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Contact: Heidi Pedersen, 360-457-6622 ext. 32, Heidi.Pedersen@noaa.gov
Carol Bernthal, 360-457-6622 ext. 11, Carol.Bernthal@noaa.gov

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary announces 2015 Volunteers of the Year

A Neah Bay couple, Sally and Paul Parker, were named Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary's 2015 Volunteers of the Year for their commitment to citizen science and coastal monitoring.

The Parkers volunteer extensively as a citizen science team, collecting data for the sanctuary's marine debris monitoring program and for University of Washington's [Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team](#) (COASST). Both programs are Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary's core programs using citizen scientists to collect information to inform sanctuary management and engage private citizens to improve awareness of ocean health and inspire stewardship of marine resources.

The Parkers have volunteered for Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary since 2007, collectively contributing more than 725 hours toward coastal health monitoring through citizen science surveys and local beach cleanups. The duo go above and beyond data collection, collecting as much marine debris as they can haul off of their surveyed beaches each month and volunteering for the fall and spring Washington coastal cleanup events each year, demonstrating a strong commitment to ocean protection.

"Thanks to enthusiastic volunteers like Sally and Paul Parker, the sanctuary is able to achieve its mission," said Carol Bernthal, sanctuary superintendent. "We are extremely grateful for their hard work and dedication."

[Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary](#) is administered by NOAA and was designated in 1994 as the first national marine sanctuary in the Pacific Northwest. It encompasses about 3,189 square miles off the Washington coast, extending from Cape Flattery to the Copalis River. Significant natural and cultural resources include 29 species of whales, dolphins and porpoises, large populations of nesting seabirds, shipwrecks, and some of the most spectacular wilderness coastline in the lower 48 states.

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