



JOINT NEWS RELEASE FROM

NATIONAL OCEANIC &
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

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NOAA AWARDS MORE THAN \$500,000 TO THE NATURE CONSERVANCY *Grant Award To Restore Marine Habitat And Protect Aquatic Species*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration today awarded The Nature Conservancy a grant of \$580,506 to implement habitat restoration projects throughout the country. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Conservancy is partnering with the NOAA Restoration Center to implement innovative restoration projects benefiting marine, estuarine and riparian habitats on both coasts of the country, as well as in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska and Hawaii. The Conservancy works with partners to implement conservation activities tailored to local needs. These projects protect coastal and marine habitat, restore species that are important to ecosystem functions, remove invasive species, create shellfish spawner sanctuaries, and re-establish water flows to estuaries.

"This partnership between NOAA and The Nature Conservancy will fund many valuable projects and initiatives that NOAA grants help support," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA's and the Bush Administration's goal to ensure healthy coastal habitats and vibrant coastal communities is greatly enhanced when there is strong local stewardship of the habitats that support our fisheries resources."

"Our coastal marine systems are in trouble," said Steve McCormick, president of The Nature Conservancy, "Working with NOAA allows us to take immediate action to turn the tide."

Today's award marks a new three-year cooperative partnership between the Conservancy and the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program, building upon a previous joint program. Over the past three years, The Nature Conservancy has been awarded funds that are forging on-the-ground restoration relationships in states around the country. Among the funded projects are efforts to expunge invasive saltmeadow cordgrass from Oregon's Cox Island, and to protect clam habitat off New York's Long Island. Working with NOAA and local partners, the Conservancy serves as a necessary bridge, helping to build restoration expertise and knowledge around the nation.

The NOAA Restoration Center uses a community-based restoration program to work with organizations and government 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 to providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. To learn more about NOAA, please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

The Nature Conservancy is a leading international, non-profit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities representing the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 15 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. To learn more about The Nature Conservancy's Marine Initiative, visit <http://nature.org/initiatives/marine/work/>.