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**NOAA, EPA RELEASES FIRST-YEAR PORTFIELDS REPORT**  
*Report Cites Success With Pilot Projects in New Bedford, Bellingham and Tampa*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency announced today the release of the report "Portfields: A Coordinated Approach to Revitalizing Ports", at the Brownfields 2004 Conference in St. Louis, Mo. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Led by NOAA, Portfields is a federal interagency effort that focuses on the redevelopment of brownfields in port communities. A brownfield, as defined by EPA, is property that may encounter complications to redevelopment or reuse by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants.

Originating from the Brownfields Federal Partnership Action Agenda, Portfields brings together federal, state and local agencies committed to working together to revitalize port communities, both economically and environmentally. There are currently three Portfields Pilot Ports: The Ports of Tampa, Fla.; Bellingham, Wash. and New Bedford, Mass.

"The Portfields program is already producing on-the-ground results," said Richard Spinrad, Ph.D., assistant administrator for NOAA's Ocean Service, who announced the report at the conference. "Portfields enhances the local economy while improving the environment. Each of these projects are outstanding examples of what is possible when agencies leverage resources and work together towards common goals."

Through increased agency coordination, creative solutions and leveraging of resources, Portfields is assisting the three Pilot Ports to revitalize waterfront areas, improve marine transportation and protect and restore native-species habitat.

"The Portfields initiative has generated the momentum for us to implement key provisions of the New Bedford Harbor Cleanup plan that will enable navigational dredging of New Bedford Harbor that would otherwise have been impossible," said New Bedford Mayor Frederick Kalisz.

The project, announced last year at Brownfields 2003 in Portland, Ore. has already produced significant results in each of the three pilot cities. The report cites the accomplishments of Portfields:

- NOAA, US Army Corps, EPA, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality, the City of New Bedford and other partners have worked closely to streamline permitting and expedite the implementation of navigation dredging in New Bedford Harbor, which has not been done in 30 years, limiting the size of ships that enter the harbor. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is providing \$5 million and the private sector is contributing \$200,000 for navigational dredging, scheduled to begin in fall.

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- The Portfields partners are assisting the port and the City of Bellingham's effort of economic revitalization and environmental restoration of Bellingham Bay. Portfields has leveraged resources from the State of Washington, local industry and NOAA to develop a plan for the Squalicum Creek restoration and redevelopment project to restore estuarine habitat essential for salmon-recovery efforts. The plan encompasses projects to redevelop infrastructure and waterfront facilities to support expanded commercial and industrial activities.
- NOAA provided resources to the Tampa Port Authority for the planning and design of stormwater improvements. This project involves development of a Geographic Information System to assess the area's topography and identify properties best suited for installation of stormwater management improvements. The port is also working with the Southwest Florida Water Management District to leverage resources for stormwater improvements that will improve the water quality in Tampa Bay and serve as a national model for innovative stormwater management.

With maritime trade expected to double by the year 2020, U.S. ports will be faced with the need to increase capacity and infrastructure. Available land is often limited in port areas, causing ports to use existing land more efficiently. Redeveloping brownfields in port areas can be a catalyst for promoting community revitalization, economic development and job creation.

NOAA and EPA have been working together to address coastal brownfields since 1985. In January 2003, NOAA and EPA signed a new Memorandum of Understanding to renew their commitment to working together on cross-agency issues and to lay the groundwork for further collaboration with other agencies on this new Portfields Initiative.

"The Portfields Program is an ideal opportunity for NOAA and other federal agencies to partner with ports and communities to help improve marine transportation systems, revitalize waterfront areas, and restore and protect coastal habitat," said Dr. James R. Mahoney, assistant secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere, and NOAA deputy administrator.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Please visit <http://www.noaa.gov> and <http://www.brownfields.noaa.gov> for more information.

EPA collects, manages and distributes ambient air quality monitoring and source emissions data from the states and provides analyses and assessment models and tools for the best use of these data in the nation's air quality management. Please visit <http://www.epa.gov> and <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields> for more information.

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