



Ocean Research Programs

NOAA Mission Goal

To protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through an ecosystem approach to management

What is requested?

The FY 2006 President's budget request includes \$118.6M for the Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Programs within NOAA Research. Particularly noteworthy are the requests of \$61.2M for the National Sea Grant College Program and \$22.7M for the Ocean Exploration Program. These levels are consistent with the FY 2005 congressionally appropriated levels. The request also includes \$10.5M for the NOAA Undersea Research Program, \$2.5M for the National Aquatic Invasive Program, \$1.6M for the Marine Aquaculture Program, and \$20.1M for the ecosystem work carried out by NOAA Research Laboratories and Joint Institutes. This fact sheet highlights the Sea Grant and Ocean Exploration programs, due to the increased levels of funding requested this year in comparison to prior requests.

Why do we need it?

NOAA Research's ecosystem programs conduct research necessary to foster science-based decisions about the use and conservation of our aquatic resources. The recommendations of the 2004 U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy report reaffirm the importance of NOAA Research's ecosystem programs. In the Ocean Action Plan, submitted in response to the Commission's recommendations, the Administration supports ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research including exploration for discovery, technology development, and continuing research observations that have substantial societal benefits.

The Commission recommended that NOAA move to a regional ecosystem management approach and develop information plans to coordinate ocean and coastal activities in each region. The report states that for U.S. policy to be effective, NOAA must focus on regions defined by environments rather than political boundaries. The Administration proposes to make Sea Grant a key tool in NOAA's Regional Ecosystem Approach. NOAA is beginning the process of defining regional ecosystem boundaries and will work with other interested parties to develop information plans and identify priority actions.

The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy also emphasized the importance of ocean exploration activities. NOAA's Ocean Exploration Program seeks to increase our national understanding of unknown or poorly known ocean systems and processes by conducting 25-30 expeditions per year. In addition, the program spends 10% of all its funds for education and outreach to improve ocean literacy in America and to stimulate student interest in ocean science. The data and information from these cruises are made available to all researchers and the general public on an award winning website www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov.

Ocean Research Programs At-a-Glance

What: \$118.6M Total for Ocean Research Programs
Why: NOAA Research programs work to foster science-based decisions about the use and conservation of our aquatic resources.



What will we do?

NOAA is in the process of defining regional ecosystem boundaries to implement the Ocean Commission recommendation that NOAA move to a regional ecosystem approach and coordinate ocean and coastal activities in each region. Sea Grant will use its extensive working relationships at the state and local level to facilitate NOAA's development of regional priorities by expanding the research and information planning efforts initiated in FY 2005 to include three additional regions. As the regional ecosystem information plans are developed, priority actions will be identified for Sea Grant's integrated research, education, extension and communication programs. This new regional focus will enhance Sea Grant's ability to make a critical contribution to this NOAA effort.

NOAA's Ocean Exploration Program spends the majority of its funds on science and education activities conducted by non-NOAA personnel to enhance NOAA's and our Nation's understanding of the deep oceans and ocean ecosystems. In FY 2005, a portion of the increased Ocean Exploration Program base is being used for infrastructure on NOAA's first designated exploration vessel, scheduled for sea trials in FY 2007. As this infrastructure is completed, base funds will support an expanded set of expeditions and projects selected through a peer-reviewed process.

What are the benefits?

Sea Grant's stable national infrastructure in every coastal and Great Lake state enables rapid transfer of objective scientific information to users, timely identification of emerging issues, and a forum to engage local constituencies in policy and priority setting. Sea Grant reaches millions of people through its communication, education, and extension networks.

Sea Grant plays a unique and important role in advancing our national interest in marine resources. Together with the Office of Naval Research and the National Science Foundation, Sea Grant and other NOAA programs provide the only sustained Federal contact and funding source for universities with marine research capabilities. By employing the expertise and skills of the network's 300+ universities, research institutions, and programs, Sea Grant activities have spurred economic growth and cost savings, created new products and services, enhanced coastal and marine resource management, reduced the loss of life and property, and educated tens of thousands of K-12 and university students.

NOAA's Ocean Exploration Program is a national program, providing the opportunity of discovery to scientists in academia, federal agencies, and the commercial sector. There is no other dedicated source of funding or logistics for discovery-based science. Limits in undersea technology and exploratory funding have kept the ocean frontier beyond reach, and this program seeks to reduce and eventually eliminate that barrier. The economic and social benefits of anticipated discovery are potentially significant, and the promise of discovery is clear. Wherever the program has explored, new discoveries and information have been found.

For more
information:

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The FY 2006 NOAA Research Request for Ocean Research Programs includes:

- Sea Grant
- Ocean Exploration
- National Undersea Research Program
- Aquatic Invasive Species Program Initiative
- Marine Aquaculture Initiative
- Laboratories & Cooperative Institutes



NOAA Budget
FY 2006

Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research
Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Research

\$ 118.6M Total