



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rob Blumenthal, rob.blumenthal@nfwf.org, 202-595-2457

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Announces \$1.75 Million in Grants from the Coral Reef Conservation Fund

21 projects funded by NOAA and NFWF will address coral health globally

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 25, 2017) — The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) today announced \$1.75 million in grants to address rapid declines in coral health globally. Grantee organizations have committed more than \$1.82 million in match, generating a total conservation impact of more than \$3.57 million.

The 21 projects awarded grants this year will promote coral conservation by reducing land-based sources of pollution, advancing coral reef fisheries management and improving watershed management planning for domestic coral reefs. Project locations range from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, and all seek to increase the local on-the-ground capacity for long-term coral reef conservation.

A complete list of the 2017 grants made through the [Coral Reef Conservation Fund](#) is available [here](#).

The Coral Reef Conservation Fund was created to assist NOAA in implementing the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. The fund is managed by NFWF in partnership with the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program. Additional funding is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service.

"The threats facing coral reefs are significant, and we are working with local communities both at home and abroad to help improve their chances for survival," said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF. "The projects we are supporting this year are a mixture of proven techniques in threat reduction that we are bringing to scale, and new tools for restoration and management that will help us increase the impacts of our investments into the future."

Corals are animals that produce hard skeletons that make up extensive reefs along tropical coastlines. These reefs not only provide habitat for commercial and recreational fish species, but are also vital to many tourism-based economies and provide protection from storms for many coastal communities, both domestic and abroad.

NOAA recently declared that 2014 to 2016 marked the longest global bleaching event for coral reefs. Reducing human-caused stressors such as overfishing and land-based runoff can help coral reefs recover from environmental stressors, including changes in temperature, light or nutrients.

“Coral reefs are not only important to the health of our coastal ecosystems, but are also critical in keeping coastal communities safe and cultivating our nation's economy,” said Nicole LeBoeuf, deputy assistant administrator for NOAA’s [National Ocean Service](#). “Partnering with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to fund these projects encourages communities to conserve coral reefs.”

Since 2000, the Coral Reef Conservation Fund has awarded more than \$17 million in federal and non-federal funds and leveraged more than \$13 million in matching funds for more than 300 coral conservation projects in 15 U.S. states and territories and 40 countries.

About the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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.

About the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 4,500 organizations and committed more than \$3.8 billion to conservation projects. Learn more at www.nfwf.org.

###