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FUNDING TO HELP RESTORE THE GULF OF MAINE

*\$2,000,000 in funding available to help restore and protect
coastal and marine resources*

Portland, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby, along with the United States Coast Guard-First District (USCG) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, announced today the availability of funding through the *Gulf of Maine Environmental Compliance & Protection Fund (GOMF)* for regional, community or locally-based programs or projects that restore important habitats and living resources.

The *GOMF* was created as a result of a community service payment generated from the settlement of a criminal enforcement action by the U.S. Attorney and the USCG with the Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. associated with discharges and disposals of oil residue and oily mixtures in coastal waters of Maine. Distribution of funds from the *GOMF* will be based on the terms of that settlement. As a result of the settlement, approximately \$2 million is expected to be available for projects in the region over the next two to three years depending upon the quality of applications received.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to supporting conservation within Maine and throughout the Gulf of Maine," said U.S. Attorney Paula Silsby. "We have been successful in recovering millions of dollars from the prosecutions of companies that once used our rivers and coastline as dumping grounds for pollution. We are pleased to be able to direct those funds to worthy organizations like those which will apply to the Gulf of Maine Environmental Gulf of Maine Environmental Compliance & Protection Fund."

"The GOMF program is a great example of the successful partnership between the US Coast Guard and the US Attorney for the District of Maine," said Cmdr. Thomas Miller, Deputy Prevention Chief for the First Coast Guard District, Boston, MA. "The funds from this settlement are an investment in the restoration of the Maine coast for years to come."

Funds are to be directed through a competitive program for projects that will help to restore resources possibly damaged by the discharges addressed in the settlement, including those involving Maine's coastal wetlands and upland buffers, rivers and riparian corridors that support Maine's native sea run fish, lands and waters in Maine that support coastal federally endangered and threatened species, and lands that support Maine's coastal national wildlife refuges.

Funding for projects will range from \$35,000 to \$300,000 and be available to community organizations, educational groups, and state, local and federal government for projects occurring within the Maine portion of the Gulf of Maine watershed (extending from Kittery to Cobscook Bay) which includes all lands that are part of Maine's coastal watersheds.

"There is perhaps no better effort for these funds to support," said Miller. "It is fitting that fines collected during a criminal environmental damage case be used in the long term and overall conservation of the coastal and marine environment."

Peer reviewers from federal, state and conservation agencies, universities and affected resources industries will assist in evaluating submissions to the program. For more information about the *GOMF* please visit the website www.nfwf.org. Go to "Grants" "Browse Special Grants Programs" and click on *Gulf of Maine Environmental Compliance & Protection Fund* for the Request for Proposals.

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