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NOAA BESTOWS NANCY FOSTER AWARD FOR HABITAT CONSERVATION

The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in partnership with the American Fisheries Society (AFS), announced Peter A. Clark as the 2005 recipient of the Nancy Foster Award for Habitat Conservation. NOAA made the announcement at the annual AFS meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, on 13 September 2005.

The Nancy Foster Award is given for excellence in service to fish habitat conservation. The first award was presented to Dr. Foster in 1997 for her outstanding contributions to NOAA activities and her support of offices engaged in the protection, conservation and restoration of coastal and marine habitats. The award has been presented five times since 1997.

Mr. Clark, Executive Director of the non-profit Tampa Bay Watch, received the award this year for his long-term dedication to habitat conservation in the Tampa Bay region. NOAA bestowed the award in recognition of his sustained contributions, personal success, innovative approaches, and balanced consideration of related disciplines. Mr. Clark initiated Florida's statewide Surface Water Improvement and Management Program, worked to designate Tampa Bay in the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program, and established Tampa Bay Watch in 1993 as a non-profit stewardship program dedicated to the charitable and scientific purpose of conserving the Tampa Bay estuary. The latter accomplishment, modeled after Riverkeeper efforts elsewhere, blossomed into a nationally-recognized organization with staff, a restoration foundation, and thousands of involved citizens. By expanding community involvement in hands-on protection and restoration projects, Tampa Bay Watch strives to counteract wetland losses from more than a century of development pressures. The program, *Bay Grasses in Classes*, brings the message into schools; cooperative efforts with industry and communities expands their work into the entire watershed.

"The hard work of citizens like Mr. Clark towards fish habitat conservation is essential to the success of NOAA's habitat programs," said Bill Hogarth, long-time resident of Tampa and head of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. "We applaud his continued commitment to improving marine resource habitat in Tampa Bay."

Since 1997, Tampa Bay Watch has partnered with NOAA through the Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) to restore fisheries habitat in and around Tampa Bay. NOAA CRP funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that (1) offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities, and (2) provide long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. Since 1996, more than 900 projects in 26 states, Canada, and the Caribbean have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat 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: <http://www.noaa.gov>

Nancy Foster Award for Habitat Conservation:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/habitatconservation/nancyfoster/>

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/>

Community-based Restoration Program: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>