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NOAA LAUNCHES REDEVELOPED WEB SITE ON U.S. MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

The Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, has re-developed the U.S. Web site on marine protected areas, providing an easier way to access updates on Presidential Executive Order 13158 on marine protected areas (MPAs). The user-friendly site contains improved and expanded information on topics such as MPA definitions; federal MPA legislation and programs; the marine managed areas inventory; the MPA Federal Advisory Committee; and online regional information centers.

The redeveloped Web site, <http://mpa.gov>, also includes frequently asked questions about MPAs, a glossary of terms related to U.S. MPAs, and archived portions from the original Web site. In addition, an extensive keyword search has been created for the online library. The library currently contains more than 1,000 resources on MPAs.

"Working together to care for our oceans and coasts require the right tools and information," said National Ocean Service Assistant Administrator, Richard W. Spinrad. "Our new Web site makes access to information about one important tool, marine protected areas, that much easier."

The MPA Web site, managed by the National Marine Protected Areas Center, offers improved navigation, extended topic selections and a colorful new look. The National MPA Center is a collaboration between the Departments of Commerce and the Interior.

MPA Executive Order 13158 requires that the Departments of Commerce and the Interior maintain a Web site as a main source of information about the nation's MPAs. The Executive Order was signed in May 2000, and the related Web site was launched in December 2000.

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.

The Department of the Interior is the nation's principal conservation agency. Interior serves as the steward for approximately 426 million acres of America's public land, representing about 19 percent of the U.S. land surface and 66 percent of all federally owned land. Interior also manages mineral development on the 1.48 billion acre U.S. outer continental shelf. Interior's National Park Service currently manages 385 parks and serves about 285 million visitors. Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service is the primary federal agency responsible for the protection, conservation and renewal of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats, and manages 538 refuges and 37 wetland management districts throughout the United States.

On the Web:

Department of Commerce: <http://www.commerce.gov>

Department of the Interior: <http://www.doi.gov>

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

National Marine Protected Areas Center: <http://www.mpa.gov>