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PRESS RELEASE

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October 6, 2006
For Immediate Release

New Website Offers Tools for Ecosystem-Based Management

Arlington, Virginia – A network of conservation groups, foundations, scientists, and universities has launched a new website that provides comprehensive information about tools for ecosystem-based management of coastal and marine environments. The Ecosystem-Based Management Tools Network website (www.ebmtools.org) is an online portal that will serve the information needs of scientists, planners, and coastal land managers throughout North America.

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is an innovative approach that draws together all components of an ecosystem, including people and their environment, rather than managing a single issue or resource in isolation. “Ecosystem-based management attempts to integrate ecological, social, and economic goals while addressing the complexity of natural processes and social systems,” said Sarah Carr, Ph.D., EBM Tools Program Coordinator for NatureServe. “EBM not only helps managers and planners to better understand the condition of coastal and marine resources, but also engages stakeholders in a collaborative process to define problems and find solutions.”

The reports of two recent landmark commissions, the Pew Oceans Commission and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, have called for using an ecosystem-based management approach to address increasing threats to the planet’s oceans and coastal areas. Both commissions highlighted the value of EBM in maintaining and restoring healthy and productive ecosystems that provide stable fisheries, abundant wildlife, protection from hurricanes and flooding, and vibrant coastal communities.

In response to this need, an alliance of EBM tools developers and users has established the EBM Tools Network, with significant financial support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. The goal of the network is to facilitate EBM in coastal and marine environments by developing needed tools and encouraging their use. The network includes representatives from Duke University, Ecotrust, The Nature Conservancy, NatureServe, NCEAS, NOAA, the Orton Family Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Pacific Marine Analysis and Research Association, Princeton University, the Sea Around Us Project, and the University of Queensland.

“This is an exciting moment for the EBM Tools Network,” said Kristin Sherwood, Associate Program Officer for the Packard Foundation’s Conservation and Science Program. “NatureServe

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and EBM Tools Network members have been working hard to develop tools that address the increasing degradation of coastal and marine systems through an approach that focuses on the entire ecosystem, including the people who live there. We hope that by making these tools available online, the network will increase their use in decision-making and planning processes that directly affect the state of our coastal and marine ecosystems.”

The EBM Tools Network website provides a searchable database of more than 80 ecosystem-based management tools, including watershed and marine ecosystem models, decision-support tools, fisheries management tools, stakeholder engagement tools, and many others. The website also helps users find relevant data, funding opportunities, and information about training and conferences.

“Ecosystem-based management provides coastal communities a more effective approach to managing local resources,” said Dan Dorfman, Senior Marine Conservation Planner with The Nature Conservancy’s Global Marine Initiative. “The EBM Tools Network website will be a great resource for communicating about EBM tools and enabling both professional planners and interested community members to participate in developing better solutions to important resource management issues.”

Users can become part of the EBM tools user community by signing up for e-mail updates from the network. To access the EBM Tools Network website, go to www.ebmtools.org. For information about the network, contact Sarah Carr at 703-908-1892, or by email at sarah_carr@natureserve.org.

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NatureServe is a non-profit conservation group dedicated to providing the scientific basis for effective conservation action. Representing a network of 80 natural heritage programs and conservation data centers in the United States, Canada, and Latin America, NatureServe is a leading source for detailed scientific information about threatened plants, animals, and ecosystems. Visit us online at www.natureserve.org.