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**NOAA AWARDS MORE THAN \$1 MILLION FOR
COMMUNITY-BASED MARINE DEBRIS PROJECTS**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awarded \$1,029,368 in grants for 12 community-based marine debris prevention and removal projects. These projects are funded by the NOAA Marine Debris Program and administered by the NOAA Restoration Center. The program provides financial and technical assistance to local groups to clean-up marine debris, and prevent its introduction into coastal environments.

“NOAA has a long record of restoring and protecting the natural conditions of our nation’s coasts either through direct efforts or through our strong partnership projects we have around the nation,” said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “We are particularly proud of the successes we’ve achieved through cooperative conservation that leverages the skills, expertise and local knowledge of our partners through NOAA’s Marine Debris Program.”

The Marine Debris Program awarded \$333,868 in the northeast region to support marine debris removal, research and education. The University of New Hampshire will use Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis to target the source of marine debris in New Hampshire and will investigate the effectiveness of marine debris removal activities. The State of Rhode Island, Clean the Bay, and other local partners will remove more than 500 tons of debris from Narragansett Bay. In Maryland, the Alice Ferguson Foundation will clean up parts of the Anacostia River while the National Aquarium in Baltimore will remove debris from Fort McHenry and Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. All Maryland projects will include extensive volunteer activity, community outreach and education.

In the southeast, the program funded the Gulf of Mexico Foundation with \$135,000 to remove hurricane-related marine debris from five critical locations throughout the Barataria Basin off the coast of Louisiana. These projects focus on clearing 130 acres of estuarine habitat and reopening two miles of fish access. The Program also awarded \$109,000 to a FoProBiM (Foundation for the Protection of Marine BioDiversity) program to educate Haitian fishers who use Navassa Island, off the coast of mainland Haiti. The long-term goal is to remove and reduce the amount of marine debris impacting the Navassa Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Through the Marine Debris Program, NOAA funded three northwest region projects for a total of \$211,500, to reduce impacts from creosote-laden logs and remove derelict fish gear. In Washington, The Nature Conservancy will study creosote impacts on habitat, inventory logs, and remove creosote and treated wood from portions of the shoreline. This project, coupled with a project award to the Northwest Straits Commission, will expand an on-going effort to identify and remove creosote-laden wood along marine shorelines in the seven northern counties of Puget Sound. In Oregon, the Oregon Fishermen's Cable Committee will remove derelict Dungeness crab traps, as well as trawl nets and gear that snagged on undersea fiber-optic telecommunications cables.

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In California, the Marine Debris Program awarded \$55,000 to the University of California - Davis, for the removal of derelict commercial and recreational fishing gear from Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and Channel Islands National Park. This project will help protect commercial and recreational fishery resources, endangered and threatened marine species, sea turtles and marine mammals.

The program granted a total of \$185,000 to two projects in Alaska. The Ketchikan Gateway Borough will remove nets, buoys, floats, derelict fishing boats and other abandoned debris from approximately five miles of shoreline and adjacent waters along Gravina Island. The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies will support an annual Kachemak Bay Coast Walk, a community-based coastal marine debris removal, monitoring and prevention outreach program that addresses 200 miles of shoreline, including the area around the city of Homer. This project will also help expand the debris removal program into other coastal communities in Alaska.

The grant competition for next year's projects is now open, and applications are due Oct. 30, 2006. Typical grant awards will range from \$15,000 - \$150,000, with a maximum of \$250,000. More information on this funding opportunity can be found at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/funding_opportunities/funding.html or on www.grants.gov by searching the Federal Funding Opportunity number NMFS-HCPO-2007-2000731.

In 2007 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by 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 more than 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

On the Web:

<http://www.noaa.gov>

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>