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## **NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES ERNEST F. HOLLINGS OCEAN AWARENESS TRUST FUND RECIPIENTS**

Washington, DC – The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) announced the award of 13 grants ranging from \$14,500 - \$25,000 for projects from the Ernest F. Hollings Ocean Awareness Trust Fund. These projects are dedicated to increasing public awareness of issues related to our ocean, including marine debris, human interaction with marine mammals, pollution and the connection between the ocean and human health.

“The diversity of our grantees is reflective of the wide range of challenges facing the ocean,” said National Marine Sanctuary Foundation President and CEO, Lori Arguelles. “By investing in these worthwhile projects, we believe that we can help affect human behavior in a positive fashion, whether through the Shedd Aquarium’s Right Bites program, working with the fashion industry to mitigate impacts of extracting coral, or through hotel guests getting ocean conservation information on their room keycards. We are particularly pleased with the innovation and response to key community needs represented in these proposals, which are very much in line with the Foundation’s mission of protecting, preserving and prompting stewardship of the ocean and its resources.”

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation established the Ernest F. Hollings Ocean Awareness Trust Fund in 2005 as a tribute to former U.S. Senator Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC) and his longstanding commitment to promoting ocean stewardship. During his tenure of service to the nation, Senator Hollings championed many ocean related issues, including increasing human knowledge about the marine environment through research and education. The Ernest F. Hollings Ocean Awareness Trust Fund grant program strives to engage the public in ocean conservation by funding for projects that promote ocean awareness nationwide.

The complete list of Ocean Awareness Trust Fund recipients includes:

- The Shedd Aquarium – Chicago, IL: \$20,000 for the aquarium’s Rite Bite Sustainable Seafood program, a multi-faceted collaborative initiative with universities, culinary schools, seafood wholesalers, retailers and restaurants, aimed at empowering everyday consumers to restore and sustain healthy marine fisheries.
- The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Foundation – Monterey, CA: \$24,975 to develop an ocean steward’s curriculum for MERITO Academy Educators, an education program for Latino youth and their teachers to increase their understanding of ocean-related threats within sanctuaries and to promote their active contribution to ocean preservation.
- Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center – Virginia Beach, VA: \$16,000 to install the first exhibit of *Brain Waves at the Beach*, a series of ten permanent exhibits along the Virginia Beach boardwalk that will feature information about the local coastal marine environment and engage the 2 million annual beachgoers about how their actions can impact our ocean resources.
- National Ocean Film Festival Alliance (NOFFA) – West Long Branch, NJ: \$20,000 to support four ocean-themed film festivals around the country including Two River Film Festival in Monmouth County, Grays Reef Ocean Film Festival in Savannah, The Ocean Channel and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary’s Santa Barbara Film Festival, and the Alaska Ocean Film Festival in Anchorage.
- Harvard University Medical School – Boston, MA: \$20,000 for the *Healthy Ocean, Healthy Humans* program, a project of the Center for Health and Global Environment at Harvard University Medical School, which aims to inspire marine conservation by producing public education tools, including a film, exhibitry, and solution cards that demonstrate how our health depends on a healthy ocean environment.
- SeaWeb – Washington, D.C.: \$20,000 for SeaWeb’s *Too Precious to Wear*, a national campaign to educate the public and decision-makers about coral ecosystems and the dire need for conservation measures, including partnerships with leading fashion designers to develop and promote sustainable alternatives for coral used for jewelry and decoration.
- Mississippi State University – Mississippi State, MS: \$15,000 will be utilized in collaboration with the Northern Gulf Institute, to produce a series of hotel keycards with educational information on coastal health and resiliency, drawing on research funded by the NGI, including topics such as ecosystem management, hypoxia, coastal and climate change, and how our behaviors are affecting the marine environment in the Gulf.

- Coastal Ocean Values Center at The Ocean Foundation – Washington, D.C. \$20,000 will be utilized by the Foundation’s Coastal Ocean Values Center to develop a Marine Protected Areas Community of Practice (MPA CoP) website for national, state, and local marine protection professionals to collect, analyze, share and communicate information about the economic and social importance of marine protected areas.
- Point Reyes National Seashore Association – Point Reyes Station, CA: \$20,000 will be used in collaboration with Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary to implement an education campaign, including a film and lecture series featuring high profile scientists, developing three mobile interpretive displays for schools and public forums, and establishing an AmeriCorps Marine Team for young people.
- Clean Water Fund – Tampa, FL: \$20,000 will be utilized to implement the Water and Coastal Area Restoration and Maintenance project, or WARM, a public education campaign aimed at monitoring and reducing marine debris and pollution from storm water runoff in Tampa Bay. Outreach strategies include an adopt-a-drain program, community clean-ups, a canal ‘owner’s manual’ for neighborhood welcome packets, and collaborative partnerships with public utilities and local businesses to provide conservation information in water and sewer bills.
- Outrigger Hotels and Resorts – Honolulu, HI: \$14,500 will be utilized to work cooperatively with its business and community partners to produce “One Ocean – Explore the Quiet and Blue,” an audio CD compilation of various artists donating their work, including a high definition component of Hawaii’s ocean resources and accompanying booklet of conservation messages and information. Proceeds from the sale of the CD will be used to benefit NOAA’s “Project Kai” educational field trip fund for students in Hawaii.
- California Resources Agency – Sacramento, CA: \$20,000 will be utilized to enhance the ‘Thank You Ocean’ campaign in California by developing weekly podcasts featuring ocean-related topics, and marketing these through the host of talk radio programs in the area.
- Immersion Presents – Mystic, CT: \$25,000 will be used by Immersion Presents to develop a multimedia science curriculum for 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades based on the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary that will include an Adventure Series, hands-on activities, interactive web content, live broadcasts, and an online curriculum moderated by professional educators.

For more information about the Foundation go to <http://www.nmsfocean.org>.

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the private, non-profit partner to the federally managed National Marine Sanctuary System; and was created to inspire all people to preserve, protect and promote our nationwide network of marine sanctuaries. These 14 marine protected areas encompass more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters stretching from the Florida Keys to the Hawaiian Islands, from Lake Huron to the Gulf of Mexico. Through public and private sector partnerships the Foundation creates conservation-based research, education and outreach programs designed to connect the public with these Special Ocean and coastal resources.

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