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NOAA Honors Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation for Debris Cleanups

NOAA's Fisheries Service is giving the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation of Juneau, Alaska, a national award for working with local residents to remove old nets, plastics and other debris from the fur seal rookeries on the Pribilof Islands and throughout coastal Alaska.

NOAA's leaders will present the Coastal Habitat Restoration Award to the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., on June 2. The award is part of the agency's third annual Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Awards Program.

"The health and sustainability of the planet's ocean resources is of paramount importance for the world's environmental, economic and human wellbeing," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "The contributions of our honorees inspire others and enhance NOAA's work to conserve and manage our nation's marine resources."

"The Marine Conservation Alliance is tackling the problem of marine debris aggressively on Alaska's beautiful coastline by bringing together diverse community groups in remarkable, well-coordinated operations," said Jim Balsiger, acting assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "The foundation's work is a model for the nation."

The Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation has successfully involved a wide array of groups, including tribes, recreational groups and the commercial fishing industry, to remove hundreds of tons of debris from a state with more shoreline than the rest of the nation. The Foundation has broadened the public understanding of the problem of marine debris and its potentially lethal effects on fish, seabirds and marine mammals by working with the media, mariners, the public and by developing curricula for schoolchildren.

For the full list of Sustainable Fisheries Leadership award winners go to: www.noaa.gov

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

On the Web:
NOAA's Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>