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**ECOTRUST LAUNCHES NATIONAL PANEL SERIES ON THE FUTURE OF
COASTAL FISHERIES**

Blue Ribbon Panel To Consider Impacts of Catch Shares on Fishing Communities

Boston, Mass., May 25, 2010 – Starting this month, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – which oversees U.S. fisheries – has kicked into high gear its program to fundamentally alter the way U.S. fisheries are managed through the use of a tool known as catch shares, which allocate a set percentage of the total allowable catch to qualifying individuals, cooperatives, communities and other entities. At the same time that the agency is working to finalize its policy guidance for catch share programs, several regions around the country have begun or are preparing to implement new programs.

Within both the national and international debate about catch share programs as tools for effective fisheries management, there is a notable lack of discussion and analysis of the effects of such programs on the communities whose livelihoods may depend on them. With this in mind, Ecotrust is convening a national blue ribbon panel of experts and practitioners of community-based fisheries, social science and rural economic development to draft a set of recommendations over the next 12 months on how to design catch share systems to better accommodate the social, economic, cultural and environmental needs and concerns of fishing communities.

The group will review the performance of existing programs, learn about three emerging systems in the U.S., and make a set of forward-looking recommendations for use by policy makers and NOAA. The goal of the project is to advance the understanding, design and implementation of catch share programs.

The panel's first meeting will focus on the New England region just one month into the new groundfish sector program. The meeting coincides with the opening of the "common pool fishery" for those fishermen who have not joined a sector and will continue to fish under the old "days at sea" rules. The panel will hear from regional experts on New England's groundfish,

scallop and lobster fisheries, and begin its deliberations on community aspects of catch share design and implementation.

After distilling lessons learned from New England, the panel will meet in New Orleans in July and in Portland, Ore. in late August to learn about community impacts of catch share programs currently underway or poised to be implemented in the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific regions.

The panel is scheduled to issue a report of its recommendations in spring 2011.

About Ecotrust

Over nearly 20 years, Ecotrust has converted \$60 million in grants into more than \$300 million in capital for local people, businesses, and organizations from Alaska to California. Ecotrust's many innovations include co-founding the world's first environmental bank, starting the world's first ecosystem investment fund, creating a range of programs in fisheries, forestry, food, farms and children's health, and developing new scientific and information tools to improve social, economic and environmental decision-making. Ecotrust works locally in ways that promise hope abroad, and it honors and supports the wisdom of Native and First Nation leadership in its work. More on the Web at www.ecotrust.org.