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NOAA UNH Coastal Ocean Program Awarded $2.5 Million

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center recently awarded more than $15 million in grants to 16 projects around the nation that promote regional coastal ocean observation systems, including a $2.5 million grant to the University of New Hampshire Center of Excellence for Coastal Ocean Observation and Analysis (COOA).

“We are extremely grateful to Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) for his continued support of COOA,” said Janet Campbell, director of COOA. “This new grant augments an initial grant of $2 million, which launched our center last year, and enhances the opportunity for UNH scientists to contribute to the regional observing system in the Gulf of Maine. We are joining our colleagues in Maine, Massachusetts and Canada to develop effective ways to monitor the ocean along our shores.”

Gregg is chairman of the Senate Appropriation Subcommittee that oversees funding for NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

Located in coastal states from Alaska to South Carolina, the 16 projects receiving NOAA grants focus on helping coastal regions collect oceanographic information, share data and organize regional networks of observing systems.

The information that comes from these projects aims to help ocean scientists and coastal resource managers with such efforts as advancing the technology used for coastal observations, developing models for predicting storm surges, characterizing the health of ecosystems and coordinating regional efforts.

The UNH center was established to turn the volumes of scientific data gathered about the coastal ocean into tangible knowledge that can inform management decisions.

COOA projects demonstrate innovative approaches to coastal ocean research, the use of newly developed materials in such research and previously unexplored ways to use research data available from other institutions.

Among projects under way are an investigation to develop a system for innovative, biodegradable material that, when used in fishing gear, could reduce marine mammal entanglement.

COOA also is developing new methods for monitoring the coastal ocean. Newly developed methods will be tested in the Gulf of Maine and, once developed, placed on buoys operated by the Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System (GoMOOS) and used to make routine measurements.

The grants are part of NOAA's Coastal Observation Technology System (COTS). The goal of COTS is to develop a system with a seamless flow of data, information and products that will greatly benefit data collectors, scientists, resource managers and additional end users. The projects selected for COTS grants work to develop the capacity for regions to collect and share ocean observations cooperatively and in support of a national integrated ocean observing system.

For more information on the UNH Center of Excellence for Coastal Ocean Observing and Analysis, visit http://www.cooa.unh.edu.