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NOAA Announces Funding to Support Ocean Observing in the Caribbean

NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) is awarding \$899,698 in fiscal year 2008 competitive grant funding to support ocean observing efforts in the U.S. Caribbean.

The grant will go to the University of Puerto Rico to support the development of the Caribbean Regional Integrated Ocean Observing System and associated management efforts. The aim is to maintain and enhance ocean and coastal observations in the region, make regional data easier to access and use, identify and prioritize future needs for ocean information and monitor environmental conditions so decision-makers can minimize the impact of severe weather, natural hazards, and other emergencies. The project will be directed by marine science professor Julio Morell at the School of Marine Sciences in Mayaguez.

"Regional partnerships are critical to the success of a national Integrated Ocean Observing System," said Zdenka Willis, NOAA IOOS program director. "With increased understanding of our oceans and coasts comes an increased ability to keep our nation safe, our economy secure, and our environment healthy and productive."

The University of Puerto Rico is one recipient in an anticipated series of IOOS competitive grants across the nation this year, totaling \$20.4M. These grants will support the continuation of 17 multi-year projects awarded in 2007, as well as new efforts in 2008.

"This agreement represents another big step forward for the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observing System, as called for in the President's Ocean Action Plan," said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator. "This year's award is a great example of NOAA's dedication to our ocean and coastal observing capacity, as well as our commitment to work with our regional partners."

This money supports NOAA's efforts to develop a national IOOS, a vital tool for tracking, predicting, managing, and adapting to changes in our coastal and ocean environments. This network of people and technology is pulling coastal and ocean data and information together, so it is easily accessible from one source and can be used by scientists and decision-makers to get a 'bigger picture' view of environmental change.

NOAA 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: <http://www.noaa.gov>
NOAA IOOS program: <http://ioos.noaa.gov/>