



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Eric Hutchins
(978) 281-9313

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Or
Teri Frady
(508) 495-2239

NOAA RECOGNIZES CHELSEA WOMAN AS 2006 ENVIRONMENTAL HERO

Gloucester, Mass.—The Commerce Department’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has named Roseann Bongiovanni of Chelsea, Massachusetts as a 2006 Environmental Hero. Hers is one of just ten such awards given nationally by NOAA this year.

Bongiovanni is a long-time advocate for wetland habitat protection and restoration in Chelsea, a town with more than a century’s experience of heavy industrial use and the environmental headaches that can accompany it.

“I first got to know Roseann after an oil spill in 1999,” said Eric Hutchins, the NOAA fishery biologist who nominated her for the award. “Chelsea had a remnant salt marsh. Using the settlement fund from the spill as a start, Roseann proceeded not just to protect that one little bit of marsh, but to get busy restoring the entire Mill Creek marsh system for public use and enjoyment.” Hutchins works as a restoration coordinator at NOAA’s Fisheries Service in the Northeast region.

The Mill Creek Salt Marsh Restoration project, which Bongiovanni managed, took five years of work to plan, fund, and execute. It will be dedicated this spring and the Environmental Hero Award will be presented at that time. The project removed approximately 1500 cubic yards of stormwater sediments during the fall of 2005 at the head of Mill Creek, creating the conditions to support about an acre of salt marsh habitat. In May, the site will be planted with more than 6,000 individual marsh plants.

“It takes vision and a lot of drive to pull together all the support needed in a community to re-invigorate a salt marsh, even in the best conditions,” said Patricia Kurkul, NOAA Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Administrator, “Roseann truly exemplifies an important lesson: effective environmental stewardship requires perseverance. We are proud to work with Roseann and pleased to present her with this award.”

Bongiovanni is a Chelsea native and resident. She has a master’s degree in Public Health from Boston University and is a Chelsea city councilor. She is a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society and is training as a marathon runner.

Established in 1995 to commemorate the 26th anniversary of Earth Day, the Environmental Hero award is presented to individuals and organizations that volunteer their time and energy to help NOAA carry out its mission. Earth Day is April 22.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats 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.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, 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. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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On the Web:

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

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