NOAA REPORT

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Williamson Named Federal Meterological Coordinator: Sam Williamson has been named the new Federal Coordinator for Meterological Services. Williamson comes from NWS, where he was the principal planner for the NEXRAD program. He has also served NOAA in special assignments in Education, Human Resources, and as Senior Science Advisor to the House Science Committee. Most recently, he was a visiting Executive Fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

The Office of the Federal Coordinator is an interagency operation that integrates the meteorological services and supporting research activities of the 14

News Briefs

Federal agencies with meteorological programs. The OFCM works with the Federal agencies, so that they provide best possible weather information and user services.

Weather Extremes On-Line: Fans of global weather facts now have a new resource on the World Wide Web.

A new NOAA Web page, http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/ol/climate/globalextremes.html, answers questions such as: What's the hottest temperature recorded in North America? What's the rainiest place in Asia? What spot takes top honors for the coldest temperature?

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A C-54 transport plane was destroyed during the 1948 Oklahoma tornado that also produced the first tornado forecast.

First Tornado Forecast's 50th Anniversary Brings Memories Back to Oklahoma

In the evening of March 25, 1948, a tornado roared through Tinker Air Force Base, causing considerable damage, a few injuries, but no fatalities. However, the destruction could have been much worse.

A few hours earlier Air Force Captain Robert C. Miller and Major Ernest J. Fawbush correctly predicted that atmospheric conditions were ripe for

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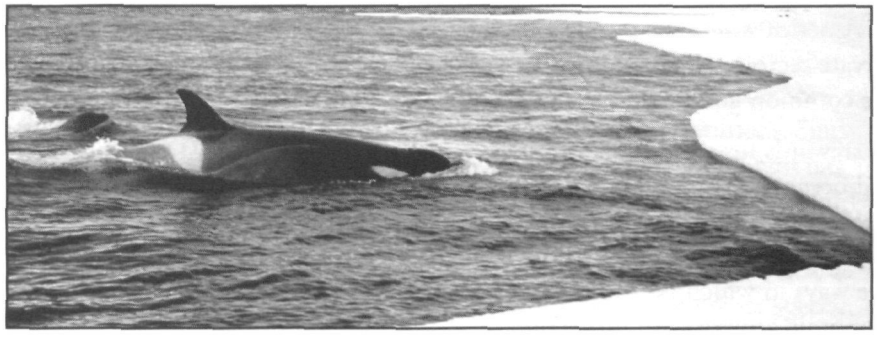
Where Science Sets the Agenda



Killer whales (Orcinus orca) photographed by NOAA Administrator D. James. Baker near the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica. For his reflections on his voyage to the South Pole, and NOAA laboratories there, see the story, page 4.

Garcia Dedicates New Hawaii Sanctuary

On February 16, Terry Garcia, assistant secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and deputy administrator for NOAA, presided over the dedication of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

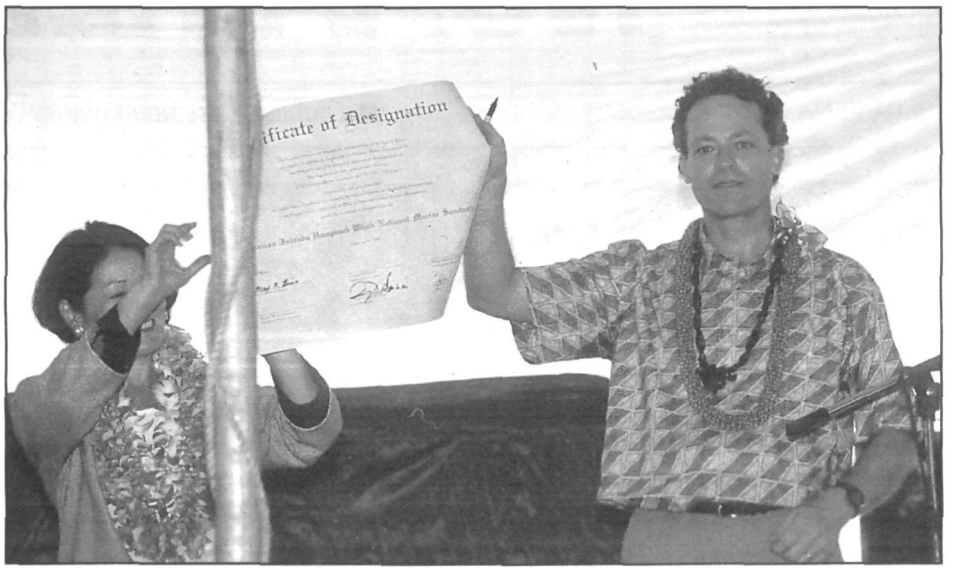
More than 300 people witnessed a stirring ceremony that included traditional dancing and chanting; demonstration of a native Hawaiian fish pond; the unveiling of a commemorative poster from marine life artist Robert Lyn Nelson; and speeches from the senior senator from Hawaii, Daniel Inouye, Hawaii's two representatives to the United States Congress, Neil Abercrombie and Patsy Mink, state representatives, and Dr. Sylvia Earle, National Geographic Society's Explorer in Residence.

The following is an excerpt from Terry Garcia's opening remarks:

1998 is the International Year of the Ocean, and I can't think of a better place to celebrate than in Hawaii. And I can't think of a better way to celebrate the Year of the Ocean than by dedicating this sanctuary, and ensuring a legacy of protection for Hawaii's humpback whale.

The Clinton Administration believes in an America that is economically strong and environmentally sound; an America where the public and private sectors can come together for the common good.

As stewards for the nation's coasts and oceans, NOAA embodies these ideals. And national marine sanctuaries are just one of the many innovative ways in which NOAA balances economic growth with protection of the resources that make that growth possible.



NOAA Deputy Administrator Terry Garcia (right) holds the Certificate of Designation for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale Sanctuary. At left is Hawaii Lt. Governor Mazie K. Hirono.

Today, the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary joins a special class of nationally recognized marine protected areas. Hawaii's humpback whales join Florida and American Samoa's coral reefs, Monterey Bay and Channel Island's kelp forests, Washington State's pristine rugged coastline, and New England's whales as worthy of this nation's recognition and protection. As a member of this family, you will be able to share the knowledge of your sibling sanctuaries, learning from each other and benefiting from each others experiences.

This sanctuary shines an international spotlight on the significance of Hawaii's waters as the nursing and calving ground for the largest population of humpback whales in the north Pacific. The benefits to having a marine sanctuary in Hawaii are many:

- For the parent, teacher or school child eager for exciting new ways to learn about humpback whales, this is your sanctuary.
- For the citizen wanting to lend a hand to preserve these beautiful creatures, this is your sanctuary.
- For the businessperson wanting to improve protection of humpback whales and the bottom line at the same time, this is your sanctuary.
- For the researcher seeking a viable partner to further our understanding of these whales, and to share that knowledge with the public, this is your sanctuary.
- For the citizen who wants a direct say in the management of his or her marine environment, this is your sanctuary.
- And for the whales that come here to calve, nurse, and breed, this sanctuary is most importantly for you.

NOAA is the only federal agency with ocean in its name. And Hawaii is the Nation's only true ocean state. Today these two oceans join together in partnership to create a national marine sanctuary, and commit to

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Spring Meeting Announced by Daley, Navy Secretary

Ocean Conference Announced for Monterey

As part of the Year of the Ocean, the Department of Commerce and U.S. Navy will co-host a National Ocean Conference on June 11 and 12 in Monterey, Calif., home to the Nation's largest national marine sanctuary.

The conference will include other Federal agencies, ocean scientists and researchers, Members of Congress, and representatives of state and local governments, industry, and interested ocean groups.

The conference, to be held at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, was conceived as a way to underscore the importance of the oceans to a vast range of vital U.S. interests, and to enhance public awareness of our nation's dependence on the ocean.

"The Year of the Ocean provides us with an excellent opportunity to examine the essential role the ocean plays in all of our lives. The oceans provide food, medicines, recreation, transportation and other aspects of marine commerce that contribute to our high standard of living," Commerce Secretary Daley said. "This conference will be an important forum to discuss these contributions and stimulate the debate as to how to ensure the long-term health of the Earth's vital ocean resources."

"Despite the importance of the ocean to various sectors of the U.S. public," said Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton, "the overall impact of ocean activities to the nation as a whole is rarely addressed. The ocean is the Navy's operating environment, and our national security, as well as our foreign trade, are dependent on preserving the high seas freedoms of navigation for military and commercial vessels worldwide. This conference," added Dalton, "reflects a growing awareness of the ocean's paramount importance to global peace and security, the world economy, and environmental well-being."

Ocean activities and concerns in the United States span a broad range of interests and are reflected in the four central themes of the conference: commerce, global security, environment, and exploration and education.

"In the United States, one of every six jobs is marine-related and one-third of the nation's gross domestic product is produced in coastal areas through fishing, transportation and recreation," said Daley. "All of these industries are dependent on healthy waters and marine habitats."

"As global communications increasingly link our economies and our lives, there is a tendency to believe the oceans that separate us are less relevant. In fact, the opposite is true," said Dalton. "The more linked we become, the more relevant the oceans become, as the great common denominator which links us all."

Sea Grant Celebrates 30th Anniversary

NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program recently celebrated its 30th anniversary of awarding grants, with a ceremony held in the U.S. Capitol. The event was sponsored by the Sea Grant Association and hosted by Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska.

In remarks at the ceremony, Senator Stevens stated that "Sea Grant has made a difference in the lives of citizens who live near and depend on our marine and water resources by addressing bycatch and fisheries habitat issues, improving stock assessment models and so much more. But perhaps the most important role of the Sea Grant Program has been in education. The program is helping to educate the next generation of leaders and resource managers. Through its research, education and marine extension programs, the Sea Grant Program continues to address a wide range of marine resource and environmental issues."

First authorized in 1966 by Congressional legislation sponsored by Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island and Representative Paul Rogers of Florida, the Sea Grant network has grown to encompass more than 200 universities and other marine organizations that work within a core of 29 state Sea Grant colleges and institutions. Since its modest beginning, Sea Grant has used the peer-review process to award thousands of research and outreach grants that address issues as diverse as aquaculture, aquatic nuisance species, coastal economic development, habitat enhancement, coastal hazards, marine science education, marine biotechnology, and seafood safety.

—Sue Borda

Focus On...

NOAA Administrator Visits South Pole Laboratories

NOAA Administrator D. James Baker visited Antarctica and the Federal science laboratories there earlier this year. Here are his impressions of the trip:

Dr. David Hoffman, Director of NOAA's Climate Monitoring and Diagnostic Laboratory (left) and Dr. D. James Baker, Administrator of NOAA (right) at the dedication plaque for the Atmospheric Research Laboratory at the South Pole.

Following a long-standing invitation of the National Science Foundation (NSF), which manages the U.S. Antarctic program, I visited McMurdo Station and the South Pole in January of this year. I went with Joe Bordogna, Deputy Director of NSF, and NOAA's Dave Hoffman, Director of our Climate Modeling and Diagnostic Laboratories (CMDL). For Dave and me, the focus was the dedication of the new NOAA/NSF Atmospheric Research Observatory at the Pole itself, but I was eager to see the continent and all the scientific facilities.

Antarctica and the seas around it have been a long-standing interest of mine. In the late 1960s, I used a set of deep-sea pressure gauges across the Drake Passage to monitor fluctuations in the Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC), and carried out studies with drifting buoy data on the ACC. But I had never set foot on the continent. In fact, my claim to fame was my remark to a surprised galley one cold and stormy morning as we approached the Palmer Peninsula: "Hey everybody, look at the tiny killer whales!"—which were in fact penguins!

The first National Academy of Sciences Committee I was appointed to was the Polar Research Committee (now Board), chaired by Dr. Larry Gould, geologist and member of the 1929 Byrd Expedition, the first flight to the Pole. On the trip, I brought a copy of Gould's book, *Cold,* that Grace Ostenso had given me from Ned's collection.

WHITENESS AND EMPTINESS

As our Navy LC-130 brought Antarctica into view, overall I had an impression of whiteness and emptiness—few people have been there, and most of the continent remains unexplored. Nothing I had read prepared me for the immensity of the continent and the beauty of the entire frozen landscape. One must see it to understand the lure of this place for the early explorers. Most unexpected are the dry valleys where no snow falls—miles and miles of desert-like mountains and valleys.

Today, the Antarctic is a shared continent with a focus on science. The U.S. has three stations: at McMurdo, South Pole, and the Palmer Peninsula, south of South America. NOAA has a long and proud history in the Antarctic, from its studies of Antarctic Living Marine Resources to CO_2 monitoring to

The Atmospheric Research Observatory at the South Pole which contains the NOAA Climate Monitoring and Diagnostic Laboratory facilities.

Susan Solomon's award winning work on ozone. In addition to the outstanding research program, NOAA has a regulatory role in monitoring the environmental impacts of new construction plans.

On our trip, we spent three days at McMurdo and the surrounding area, and one day at the Pole, visiting all the science facilities—from neutrino telescopes to marine mammal studies. We also visited the wintering-over huts of Scott and Shackleton, still filled with the smells of exploration, wood, seal meat, horses, and humans; shelves stocked with the sad remains of Scott's expedition from which he never returned.

Wildlife is limited, but spectacular: we talked to emperor and adelie penguins, watched the orcas, saw elephant and crab eater seals, and waved our arms at Skua gulls.

THE NEVER-SETTING SUMMER SUN

The fact that the sun never sets in the Antarctic summer is known to all of us—but experiencing it is quite another story! The summer sun goes around the sky, not up and down. One doesn't realize how much one depends on the height of the sun in the sky for time bearings. After dinner, the sun continues to shine—it's easy to forget to go to bed!

The scientists are enthusiastic and there is a sense of camaraderie that comes from a shared sense of excitement and new discovery. The facilities are excellent. Dave and his team have an impressive operation there, and I was pleased to visit even for a short time. NOAA's new

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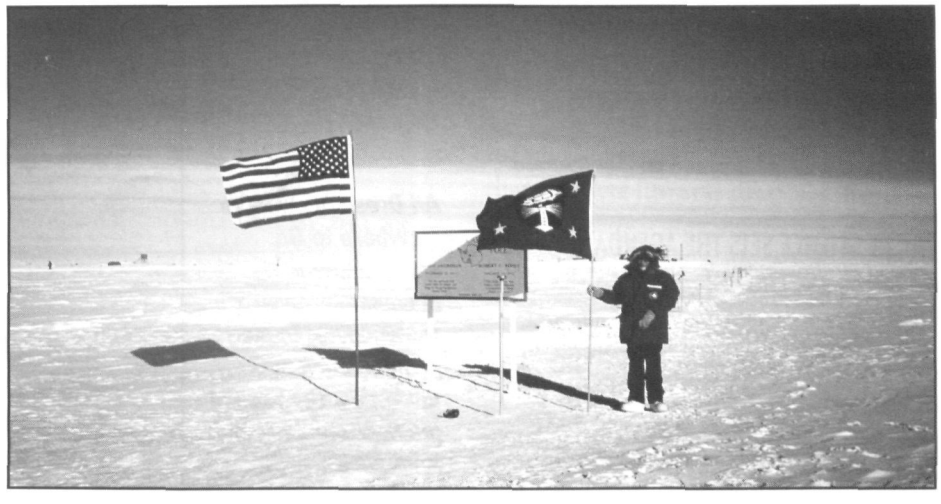

Dr. D. James Baker, Administrator of NOAA, at the geographic South Pole, holding his official flag. Note the series of markers marching to the right showing previous positions of the pole as the ice cap moves.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Program Helps to Resolve Workplace Differences

What began as an informal regional effort, the dispute resolution program in NOAA's Western Administrative Support Center service area, has evolved into a nationwide program within the agency.

The program's local success has resulted in the nationwide acceptance of this Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program as NOAA's method of choice for resolving workplace differences at the lowest level.

Alternative Dispute Resolution programs are beginning to receive considerable attention in the Federal work environment. ADR is designed to take differences in the workplace out of a formal, contentious arena and into a more positive approach for resolving issues. Where formal processes deal primarily with the facts of an immediate situation, mediation also addresses the underlying emotional aspects of the problem essential to effective long-term solutions.

This kind of mediation is a confidential process in which a trained neutral party helps to negotiate a settlement. The mediator has no authority to render a decision, but may suggest options to encourage the parties to expand the range of possible resolutions under consideration. The process is voluntary for all parties, and any agreements reached are the agreements of the disputants.

Within NOAA, mediation has found widespread application. After successful partnering with the appropriate unions, it was agreed that both administrative and negotiated grievance processes could use mediation in the resolution of disputes. The NOAA Office of Civil Rights has chosen to use mediation where appropriate for Complaints of Discrimination. Managers and/or employees may request mediation in those instances where there is not a formal process invoked, but general workplace differences might be improved with the help of a neutral third party.

Electing to use ADR, or mediation, provides two primary benefits to the agency and participants. It is cost

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Antarctica: 'Where Science Sets the Agenda'

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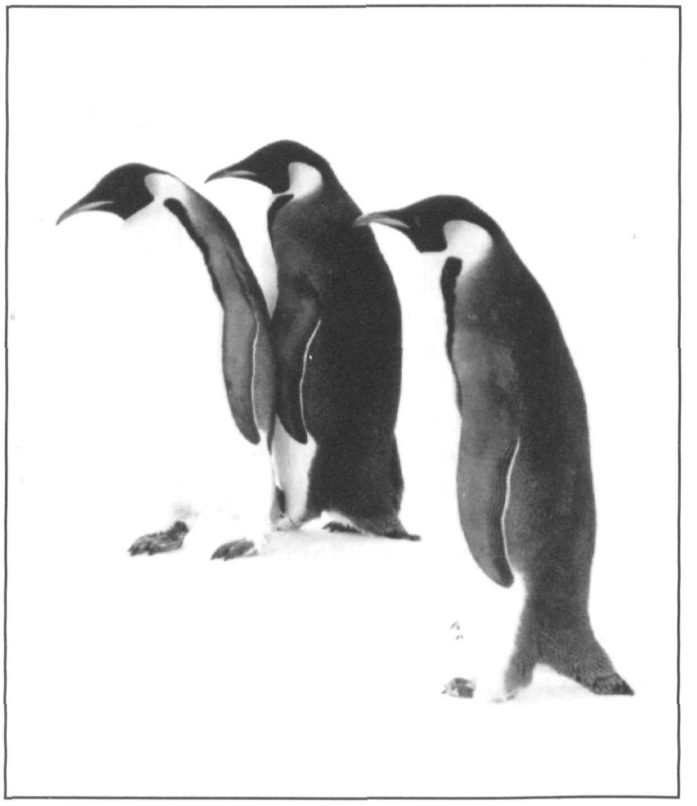
Atmospheric Research Observatory is a wonderful lab, currently being manned by Lt. Nathan Hill and Eric Sandberg. The facility is shared by NOAA and NSF-supported scientists who carry out a range of atmospheric monitoring. I was envious of the scientists and their well equipped laboratories: if I hadn't been an oceanographer, I might have chosen the Antarctic as a place to do science.

WHERE SCIENCE SETS THE AGENDA

Antarctica is the only place in the world where science sets the agenda, and we have seen how important this part of the world is to global climate change and global ecosystems. NSF is doing a fine job of managing the stations and of minimizing the environmental impacts of the U.S. long-term presence. But new challenges are growing as tourism increases. We need to enhance our scientific work there and to provide the science necessary for long-term trends, especially as stresses on the rest of the world increase. NOAA has played and will continue to play a key role in the Antarctic, and I'm pleased to have been able to tour the facilities and to meet and talk with scientists there.



All Dressed Up With Nowhere to Go: *Three emperor penguins (Aptenodytes forster) photographed by Dr. Baker near the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica.*

A Milestone in Weather Forecasting, First Tornado Forecast is Celebrated

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tornadoes in the vicinity of Tinker AFB. This first tornado forecast was instrumental in advancing the Nation's commitment to protecting the American public and military resources from the dangers caused by natural hazards.

"This was the first time meteorologists actually predicted that a tornado was possible and that individuals should take precaution," said Jeff Kimpel, director of NOAA's National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Okla. "Up to this point in history, no one had ever issued an operational tornado forecast."

Fifty years later, NOAA's National Weather Service, National Severe Storms Laboratory, in cooperation with the University of Oklahoma, the Air Force and the city of Norman hosted an extended celebration in Norman, Okla., and at Tinker AFB as a tribute to the first tornado forecast and 50 years of tornado forecasting.

"The forecast issued in March 1948 was the first step in establishing the organized warning and watch program that blankets and protects the nation today," said Gary Grice, deputy Director of NOAA's Storm Prediction Center. "Today we're able to issue warning and watches for the protection of life and property because two people had faith that scientists could predict tornadoes. That's worth commemorating."

The three-day commemoration, March 23-25, 1998, recognized severe weather research and forecasting and highlighted the milestones in tornado forecasting over the past half-century, including the rapid advancements in severe weather watches and warnings that have been gained during the past few years through new technology such as the Doppler radar and interactive computer systems. The Golden Anniversary Celebration also spotlighted the exciting future which lies ahead from better scientific understanding and integration of rapidly advancing computer systems into operational meteorological forecasting.

A powerful tornado destroyed several P-47 fighter airplanes, and a C-54 transport plane, at Oklahoma's Tinker AFB in 1948. The tornado was the first ever forecasted, 50 years ago.

To commemorate the events, NOAA held an Open House at its Storm Prediction Center, the National Severe Storms Laboratory, the Operational Support Facility and the Weather Forecast Office in Norman, Okla. Students and families from the area toured the University Research Park facilities, and learned how severe weather and tornado watches and warnings are generated and issued each day at the Storm Prediction Center.

In addition, the Central Oklahoma chapters of the American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association conducted a scientific symposium on tornado forecasting, and NOAA and Tinker Air Force base hosted a special ceremony to unveil a marker dedicated to the historic forecast.

Today, issuing tornado and severe weather warnings, watches and forecasts are an everyday activity at the National Weather Service. Throughout the year, primarily in the spring and early summer, forecasters at NOAA's Storm Prediction Center monitor the conditions for possible severe weather activity that impacts life and property. Much of the sophisticated watch and warning program in place today, is the result of 50 years of research. "Research brought us the improved tools and forecast techniques we use in the operational forecast environment today," added Kimpel.

—Stephanie Kenitzer

(More information on the Golden Anniversary is available on the Internet at ***http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/GoldenAnniversary****.)*

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This new Global Measured Extremes of Temperature and Precipitation page is also accessible through: http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/ol/climate/severeweather/severeweather.html

The new page is courtesy of NOAA's National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C.

Karl Named Head of NCDC: Thomas Karl, whose work in climate change has been published in scientific journals around the world, has been named director of NOAA's National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C.

Karl, who has been with the climate center since 1980, most recently served as senior scientist there, where he analyzed global climate change, extreme weather events, and trends in global and U.S. climate over the past 100 years. He also led other scientists in their studies of the changing environment.

NOAA Ship Ferrel Rescues Sailboat in Keys: The former manager of the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary was instrumental in rescuing a sinking sailboat last week in sanctuary waters, through his new position as commanding officer of the NOAA ship *Ferrel.*

NOAA Corps Lt. Cmdr. Paul Moen and his officers and crew aboard the *Ferrel* responded to a mayday call before dawn from the sailboat *Surprise,* which was taking on water and beginning to sink in heavy seas offshore and to the north of Carysfort Reef.

"I maneuvered the *Ferrel* slowly alongside the *Surprise,* which was beam-to the seas and rolling wildly," Moen said. The *Ferrel* stayed on scene until Moen was sure that the situation was under control.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Makes Workplace Mediation Quick, Positive

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effective and it brings quick closure to disputes. The administrative costs associated with processing any complaint can grow quickly. Also, when people are in disagreement they mentally deal with the issue at hand, align allies and tend to be less than optimally productive. ADR can, under most circumstances, be requested and completed within two weeks with the only cost being the travel and per diem for the mediators.

Agreements reached in mediations are more creative than traditional adjudicated remedies and therefore meet the needs of the individuals much better. Traditional grievance and EEO solutions have winners and losers, or more typically only losers. That is, when an outside third party makes a decision for others involved in a dispute, seldom are either of the disputants ever fully satisfied. In mediation, those involved in the dispute discuss alternatives and solve their own problems. When people are involved in decisions, or in this case the settlement agreement, that agreement will have lasting results.

One attractive feature which mediation offers is that employees do not lose the right to continue in an administrative process because time frames have expired. In administrative rights based procedures time frames are essential to the continuation of those rights. However, if an employee who has filed a grievance or complaint in a timely manner wishes to go to mediation, the time frames for the formal process are suspended until mediation is completed. If the mediation is unsuccessful, the complainant returns to the formal process at whatever stage he or she was at prior to attempting mediation.

NOAA currently has one full time mediator, or program coordinator, and twenty-three mediators who provide assistance as needed. The mediators in NOAA's pool are from different line offices and represent a diverse cross section of employees from different occupations. We ensure that employees do not mediate cases within their own line organization.

For more information, call the Program Coordinator at (206) 526-6171.

Garcia Dedicates Hawaii Sanctuary

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restoring and maintaining the populations of the majestic humpback whales.

On behalf of NOAA, thank you all for your support, and congratulations on the dedication of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

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