

National Marine Fisheries Service Community-Based Restoration Program

In 1996, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Restoration Center formulated a highly successful program to involve communities in local marine and estuarine habitat restoration. The program reaches out to local constituencies to accomplish meaningful, neighborhood restoration projects. Projects are often identified by individuals and civic organizations, and are successful because they have significant community support and depend upon citizens' hands-on involvement to implement the restoration.



Volunteer diver helps restore kelp to Santa Monica Bay, CA.

The Importance of Restoring our Coast

Coastal regions are home to 110 million people - a number expected to increase to 127 million by the year 2010. People love coastal areas for their beauty and depend on them for recreational and commercial uses. Estuaries and coastal wetlands provide essential habitat for 80-90% for the recreational fish catch and 75% of the commercial harvest. Human activities and development have caused the destruction of more than half of the estimated 215 million original acres of wetland. Restoration helps replace habitats required by marine and anadromous fish, endangered species and marine mammals.

Restoration Partnerships

Partnerships are a key element in community efforts to accomplish significant, on-the-ground habitat restoration. Partnerships amplify financial resources and allow NOAA to reach a larger number and more diverse array of communities with strong, vested interests in fishery habitat restoration. They also improve relations between organizations, foster confidence in federal and state agencies, encourage the sharing and distribution of technical expertise, and promote stewardship and conservation ethics for natural resources. Restoring and protecting natural

resources would be greatly limited without the advantages of partnerships and community involvement.



Elementary school students helping restore wetlands in Florida.

Partnering with NOAA

NOAA solicits proposals for locally-driven, on-the-ground habitat restoration projects that address important habitat issues within communities. Program emphasis is on using a grass-roots, bottom up approach to restoring fishery habitat across coastal America. Project proposals are reviewed by NMFS technical staff, and awards are made on a competitive basis to those projects most closely aligned with NOAA's trust responsibilities for marine resources. In most instances, NOAA technical staff work closely with concerned communities to strengthen the development and implementation of sound projects. Communities participating in habitat restoration ultimately monitor and maintain these restoration efforts, heightening environmental awareness. Concerned citizens are making a world of difference to the restoration of coastal habitats vital to health of the Nation's natural resources.

For More Information:

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