



Contact: John Ewald, 301-713-3066
Ben Sherman, 202-253-5256

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 25, 2010

NOAA, SeaWeb Partner to Communicate the Value of Coral Reefs
Three-year agreement supports projects totaling \$1.7 million

NOAA and SeaWeb have entered into a partnership to enhance understanding of the nation's valuable but increasingly vulnerable coral reef ecosystems in the Caribbean, Florida, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands. Sometimes referred to as the 'rainforests of the sea,' coral reefs provide services estimated to be worth as much as \$375 billion globally each year.

The three-year agreement will dedicate \$850,000 in NOAA funding and \$865,000 in matching funds from SeaWeb to help the U.S. coral jurisdictions identify initial priority areas for building a foundation for social marketing and strategic communications campaigns. Campaign strategies will be designed, carried out and evaluated within target areas, with the aim of increasing public dialogue on coral conservation, protection and management. The partnership and agreement are the result of a competitive selection process following a request for proposals issued by NOAA in early 2010.

"The decline and loss of coral reefs has significant social, cultural, economic and ecological impacts on people and communities in the United States and throughout the world," said Kacky Andrews, program manager for [NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program](#). "Coral ecosystems are at serious risk due to a variety of human activities; protecting and conserving them is an urgent issue that must be addressed with engaged communities taking part in developing and implementing the solutions."

Working with the seven U.S. states and territories that contain coral reefs (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), NOAA and SeaWeb will identify initial priority areas for the outreach campaigns.

"Communicating the intrinsic value of corals and their reefs to diverse audiences in multiple locations will be a truly worthwhile endeavor," said Dawn M. Martin, president of SeaWeb. "As we've demonstrated before, sparking a social movement within individual communities – showing people why doing right is best for them and their own surrounding environments – is the most effective way to cause positive change. At the end of the day, it really is up to each of us to change our behavior and preserve our precious corals."

NOAA and SeaWeb staff will meet twice-yearly to develop individual work plans, funding priorities and allocations for specific projects. Each year staff from the states and territories will work with NOAA and SeaWeb staff to review work plans and ensure needs and priorities are being addressed. Once detailed work plans are submitted and accepted by the NOAA and SeaWeb staffs, funds will be released through SeaWeb to implement the agreed upon work.

SeaWeb is an international nonprofit communications organization dedicated to creating a culture of ocean conservation. SeaWeb works collaboratively to inform and empower diverse ocean voices and conservation champions in strategic, targeted sectors to encourage market solutions, policies and behaviors that result in a healthy, thriving ocean. SeaWeb transforms knowledge into action by shining a spotlight on workable, science-based solutions to the most serious threats facing the ocean such as climate change, pollution and overexploitation.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and

marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaagov>.

-30-

On the Web:

SeaWeb: <http://www.seaweb.org>

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program: <http://coralreef.noaa.gov>