



Contact: Connie Barclay
301-713-2370

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 1, 2009

**NOAA Honors University of Washington Research Professor
as Nationwide Leader in Habitat Conservation**

NOAA today awarded Charles ("Si") Simenstad, of the University of Washington School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, the 2009 Dr. Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award for his extraordinary commitment of more than 35 years to stewardship, research and outreach concerning our nation's estuaries.

"Professor Simenstad has dedicated his entire career to estuarine and near shore marine ecology and conservation, and has been the leading researcher on estuarine processes in Puget Sound and the west coast, ranging from the remote Aleutian Islands of Alaska to the estuaries of the Columbia River and San Francisco Bay," said James Balsiger, acting NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "Simenstad's research makes him a perfect recipient for the Dr. Nancy Foster Award."

Simenstad is a pioneer in coastal marine ecology. His contributions, including nearly 60 peer-reviewed papers, have been a force for estuarine research and conservation, reminding scientists, governments and the public that estuaries and near shore habitats play vital roles in the ecology and conservation of many species, including salmon, herring, crabs and oysters.

Simenstad's innovative ability to translate science into action began in 1990 when he established the Wetland Ecosystem Team of research scientists, educators and graduate students at the University of Washington. Almost 20 years later, the team still conducts basic and applied research on estuarine restoration projects in the region, often partnering with landowners, local agencies and treaty tribes of Native Americans.

Since January 2002, Simenstad has served as chair of the science team of the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project. He has also served on the Nature Conservancy's northwest science committee since 2005, and is a member of the advisory committees for national estuarine reserves and science working groups for the Lower Columbia River and San Francisco Bay. At the national level, he served on the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council committee on mitigating wetlands losses from 2000 to 2001.

NOAA's Fisheries Service established the Dr. Nancy Foster Award in 1997 to recognize leaders in habitat conservation. The first award was presented to Dr. Foster herself to acknowledge her career commitment to protect, conserve and restore habitats of living marine resources. Under her direction, NOAA created the Office of Habitat Conservation and the NOAA Restoration Center to focus on protecting and restoring the nation's coastal and marine habitats. She established the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, which has pioneered ecosystem management to restore the nation's largest estuary. Dr. Foster served as a visionary leader at NOAA until her death in 2000. This 2009 award is the tenth presentation since 1997.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.

On the Web:
Nancy Foster Award for Habitat Conservation:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/habitatconservation/nancyfoster/>

- 30 -