



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Contact:

Rob Blumenthal, 202-857-0166, [rob.blumenthal@nfwf.org](mailto:rob.blumenthal@nfwf.org)

## **NFWF Announces More Than \$880,000 in Grants to Aid Puget Sound's Killer Whales**

*Conservation partners including SeaWorld and Shell work to provide a feast of Chinook salmon for killer whales this Thanksgiving*

**SEATTLE, WA (November 16, 2017)** –The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) today announced the awarding of \$888,265 in grants to increase the recovery potential of the endangered Southern Resident killer whale. The grants will generate \$1.3 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of more than \$2 million.

The grants were awarded through the [Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program](#) (KWRCP), a partnership that began in 2015 with support from SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This year, Shell added its support to the effort. The company has been a part of the Anacortes community since 1955, and has identified the KWRCP as a key local conservation effort for the region.

The projects supported by the nine grants announced today will help to restore and enhance populations of Chinook salmon, a key prey item for the whales. These projects will focus on scientific research, habitat restoration and bolstering of forage fish levels. Specifically, grantees will work with recreational fishermen to understand the potential significance of the resident Chinook population to killer whales. Additionally, grantees will work with the seven Northwest Straits Marine Resource Committees to protect and restore important forage fish habitat, and support the restoration of 8 acres of juvenile salmon habitat in the Skagit River.

“We are excited to welcome Shell, a long-standing partner of NFWF in several regions of the country, to the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program,” said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF. “Saving this apex species is an ‘all hands on deck’ situation. It is only through partnerships supporting a comprehensive approach to conservation that we will be able to reverse the decline of this iconic species of the Pacific Northwest.”

The program also supports cutting-edge science, including genetic research, acoustic monitoring and aerial surveys using helicopter drones. This research will provide managers with the tools they need to help killer whales overcome the threats they face from poor water quality, noise pollution, vessel traffic, malnutrition and disease.

“Protecting this species has been at the core of SeaWorld’s purpose and mission for decades,” said Dr. Chris Dold, chief zoological officer for SeaWorld. “It’s more important now than ever to

support efforts like the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program, and SeaWorld remains committed to giving these animals a chance at survival.”

Less than 90 Southern Resident killer whales remain. While the species has been protected since the 1970s, its numbers have failed to rebuild the way neighboring populations to the north have. The Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program works to understand why the population has failed to recover and takes steps identified in the recovery plan to bring this population back from the brink.

“Working with this diverse group of partners to aid in the recovery of this incredible species is an honor, and we are proud to have this opportunity to help affect change,” said Shirley Yap, Shell Puget Sound Refinery General Manager. “Our refinery has a long history of collaborating with numerous environmental organizations to protect and preserve the communities we live in. By investing in projects that address salmon research and the monitoring of killer whale health and habitat restoration, we hope to help increase the killer whale population off the coast of Washington state.”

A complete list of the 2017 grants made through the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program is available [here](#).

#### **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](http://www.nfwf.org).*

#### **About SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.**

*SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., supports two initiatives at the Foundation that focus on coastal and marine resources, the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program and the Ocean Health Initiative. The Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program funds efforts to advance the knowledge and conservation of killer whales with a primary focus on activities that aid in the recovery of the Southern Resident killer whale Distinct Population Segment (DPS) and the Northern Pacific Resident population. The Ocean Health Initiative works through other Foundation programs to support a portfolio of projects that bolster the health of threatened marine and coastal species and habitats while engaging communities in these conservation efforts. For more information, visit [SeaWorldCares.com](http://SeaWorldCares.com)*

#### **About Shell Oil Company**

*Shell Oil Company is an affiliate of the Royal Dutch Shell plc, a global group of energy and petrochemical companies with operations in more than 70 countries. In the U.S., Shell operates in 50 states and employs more than 20,000 people working to help tackle the challenges of the new energy future.*

*Environmental stewardship is one-way Shell has continued to share benefits with communities over the past 100 years. Since 1999, Shell has focused our partnerships with many organizations*

*in the U.S. to protect more than 13 million acres of wetlands, clean and remove 600,000 pounds of debris from shoreline, and conserve more than 1.8 million acres of critical habitat.*

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