



# FISHING for ENERGY

Generating new energy from old gear.

The Fishing for Energy Project is a partnership between the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Covanta Energy Corporation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program, and Schnitzer Steel to reduce the amount of unused fishing gear in the community and marine environment. The project provides a place for the fishing community to dispose of old or derelict fishing gear they recover while at sea at no cost. Various sites on Cape Cod, MA, specifically Provincetown, Chatham and Wellfleet, will be the latest ports on the eastern seaboard to launch the Fishing for Energy program, currently slated to roll-out in September and October.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program has identified derelict fishing gear as one of the major types of debris impacting the marine environment; threatening commercially important species, living marine mammals and their habitat, as well as hindering navigational safety. Derelict fishing gear (gear that is lost in the marine environment) continues to "fish", catching commercially valuable species. The gear also catches non-target species, including species that may be listed as endangered or threatened. Marine mammals and sea turtles can become entangled and drown, or their health may be impacted as they are wrapped in pieces of line or net that can cause injury or prevent them from catching prey. Marine habitats, which are smothered when derelict nets sink from the weight of their catch, are further damaged when nets on the bottom are shifted by storms. Derelict gear also poses a hazard to ships and fishermen, as it can become wrapped around propellers and snagged by active fishing gear.

In 2005, NFWF and NOAA created a partnership program to reduce derelict fishing gear through prevention activities, and working with the fishing community and related industries to find positive solutions to address derelict fishing gear. At the prevention level, the NOAA/NFWF partnership seeks solutions that help fishermen reduce stockpiles of retired or no longer useable gear. The high costs associated with disposing of old fishing gear in a landfill are burdensome to fishermen; also creating a disincentive for them to remove any derelict gear found in the ocean when fishing or transiting.

To ease the burden on fishermen, NOAA/NFWF created the Fishing for Energy project to provide fishermen a place to dispose of fishing gear free of charge. The project is modeled on a successful multi-partner project in Hawaii. This project also provides the fishing community with a means to become more

actively involved in addressing existing derelict fishing gear, by giving them a place to dispose of derelict gear they come across while on the water.

Covanta Energy Corporation joined the NOAA/NFWF partnership to provide a preferable alternative for the disposal of gear by accepting the gear at their Energy-from-Waste facilities, free of charge. Covanta is proud to offer an environmentally sound solution to communities' solid waste disposal needs, converting solid waste into clean, renewable energy. Covanta is also a partner with Schnitzer Steel in the Hawaii project, and both corporations have convenient facility locations along the East Coast with close proximity to commercial fishing ports.

As part of the Chatham roll-out, Covanta will partner with the local port, state and local agencies as well as trade associations, non-governmental groups and the local fishing industry to continue collecting derelict fishing gear from area waters. Once removed from the environment, the gear will initially be transported to Schnitzer Steel's Rhode Island facility to be processed for use in any one of Covanta's Energy-from-Waste facilities in Massachusetts or Connecticut. Approximately one ton of derelict nets equal enough electricity to power one home for 25 days.

Over time, the Fishing for Energy project could significantly reduce the amount of derelict fishing gear in the waters around New England, lessening the impact of derelict gear on both living resources and the fishing community. Several more projects with other ports are planned for the eastern seaboard in 2008.

*Websites:*

- NOAA Marine Debris Program ([www.marinedebris.noaa.gov](http://www.marinedebris.noaa.gov))
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ([www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org))
- Covanta Energy Corporation ([www.covantaenergy.com](http://www.covantaenergy.com))
- Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc. ([www.schnitzersteel.com](http://www.schnitzersteel.com))