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NOAA Announces Funding to Support Ocean Observing in the Southeast

NOAA is awarding \$1,984,535 to support ocean observing efforts along the Southeast coast of the United States. The fiscal year 2008 funding is provided through NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) program.

The Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA) will receive \$784,535. M. Richard DeVoe, SECOORA Board of Directors Chairman and Executive Director of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium will oversee the continued development of SECOORA and associated activities, including data management. An additional \$1.2M will go to the Carolinas Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System, where Dr. Lynn Leonard, Geology Professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington's Center for Marine Science, will oversee coordination of observing efforts in North and South Carolina.

The goals of SECOORA are to maintain and enhance coastal meteorological and oceanographic observations regionally, increase access to and use of observing data, identify and prioritize future regional needs for ocean information, monitor conditions so decision-makers can take appropriate action, and improve nowcasts and forecasts for rip currents, near shore waves and ocean circulation, and coastal water quality. These efforts will benefit search and rescue operations, fisheries and coastal management, and recreational and commercial use of coastal waters.

"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."

SECOORA is one recipient in an anticipated series of IOOS 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 Integrated Ocean Observing Program: <http://www.ioos.noaa.gov>