



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Megan Callahan-Grant, NOAA
(503) 231-2213
Debrah Marriott, LCREP
(503) 226-1565

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NOAA AWARDS \$250,000 TO THE LOWER COLUMBIA RIVER ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awarded a \$250,000 grant to the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership to restore fisheries habitat in the Lower Columbia River and Tillamook estuaries.

The award supports the second year of a three-year agreement between the Estuary Partnership and NOAA Fisheries Service Restoration Center. The partnership is tasked with funding habitat restoration projects that benefit living marine resources in the estuaries. This year's funding will support local, hands-on habitat restoration projects in the lower Columbia River and Tillamook Bay, estuaries of national significance and part of the National Estuary Program administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"This partnership is a great example of leveraging federal dollars to enhance local projects that augment the overall salmon restoration efforts in the Northwest," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere, and NOAA administrator. "The continued partnership between the NOAA Restoration Center and the National Estuary Program represents an important step in providing federal support of community-led estuary restoration."

During its first year, the partnership funded three projects including the Hoquarton Slough Riparian Restoration Project, the Elkhorn Creek Riparian Restoration and In-stream Enhancement Project and the Ramsey Wetland Complex Off-channel Habitat Restoration Project.

"We are very pleased to extend this productive partnership into its second year", said Debrah Marriott, executive director of the Estuary Partnership. "This award will help the Estuary Partnership make further progress toward its goal of restoring 16,000 acres of habitat, including 3,000 acres of estuarine habitat, by 2010."

The Estuary Partnership is a collaborative program among the states of Oregon and Washington, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, business and economic interests, and citizens. The organization works to increase habitat and habitat functions; improve land use practices to protect ecosystems; enhance education opportunities and provide information about the lower river and estuary to build stewardship among all citizens; improve coordination among multi-jurisdictions and interests; and reduce conventional and toxic pollutants.

The NOAA Restoration Center is a financial and technical assistance program that promotes strong partnerships at the national, regional, and local level to restore fisheries habitat. NOAA CRP works with organizations and government to support locally-driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine, and riparian areas. 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 have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners.

Each year, NOAA awards approximately \$900 million in grants to members of the academic, scientific and business communities to assist the agency in fulfilling its mission to study the Earth's natural systems in order to predict environmental change, manage ocean resources, protect life and property, and provide decision makers with reliable scientific information. NOAA goals and programs reflect a commitment to these basic responsibilities of science and service to the nation for the past 35 years.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, 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.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

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

The Estuary Partnership: <http://www.lcrep.org>.