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**NOAA ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR SALT MARSH RESTORATION
IN DENNIS**

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awarded \$65,000 to the Town of Dennis, Mass., for a community-based project to study the feasibility of restoring a degraded 57-acre salt marsh and fish run. The project, funded by the Community-Based Restoration Program within the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), will result in the design of a structure that will enhance tidal inundation and circulation to the salt marsh and improve an anadromous fish run.

A failing, undersized pipe beneath Bridge Street in Dennis acts as a barrier for anadromous fish and restricts tidal water to the upstream marsh. The grant will support a study of the existing site conditions and the development of a design to restore the marsh and the fish run.

"Replacing the existing undersized culvert with a larger structure that will put more water onto the marsh surface will enhance the marsh and the ability of anadromous fish to access upstream areas for spawning," said Patricia Kurkul, NOAA Fisheries regional administrator for the Northeast Region. "We are pleased to support the efforts of the Town of Dennis and the project partners to design and implement this restoration project."

"NOAA and the Bush Administration are working to improve the understanding of our environment and to strengthen local and regional initiatives like habitat restoration," 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 Town of Dennis will help advance knowledge critical to those efforts in Massachusetts."

“This NOAA grant, and the excellent habitat restoration technical assistance that comes with it, will help the Town of Dennis and its project partners to advance this restoration project,” said George MacDonald, Dennis Natural Resources Officer. “This is the second active salt marsh/anadromous fish run restoration project we now have underway with technical and financial assistance from the NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program. Together, we are working to improve coastal habitats and foster environmental stewardship by the local community.”

The Community-based Restoration Program (CRP), a financial and technical assistance program within the NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation, promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional and local level to fund grassroots, community-based activities. The NOAA-funded projects provide strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities in addition to long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. More information about the CRP can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

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.

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>.