launch "Clean Sweep II."

This begins the second year of a comprehensive clean-up of all marine debris from the state's shoreline. Gov. Donald Carcieri, Department of Environmental Management officials, Rhode Island's Congressional delegation and officials of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration spoke at the ceremonies.

At the event, Timothy R.E. Keeney, NOAA's deputy assistant secretary for oceans and atmosphere, gave Clean the Bay and the Rhode Island DEM the second major grant to help fund the next phase of *Project Clean Sweep*. The \$170,000 grant, the second largest community-based marine debris prevention and removal grant in the nation, is a tribute to the monumental work that this public-private partnership has already accomplished in its first year. Following on the success of its first year, Clean the Bay and RIDEM have an impressive plan to expand the cleanup of debris to 86 additional miles or nearly a quarter of the shoreline of the Ocean State.

"NOAA is proud to be part of this extraordinary Rhode Island partnership to remove hundreds of tons of debris from the state's waters and shoreline," said Keeney. "Project Clean Sweep is a shining example of what NOAA wants to accomplish around the country with local and state partners through our new community-based program to remove debris that clogs our coastal waters, sickens and kills marine creatures and damages local economies."

"Project Clean Sweep is a wonderful example of how individual citizens can accomplish great things with a little government help," said Gov. Carcieri. "In particular, this effort to clean and preserve our most important natural asset, Narragansett Bay, demonstrates the real contributions that Rhode islanders can make to the Ocean State."

In nine months of 2007, Clean the Bay, an organization founded by charter boat captains Ed Hughes and Alan Wentworth, removed debris that littered 64 miles of shoreline and more than 300 acres of the bay. The first year's efforts included removal of three barges, more than 18 derelict boats, over 100 lobster pots, yards of abandoned fishing gear, many telephone poles and tons of plastic bottles, caps and other debris.

Removing debris – some that has clogged the bay for decades – helps restore the bay for the public and for the fish, birds and animals that depend on clean water and a healthy ecosystem. Abandoned fishing lines and plastic trash can choke, entangle and kill fish, birds and turtles. Leaching from tires and creosote-soaked telephone poles contaminates water. Large debris also prevents safe fishing, boating, swimming and many other vital economic uses of the bay. And finally marine debris damages the beauty of Narragansett Bay - Rhode Island's

greatest natural treasure.

Following comments by state and federal officials, Clean the Bay took Governor Carcieri, dignitaries and journalists out into Narragansett Bay on its 56-foot mechanized landing craft to see how it uses a crane to pluck large debris from the water. Clean the Bay uses the military-style landing craft and a marsh walker on loan from RIDEM to collect large debris. In addition, the program includes a coordinated volunteer campaign to clean up small debris from beaches through organized cleanups, and an innovative reporting program that allows the U.S. Coast Guard to notify Clean the Bay of floating debris so it can be scoop up before it becomes a safety hazard to boaters.

Clean Sweep I involved more than 458 volunteers from around the state. This year's volunteer coordinator estimates that number will grow to 620. The volunteer effort not only cleans debris from beaches and shoreline, it also sends a powerful message across the state that prevention is much smarter, less expensive and easier than removing debris.

The NOAA grant that will help fund Clean Sweep II is one of several community-based marine debris prevention and removal grants that total approximately \$1.17 million for projects around the nation. NOAA's Marine Debris Program provides financial and technical assistance to local groups to clean marine debris and to prevent new debris from damaging the marine ecosystem.

For more information on NOAA's Marine Debris Program go to <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov>

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

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