



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Connie Barclay
(301) 713-2370

NOAA05-136
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 17, 2005

NOAA ACCEPTING PROPOSALS FOR DAM AND STREAM BARRIER REMOVAL PROJECTS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced the availability of up to \$6 million in financial assistance for the Open Rivers Initiative. This program will provide grants, anticipated to range from \$50,000-\$250,000, for communities to remove obsolete and derelict stream barriers.

"Many small communities and private owners understand the benefits of removing these obstructions, but simply lack the funds to do so," said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "This initiative is intended to help provide assistance where funding is an issue. We envision this as an investment in our society, our economy and our ecological future."

There are an estimated two and a half million dams across the country, many less than six feet tall and some nearly 200 years old. The ORI will only target structures that no longer serve a useful purpose, where both the community and owner support dam removal, and where removal will provide significant benefit to anadromous fish such as salmon, striped bass and shad.

Many derelict dams pose a safety hazard to downstream communities, create economic hardship for towns forced to pay for upkeep and liability, and disturb delicate ecosystems by preventing the free flow of water and migration of aquatic species. Removing dams and other blockages opens habitat for migratory fish and can help boost local economies by increasing property values and increasing recreational opportunities such as fishing and kayaking.

The ORI grant initiative is administered through the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program. More information can be found under Funding Opportunities at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/>. Full initiative details, including specifics on the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals, are available at <http://www.grants.gov>, and can be searched for using Funding Opportunity # NMFS-HCPO-2006-2000405. Proposals must be submitted no later than January 13, 2006.

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.

-- 30 --

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