

## MEDIA ADVISORY

Contact: Kent Laborde, NOAA  
202-482-5757 (office)  
240-481-6310 (cell)  
Jeff June, NRC  
206-679-3437 (cell)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **NAVY DIVERS TRAIN TO REMOVE HAZARDOUS ABANDONED FISHING GEAR**

Reporters are invited to observe Navy divers undergoing specialized training as they learn a more efficient method to safely remove submerged derelict fishing nets. These divers – already highly trained and experienced – will receive the additional instruction and hands-on exposure to help them better carry out the dangerous but critical task of net removal. **Department of Natural Resources divers**, local experts in derelict net removal, will work to transfer their knowledge to the Navy, beneficial to the State of Washington and national security. Each training class includes classroom instruction, an in-water lake demonstration of removal methods (open to media on 6/29), and two days of open water removal operations (open to media on 6/30). In 2005 sixty Navy divers are scheduled complete these courses.

**WHO:** Divers from U.S. Navy Region Northwest and the **Washington Department of Natural Resources** along with officials from the Navy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Northwest Straits Commission, Washington Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Coastal America,

**WHAT:** Derelict fishing gear removal training and hands on field operations

**WHEN:** June 29-30

**WHERE:** **June 29**, 9-11 a.m., NOAA Dive Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle  
Observation of classroom and nearby lake practice dives, interviews with participants and officials.  
**June 30**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Blaine Harbor Marina, Blaine, Washington  
Observation of open water derelict net check out dives (actual net removals). Media will have access to the removal site on two government vessels. Navigation and on-station time will be approximately one hour, 30 minutes.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Abandoned, lost and discarded fishing nets can be found throughout the world's oceans, and are a particular concern in the waters of Puget Sound. Unless removed from the water, these derelict nets continue to attract, capture and kill marine organisms until they are buried by sediment or dissolve, which can take hundreds of years. The gear also poses a severe threat to navigation by fowling props and rudders, damaging vessels and making them unable to maneuver. Finally, the gear is a hazard to divers, who can become entangled just like a fish. This training matches enhanced military readiness to an environmental restoration need benefiting multiple government agencies.