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UNH Awarded \$1.4 Million in Federal Funds for Marine Projects

By *Sharon Keeler*
UNH News Bureau

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire has been awarded \$1.425 million in federal funds to support its Open Ocean Aquaculture project (\$1.35 million) and to establish a UNH Office of Technology Management (\$75,000). The latter will ensure that technology developed through UNH's marine research initiatives is disseminated nationwide through the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, R-N.H., secured the funds for the two projects in his capacity as chairman of the Senate Appropriations' Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary, which funds NOAA. The Open Ocean Aquaculture grant is in addition to \$900,000 awarded to UNH earlier this summer, of which \$450,000 was for the nearby Seacoast Science Center to develop exhibits explaining the project.

"UNH now has several cutting-edge marine research initiatives underway that I have supported, including the Open Ocean Aquaculture project, the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology, and the Joint Hydrographic Center," says Gregg. "I have secured federal funds for these projects because they have the potential to result in improved technology that can be used by coastal resource managers to better manage our environment."

The Open Ocean Aquaculture project is a joint effort between UNH and the Portsmouth Fishermen's Cooperative, with public information provided through the Seacoast Science Center. Its goal is to demonstrate the feasibility of producing commercially important species offshore, both to produce fish for consumption and also relieve pressure on wild fisheries. Summer flounder and mussels already are in production at a site near the Isles of Shoals off the New Hampshire coast.

The new funding will enable UNH to grow cod and haddock at this same site during the next two summers, and also to bring top researchers from throughout New England into the project through a competitive grants process. In addition, the NOAA Coastal Services Center is establishing the UNH Office of Technology Management to help spread the benefits of the research

to better manage coastal resources, monitor environmental change and keep the environment clean for future generations.

According to Hunt Howell, UNH professor of zoology, "The key is to have a comprehensive project that addresses all of the issues, ranging from environmental questions to the engineering challenges of working in the open sea, and at a site that has the same regulatory permits as would be needed by commercial fishermen."

Ann Bucklin, UNH research professor of zoology, adds "In recent years there have been tens of millions of dollars invested in mariculture research. Senator Gregg's success in obtaining funding for this demonstration project enables UNH to take the lead in moving toward commercial application of those research results to create economic opportunity for displaced fishermen and coastal residents."

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