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**NOAA AWARDS \$212,155 TO CALIFORNIA COASTKEEPER  
ALLIANCE FOR KELP RESTORATION**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration awarded a \$212,155 grant to California Coastkeeper Alliance as part of a partnership to help restore portions of southern California's underwater giant kelp forests. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The award kicks off a second three-year restoration effort between the California Coastkeeper Alliance and the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program to implement kelp restoration projects that benefit a wide variety of marine resources in Southern California. The Southern California Regional Kelp Restoration Project is reestablishing historic kelp beds and educating coastal communities about the importance of kelp forests to the marine environment. California Coastkeeper Alliance and its member organizations will work in partnership with the NOAA Restoration Center to identify appropriate sites, and implement and monitor kelp habitat restoration projects.

"This partnership between NOAA and California Coastkeeper Alliance will restore a vital element of California's marine environment while increasing public awareness and appreciation for kelp forests," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA's goal of healthy coastal habitats and vibrant coastal communities can only be accomplished when there is strong local stewardship of the habitats that support our fisheries resources."

Along the Southern California coast, sedimentation associated with coastal development, urban runoff and overfishing has diminished many kelp forests. Between 1967 and 1999, Southern California kelp biomass decreased by nearly 80 percent. Human impacts make it difficult for kelp forests to recover after pressure from natural events such as large storms and warm water El Niño events.

This new partnership between NOAA and the California Coastkeeper Alliance will enable the Southern California Regional Kelp Restoration Project to increase kelp restoration along the Southern California coast and continue its marine education outreach to communities in Southern California.

The project, initiated in 2001 with a grant from NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program and donations from business and private donors, has been highly successful. In addition to improving kelp restoration science, hundreds of volunteer SCUBA divers have participated in restoration and monitoring of Southern California kelp beds and over 4,500 school children have directly participated in the project's education program.

The California Coastkeeper Alliance was formed in 1999 and is a coalition of local Waterkeepers dedicated to protecting and restoring the quality of California's aquatic ecosystems. The California Coastkeeper Alliance provides a network of support among Southern California Waterkeepers and presents a unified voice on regional issues. Members include San Diego Baykeeper, Orange County Coastkeeper, Santa Monica Baykeeper, Ventura Coastkeeper, and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper. To learn more about the California Coastkeeper Alliance, please visit <http://www.cacoastkeeper.org>.

The NOAA Restoration Center uses a community-based restoration program to work with organizations and governments to support locally driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas. NOAA funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that offer educational and social benefits for citizens and their communities and provide long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. Since 1996, over 800 projects in 26 states have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners. For more information on the Community-based Restoration Program, please visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

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's goals and programs reflect a commitment to these basic responsibilities of science and service to the nation for the past 34 years.

NOAA 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. To learn more about NOAA, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.