



For Immediate Release  
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## **Hawaii's Linda Paul Honored As National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Volunteer of the Year**

**Award Presented at NMSF 2006 Leadership Dinner in Washington, DC**

**Media Note: Photos from Ceremony Available,  
Please Call Contact**

**Washington, DC** – In recognition of her exhaustive efforts to protect the coral reefs of Hawaii and her leadership towards designating the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) a national marine sanctuary, Linda Paul was honored as the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF) Volunteer of the Year during a June 13<sup>th</sup> dinner at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC.

Executive Director for Aquatics for the Hawaii Audubon Society and the Vice-Chair of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council (RAC), Paul has asserted herself as a tireless leader of the RAC and as an advocate for the preservation and protection of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

"I am truly honored to receive this award," said Paul. "Protecting the unique biodiversity of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands is critical to the health of our planet. In making the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands a national marine sanctuary, we can help to preserve the place I love for future generations. However, it is essential to remember that the NWHI are too fragile to withstand much human visitation. Therefore, the policy is to 'bring the place to the people instead of the people to the place'."

RAC, an advisory body to NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program, was established to assist in planning for a marine sanctuary and operating the NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve. The purpose of the Reserve is to conserve one of the nation's most unique coral reef ecosystems.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve, the single largest conservation area under the U.S. flag, is under consideration to be designated as the nation's 14<sup>th</sup> national marine sanctuary. Paul, through her work on the RAC, is an integral part of making that a reality.

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The program is blessed with many outstanding volunteers that commit their time and resource to support our efforts," said Dan Basta, director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program. "Linda's tireless efforts, not just in Hawaii, but worldwide, to advocate on behalf of the waters surrounding the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands earns her more than this award, but the thanks and admiration from us all."

Throughout her life and career, Paul has been a dedicated activist for the NWHI; co-authoring two videos; developing marketing materials; doing numerous media interviews and leading countless presentations about the NWHI. She also initiated the application process supporting the nomination of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.

Paul's interest in ocean issues and passion for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands began when she was a graduate zoology student studying lobsters. Her studies focused on revealing behavior of the endemic Hawaiian spiny lobster *Panullirus marginatus*. During this time she ventured on research vessels to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands to collect adult and juvenile species.

"The effort that Linda has put into trying to preserve such a vast and rich natural resource is an inspiration to everyone who attempts to make a difference," said National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Executive Director Lori Arguelles. "She is truly an asset to the NMSF and a strong vocal advocate in the fight to protect our nation's oceans and coasts and their precious resources."

The NMSF Leadership Awards Dinner is held in conjunction with the 2006 Capitol Hill Oceans week, a three-day symposium that features ocean policy experts from government, private industry, nonprofits and academia. Participants look to raise awareness of important ocean and coastal issues among our nation's leaders and to build bridges among various ocean constituencies. Topics covered during this year's symposium will include alternative energy sources, marine debris, invasive species, the Census of Marine Life, the next steps in the development of an ocean observations system, a legislative agenda for Capitol Hill, and a regional Gulf of Maine panel focused on ecosystem management innovations.

Paul is being honored alongside former White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, Retired Adm. James D. Watkins, U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) and Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA), at the NMSF 2006 Leadership Awards in Washington, DC.

*The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is the private, non-profit partner to the federally managed National Marine Sanctuary Program. It was created to inspire all people to preserve, protect and promote our nationwide network of marine sanctuaries. The 14 sites within the national marine sanctuary system protect oceans and great lakes from the Florida Keys to the Hawaiian Islands and from Lake Huron to the Gulf of Mexico.*