



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA Invests Record Funding to Clean Up Miami's Biscayne Bay

NOAA announced today that it will invest \$200,000 in Florida's Miami-Dade County to expand the scope of Baynanza, an annual celebration and cleanup of Biscayne Bay. The funding — the largest NOAA contribution ever made towards a community marine debris cleanup project — will support the large-scale removal of marine debris, such as abandoned vessels, docks and pilings, and other large items that cannot be bagged by volunteers.

"In our role as coastal steward, NOAA wants to remove as much marine debris as we can. This grant helps Miami-Dade restore fish habitat, make boating safer, and enhance the overall experience for people enjoying the Bay," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "

Thousands of abandoned and derelict vessels and structures litter Florida's coastal waterways. In some cases, debris has been spreading along shorelines and across underwater habitats for many years. In coastal South Florida, derelict blue crab traps pose a significant problem. These traps can damage seagrass beds and mangrove roots, and have the potential to trap and kill fish and crabs out of season in a phenomenon known as "ghost-fishing." The County is working to clean up waters and wetlands within NOAA's Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve, two of the region's most environmentally sensitive and highly protected marine areas.

"These derelict vessels, trash, and discarded crab traps are prevalent within the borders of what should be a highly protected area," said Carlos Espinosa, P.E., Director of Miami-Dade County's Department of Environmental Resources Management. "Working with the NOAA Restoration Center and the Marine Sanctuary is a tremendous opportunity for DERM to help reverse decades of neglect and to restore the project area to a more pristine condition."

On April 19, NOAA will take part in Biscayne Bay Cleanup Day during Miami-Dade's "Baynanza" event. The annual Baynanza celebration was established 25 years ago to bring attention to Biscayne Bay and its importance as one of the County's most important ecological and economic systems. This year, communities will focus on shoreline cleanups, tree plantings and educational activities. In 2007, Biscayne Bay Cleanup Day drew almost 6,300 community participants, and this year even more volunteers are expected to come out and help clean up trash along the shores.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program offers funding and technical assistance to encourage local communities to create and run projects that prevent and remove marine debris to benefit coastal habitat, waterways, and NOAA trust resources including local fish. In addition to the ecological improvements the projects provide educational and social benefits for people in the communities. More on NOAA's Marine Debris Program at <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov>

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 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, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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