



## **NEWS FROM NOAA**

**NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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### **EAST MOLINE'S CHAD PREGRACKE RECEIVES ENVIRONMENTAL HERO AWARD**

Chad Pregracke, founder of the Living Lands & Waters environmental group, has been recognized by NOAA as an Environmental Hero for his long-standing commitment to clean and preserve the nation's major rivers. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Pregracke started a personal quest to clear trash from area rivers while working as a commercial shell diver, fisherman and barge hand during high school and college. His efforts to clean up the Mississippi River near his home caught local attention and expanded to community wide projects to clean waterways across the nation. While still in college, he established the Living Lands & Waters 501(c) (3) environmental organization in East Moline, Ill., in 1998. Today, there are ten paid staff members, a fleet of several barges and workboats and thousands of volunteers.

Established in 1996, the Environmental Hero Award is presented to individuals and organizations that volunteer their time and energy to help NOAA carry out its mission.

"NOAA and the nation are fortunate to have such dedicated people volunteer so much of their time," said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "They set a perfect example for others to follow in their communities. America can benefit from more environmental heroes like Chad."

"True to his commitment to environmental stewardship, Chad is spending Earth Day in Washington, D.C., to clean the Anacostia and Potomac rivers in conjunction with the Capitol River Relief "Team Up to Clean Up" project," states Terry Simmons, data acquisition program manager for NOAA's Quad Cities National Weather Service Forecast Office in Davenport, Iowa. "We look forward to honoring Chad with the Environmental Hero Award when he returns."

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.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

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