



NEWS RELEASE

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Coos County Restoration Project is among Five, Nationwide to Receive a CCRI Grant Award

Washington, D.C. – June 1, 2006 – The National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Foundation), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Community-based Restoration Program, are pleased to announce that the Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative has awarded a total of more than \$300,000 to five high quality community-led projects to support marine habitat restoration in coastal counties across the nation. Coos Watershed Association in partnership with Coos County rose to the top of a competitive pool of applicants and will receive \$63,000 to improve aquatic habitat and increase access to upper stream reaches by replacing six fish passage culverts, installing eight cross-drain sediment reduction culverts, and providing vegetative cover for two stream miles of riparian corridor along Palouse Creek, Oregon.

The initiative provides grant funding for marine habitat restoration projects on a competitive basis to innovative, high quality county-led or supported projects that support wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration. CCRI is a partnership between NACo, the Foundation, and NOAA’s Community-based Restoration Program.

“I’d like to offer my congratulations to the first annual Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative grantees,” said NACo President Bill Hansell, Umatilla County, Ore. commissioner. “Counties across the country are taking the lead to restore our coastal resources, and NACo is proud that these important grants will bolster five outstanding county-led efforts.

The partners selected the winning projects from an extremely competitive pool of 48 applications. NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program is providing major financial support for the individual projects with grants ranging from \$28,000 to \$100,000. Consideration for funding is based upon the level of county leadership and the ecological benefits for a community's coastal and marine resources.

"These projects are excellent examples of county governments playing a crucial role in coastal habitat restoration," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, NOAA Fisheries Service Director. "The projects will benefit local communities and our nation's fisheries."

"These projects will help several species of salmon, wading and shore birds, and sea turtles and the fragile habitats they depend on," added Jeff Trandahl, executive director of the Foundation. "By involving community groups, the value of these natural resources is recognized and will be well supported for future generations."

2006 CCRI Grantees

- Humboldt County, California - \$100,000. The Humboldt County Department of Public Works will restore upstream fish passage on Indian Creek by removing a box culvert that currently serves as a barrier to migrating juvenile and adult salmonids. Historically, coho salmon and steelhead inhabited Indian Creek upstream of the barrier. Replacing the culvert and restoring habitat on Indian Creek will afford access to upstream spawning and rearing habitat and reduce sediment delivery into the larger Mattole River.
- **Coos Watershed Association (Coos County, Oregon) - \$63,000. The Coos Watershed Association (CWA) and Coos County will improve aquatic habitat and increase access to upper stream reaches by replacing six fish passage culverts, installing eight cross-drain sediment reduction culverts, and providing vegetative cover for two stream miles of riparian corridor along Palouse Creek, Oregon. Identified through the CWA Coos Lowland Assessment and Coffee Klatch series, this project will immediately improve access to over two miles of cool water summer rearing habitat, restore historic water flows, and reduce fine sediment inputs caused by erosion. Vegetation planting efforts will target areas with the greatest potential to reduce erosion and where the lack of shade drastically rises summer water temperatures.**
- Mid Puget Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (Kitsap County, Washington) - \$60,000. The Mid Puget Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (Mid Sound) with the support of Kitsap County and other partners will replace an existing culvert with a larger, more natural opening to protect and restore estuary habitat to Dyes Inlet and Puget Sound, Washington. During low and high tide the existing culvert creates a passage barrier for migrating fish species due to the funneling of water into one high velocity in- or out-flow. This project will allow natural stream and tidal flows in the Barker Creek Estuary, expanding and enhancing the habitat functions and characteristics of the estuary and surrounding near shore environments. The project will provide for proper mixing of fresh and salt water and sediment transport which has been impeded by the previous barrier. The new culvert will also allow for unimpeded migration of adult salmon into the Barker Creek system and increased estuarine habitat for out migrating juvenile salmon.

- Manatee County, Florida - \$50,000. Manatee County will create and restore 142 acres of wetlands and create 44 acres of open water reef habitat within the Robinson Preserve in Tampa Bay, Florida. The project will remove exotic plants and revegetate along the 142 acres of wetland in order to create new habitat for fish and wading birds, as well as improve water quality within the region. Additionally, the project will include artificial reef construction along the 44 acres of open water to enhance the fisheries population within the Tampa Bay region. Educational opportunities will be provided through the creation of hiking trails and boardwalks.
- Sea Turtles at Risk, Inc. (Franklin County, Florida) - \$28,350. Sea Turtles at Risk, Inc. (STAR) and Franklin County will restore and protect a 4,000 foot section of the hurricane damaged St. George Island Dune system through native vegetation plantings, installation of a sand fence, and construction of four dune walkovers. The project will provide critical habitat for marine turtles such as *loggerhead*, *green*, and *leatherback*, and improve nesting and hatching rates of these species. Additional wildlife including *snowy plover*, *least terns*, *American oystercatcher*, *peregrine falcon*, and *piping plover* will also benefit from the project. The dune walkovers will assist in the long-term maintenance of the dunes through deterring foot traffic from the fragile habitat. Monitoring will be done following the project to evaluate the restoration efforts and impacts to turtle nesting and hatching rates.

Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative Partners

The National Association of Counties is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. NACo provides an extensive line of services including legislative, research, technical, and public affairs assistance, as well as enterprise services to its members. NACo acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties and provides them with resources to help find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face. More than 2,000 of the nation's 3,066 counties, representing over 80 percent of the U.S. population, are NACo members. For more information, visit www.naco.org.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a nonprofit organization established by Congress in 1984 and dedicated to the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants, and the habitat on which they depend. The Foundation creates partnerships between the public and private sectors to strategically invest in conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. The Foundation awarded over 8,000 grants to more than 2,600 organizations in the United States and abroad and has leveraged – with its partners – more than \$300 million in federal funds since its establishment, for a total of more than \$1 billion in funding for conservation. The Foundation is recognized by Charity Navigator with a 3-star rating for efficiency and effectiveness. Ninety-two cents of every dollar contributed to the Foundation is directed to on-the-ground conservation projects,

with five cents supporting management and administration of the Foundation's multi-million dollar grants program and three cents funding partnership development and fundraising. For more information, visit www.nfwf.org.

The NOAA Restoration Center Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) is celebrating its 10-year anniversary as 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 1000 projects in 26 states, Canada, and the Caribbean have been implemented using NOAA funding and leveraged funding from national and regional habitat restoration partners. For more information, visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration>.

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