



Joint News Release From National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration LA Dept. of Natural Resources

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NOAA AWARDS \$100,000 TO LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced a \$100,000 grant to the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources as part of a multi-project partnership to restore marine fisheries habitat.

The funding will support the continuation of a three-year partnership between DNR and the NOAA Fisheries Service Restoration Center for habitat restoration projects that benefit commercial fisheries resources and recreational sportfish throughout coastal Louisiana. The partnership's objective is to implement on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that restore marine and estuarine habitats. These habitats may include salt marshes, seagrass beds, oyster reefs, mangrove forests and shellfish beds. Coastal Louisiana is currently losing approximately 25 square-miles of wetland habitat every year, and long-term restoration activities are critical for the state's ecologic and economic resources.

"Healthy coastal and marine habitats are important not only to wildlife, but also to local economies that depend on these resources for survival. The continued partnership between NOAA and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources demonstrates our joint commitment to restoring fisheries habitat throughout Louisiana," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "These habitat restoration efforts fit into our approach of ecosystem-based management, and promote a conservation ethic and coastal stewardship of the habitats that sustain our nation's fishery resources."

"The department will be seeking project proposals by the summer and expects some innovative ideas to come from our coastal parishes in this effort with NOAA," said DNR Secretary, Scott A. Angelle. Last year, two projects totaling \$194,000 were funded, including marsh restoration near Lake Boudreaux and shell reef restoration within Lake Pontchartrain.

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The NOAA Restoration Center Community-based Restoration Program 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>