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## **NOAA'S NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE AND AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC ANNOUCE PARTNERSHIP**

**March 7, 2005--Long Beach, Calif.**—The Aquarium of the Pacific and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have entered into a memorandum of agreement to establish a formal relationship between these two organizations. Aimed at maximizing the shared education and outreach missions of both organizations, the agreement was penned during a signing ceremony at the Aquarium on Thursday, March 3, 2005.

Both entities work to increase environmental literacy among Americans, through informal and formal education for the improved health of watershed-ocean ecosystems and the sustainability of the nation's ocean resources. The agreement includes the planning, designing, creating, and maintaining exhibitory on a regional watershed-ocean ecosystem as well as integrated educational activities. These programs will draw on the financial and professional expertise of both organizations to raise the public's awareness on the impact of coastal development to the ocean environment.

"The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the U.S. Ocean Action Plan indicate clearly that NOAA has the leadership in protecting our oceans. The same reports also state that aquariums play a vital role in connecting the public to the oceans. This memorandum of agreement brings together NOAA and Southern California's largest aquarium to help realize the vision of creating a sustainable future for our ocean," said Jerry Schubel, Aquarium of the Pacific President & CEO

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The idea of leveraging resources to achieve a common goal of environmental education and outreach was first proposed during meetings between the Aquarium of the Pacific, which is a designated Coastal America Ecosystem Learning Center, and members of NOAA Fisheries Southwest Region in Long Beach.

“We are together accomplishing what neither organization could have done by itself,” said Dr. Rebecca Lent, Deputy Assistant Administrator for NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service. “This is truly a win-win situation for us, the aquarium, the public, and ultimately, the environment.”

Under the signed Memorandum of Agreement a National Marine Fisheries Services/Aquarium of the Pacific Ecosystem Education Committee will be formed of members representing regional ocean science and management organizations and authorities. The committee will oversee the design, creation, implementation, and maintenance of joint outreach activities.

“Long Beach and the greater Los Angeles area are among the most urbanized areas in the U.S. and the world. A new model is needed for these areas where humans dominate the landscape. We need to develop strategies for humans to live in harmony with nature, and we feel this agreement is yet another step in that direction,” said Schubel.

The Aquarium of the Pacific, a nonprofit institution, celebrates our planet's largest and most diverse body of water: the Pacific Ocean. Home to more than 12,500 animals, the Aquarium explores the waters of Southern California and Baja, the Northern Pacific, and Tropical Pacific. The Aquarium features hands-on discovery labs staffed by knowledgeable volunteers; the Lorikeet Forest aviary; the interactive Shark Lagoon; and the new *Whales: Voices in the Sea* kiosk exhibit. Now through April 30, 2005, guests to the Aquarium will also discover the *Weird, Wild, & Wonderful* creatures of the sea. The Aquarium of the Pacific is dedicated to instilling a sense of wonder, respect, and stewardship for the Pacific Ocean, its habitats, and ecosystems. As the key voice for the Pacific Ocean, the Aquarium offers a variety of engaging programs, providing numerous opportunities to explore the Pacific. A world of discovery awaits people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests. The Aquarium was rated #2 Los Angeles area Family Destination in the *2004 Zagat U.S. Family Travel Guide*. The Aquarium of the Pacific is open daily from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and is located at Rainbow Harbor at 100 Aquarium Way in Long Beach, Calif. General admission is \$18.95 for adults (12+), \$16.95 for seniors (60+), \$10.95 for children (3-11), and free for children under 3 and Aquarium members. For advance tickets and information, the public may visit [www.aquariumofpacific.org](http://www.aquariumofpacific.org) or call 562/590-3100.

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