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**NOAA Awards \$482,500 to FishAmerica Foundation
to Restore Coastal Fisheries Habitat**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced a \$482,500 grant to the American Sportfishing Association's FishAmerica Foundation as part of a three-year cooperative partnership to restore marine and anadromous fisheries habitat. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The grant will create a program between the FishAmerica Foundation and NOAA's Restoration Center to conduct habitat restoration projects that benefit commercial fisheries resources and recreational sportfish throughout the coastal United States. The goal is to implement on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that restore habitat in marine, estuarine and riparian areas. This may include salt marshes, seagrass beds, oyster reefs, coral reefs, mangrove forests, shellfish beds and freshwater spawning and rearing habitats in streams and rivers.

"This funding will enhance habitat that is critical to the health of many of our nation's fisheries," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA and the Bush Administration are working to improve the understanding of our environment and to strengthen local and regional initiatives like habitat restoration and protection."

"We've always placed a premium on our partnerships with government agencies such as the NOAA Restoration Center," said Johanna Laderman, managing director of the FishAmerica Foundation. "The FishAmerica Foundation is a great route for empowering citizen conservationists in their own communities, giving them a strong, vested interest in caring for the environment in their neighborhoods."

The NOAA Community-based Restoration Program has been working with community organizations and local governments to support locally-driven habitat restoration projects in marine, estuarine and riparian areas since 1996. NOAA CRP funds on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that offer educational and social benefits for people and their communities in addition to long-term ecological benefits for fishery resources. To date, over 800 projects in 26 states have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat

restoration partners. More information on the CRP 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>.

The FishAmerica Foundation is the American Sportfishing Association's conservation and research foundation whose mission is to keep our fish and waters healthy. FishAmerica unites the sportfishing industry with conservation groups, government natural resource agencies, corporations and charitable foundations to invest in fish and habitat conservation and research across the country. FishAmerica provides matching grants to community partners, helping to ensure millions of Americans will be able to enjoy fishing in the future. Since 1983, FishAmerica has provided more than \$6 million for more than 750 grassroots conservation projects nationwide. To learn more about FishAmerica, please visit www.fishamerica.org.