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**WELLS RESERVE TO EXPAND FISHERIES SCIENCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH**

WELLS, Maine, October 18, 2017 — Two grants from the National Estuarine Research Reserve System’s Science Collaborative will extend Wells Reserve research in collaborative and fisheries science. Both projects begin this fall, continue into 2019, and involve colleagues from across the country.

The Wells Reserve will receive $99,948 to work with more than a dozen other estuarine reserves to develop a curriculum, resources, and training in conflict resolution. The project, “Resilience Dialogues: Strategies for Conflict Management in Collaborative Science,” will be coordinated by the director of the Wells Reserve’s Coastal Training Program, Dr. Christine Feurt.

Feurt explained, “For nearly 10 years, our network of reserve sites has been bringing people together to make decisions about protecting water resources in their communities. At times, conflicts arise that challenge a group’s ability to reach consensus. This grant will allow us to discover, evaluate, and share the best techniques for removing barriers so cities and towns can improve water quality.”

The Wells Reserve will also be involved with a University of New Hampshire (UNH) project to expand the use of genomic research in fisheries management. UNH was awarded a $496,887 grant for “New Technology for Old Problems—Using DNA Methods to Monitor Invasive Species and Biodiversity in Estuarine Systems.” The Wells Reserve will help UNH design and test a DNA-based method for monitoring invasive species and biodiversity.

“Environmental DNA techniques, or eDNA, may revolutionize fisheries field work and population monitoring,” said Dr. Jason Goldstein, the reserve’s research director. “Water and sediment carry traces of DNA from fishes and invertebrates that inhabit rivers, streams, and estuaries. By analyzing the water or sediment for DNA, we can discover what species are present. The eDNA method can complement or augment traditional monitoring methods.”

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System’s Science Collaborative supports collaborative research that addresses coastal management problems important to the reserves. The Science Collaborative is managed by the University of Michigan’s Water Center through a cooperative agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Funding for the research reserves and this program comes from NOAA. Learn more at https://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/ or www.graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs.

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