



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA Renews Partnership with The Nature Conservancy: Works with Florida and Georgia Communities to Restore Coastal Habitats

NOAA has teamed up once again with The Nature Conservancy to preserve America's valuable coastal resources. The new three-year partnership will build on past successes protecting coastal and marine habitat, while engaging local communities through volunteer and educational opportunities.

NOAA's Restoration Center has awarded \$800,000 in the first year to fund the restoration of fish and shellfish habitat in 14 innovative projects that stretch from the California shores to the oyster beds of New England and Florida. NOAA has awarded \$174,421 to projects in Florida and Georgia. NOAA staff collaborated with TNC during the project selection process and will provide technical expertise and oversight through the life of the partnership.

"America's rich history began with early settlers building their communities on the wealth of marine resources available along our coasts and rivers," said William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "These projects will help rebuild oyster reefs, open rivers for sturgeon and salmon and restore habitat for oysters and other shellfish. They will improve the environment and benefit the economies of local communities."

In the Southeast region, the following projects were selected to receive partnership support. In addition to the NOAA award listed below, TNC's Global Marine Initiative will provide a match.

Building a Living Shoreline on Sapelo Island: A Demonstration Project, Georgia \$60,000

The NOAA-TNC partnership will help create highly visible demonstration sites for shoreline restoration and stabilization along the Georgia coast. Living shorelines stabilize banks and minimize coastal erosion while also creating natural habitat for estuarine and coastal plants and animals. The project will explore effective techniques for creating living shorelines as well as educate local communities on the benefits of shoreline restoration. Volunteers will help plant vegetation and build an oyster reef, and the public can visit the site for guided tours upon completion.

Restoring Intertidal Oyster Reefs in Florida: Indian River Lagoon \$60,000

TNC and the University of Central Florida will implement and monitor a project to restore intertidal reefs of the eastern oyster. The oyster reefs in the ecologically and economically important Indian River Lagoon system have suffered extensive losses due to boat wakes in recent years, but "no wake" zones are unlikely to be created to protect oysters in the near future. With the help of community volunteers and collaborations with Watershed Action Volunteers and Brevard Zoo, the project aims to restore 20 acres of intertidal oyster reef.

Loxahatchee River Oyster Restoration: Restoring Essential Fish Habitat, Florida \$54,421

Local community members are teaming up with TNC to restore oyster habitat in the Loxahatchee River. While areas of the river are known to have the ideal water conditions for oyster reef development, the river bottom is unsuitable for oyster to latch on to. Through the use of limestone rock along gently sloping sandy shoreline and bags of oyster shell under volunteer homeowners' docks, the project directors will create pockets of suitable habitat for oyster larvae to settle on and, over time, develop into healthy reefs.

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 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries Service, please visit: www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program (CRP), a financial and technical assistance program within the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to fund grassroots, community-based activities. The NOAA-funded projects provide strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities in addition to long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. More information about CRP can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

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