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NOAA Continues to Support Coastal and Ocean Observing in the Pacific Islands

The Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System (PacIOOS) was awarded more than \$2.75 million in competitive grant funding through NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). The funding is for the first year of a five-year cooperative agreement to enhance and sustain coastal and ocean observing efforts throughout the U.S. Pacific Islands region. PacIOOS is based within the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Melissa Iwamoto, Director of PacIOOS, states, "The ocean is fundamental to our lives in the islands. PacIOOS strives to provide accurate and easily accessible coastal and ocean information to help improve Pacific Islanders' quality of life through empowered decision-making." She adds, "We are pleased to continue helping island communities and authorities address both the short- and long-term challenges we face in the islands."

Guided by stakeholder input, PacIOOS will continue to support its implementation as an ocean information system. Through the collection of observational ocean data, prediction of future events, and as a resource for a wide variety of ocean data, PacIOOS helps to increase ocean safety, protect public and environmental health, and support the economy. Wave inundation forecasts, real-time wave information, water quality measurements, and other ocean and coastal information products are freely available online. User-friendly data visualization tools and PacIOOS' interactive mapping platform 'Voyager' also offer easy and open access to the data.

PacIOOS is one of eleven regional associations to receive funding from IOOS. Over \$31 million was awarded this year across the U.S. IOOS system.

"Ocean observing is a collaborative effort, and in order to build a strong, comprehensive national network, it's essential that we work with dynamic regional associations who are integrated into the communities they serve. It's because of regional associations like PacIOOS that the national Integrated Ocean Observing System is able to reflect the needs of so many diverse communities and industries who need observing data every day," said Zdenka Willis, Director of U.S. IOOS.

Regional associations address and coordinate local coastal and ocean observing and decision-support projects, which benefit the local area and integrate into the national U.S. IOOS. Providing funding for regional entities is a key provision of the 2009 Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System (ICOOS) Act, which authorizes the establishment of the U.S. IOOS.