
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE
NEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230

NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION

Contact: Aja Sae-Kung
(202) 482-6090

NOAA03-R979
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 23, 2003

**NOAA AWARDS OVER \$963,000 TO UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
FOR OYSTER REEF RESTORATION**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has awarded a \$963,000 grant to the University of South Alabama to continue support of the Alabama Oyster Reef Restoration Program. This program represents a unique pairing of oyster reef creation and targeted research. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department.

The award, provided by the NOAA Restoration Center, will support oyster reef creation activities in areas of Mobile Bay that have historically supported highly productive reefs. The University of South Alabama will direct and supervise the placement of oyster shell in various orientations and locations in the bay and will monitor the reefs for survivability, productivity and benefit to fisheries.

The three main goals of the program are: to develop the scientific understanding necessary to direct current and future oyster restoration and enhancement in Alabama; to assist in the development of a long-term strategy for sustained productivity of Alabama's oyster resources including the other species that the reefs support; and to provide this information to state and federal management agencies, the fishing industry, and the general public through outreach.

"NOAA and the Bush Administration are working to improve the understanding of our environment and to strengthen local and regional initiatives like the Alabama Oyster Reef Restoration Program," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "This grant to the University of South Alabama will help advance knowledge critical to those efforts in ecosystem-based management."

Each year, NOAA awards approximately \$900 million in grants to members of the academic, scientific and business communities to assist the agency in fulfilling its mission to study the Earth's natural systems in order to predict environmental change, manage ocean resources, protect life and property, and provide decision makers with reliable scientific information. NOAA goals and programs reflect a commitment to these basic responsibilities of science and service to the nation for the past 33 years.

- more -

The NOAA Restoration Center (RC), within the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to enhance living marine resources to benefit the nation's fisheries by restoring their habitat. More information about the RC can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. To learn more about NOAA, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

###