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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coastkeeper receives \$75,000 gift for Watershed Education Program

Miocean Foundation pledges funding to dramatically expand the number of schools to take part in classroom and outdoor learning experiences.

COSTA MESA, Calif. – The Miocean Foundation and Orange County Coastkeeper have teamed up to enhance opportunities for middle school and high school students to experience and learn more about the science behind watershed and coastal ecology.

Miocean is donating \$25,000 a year for the next three years to fund an additional 30 classes to take part in Orange County Coastkeeper's WHALES Program (Watershed Heroes—Actions Linking Education to Stewardship). Since 2005, Coastkeeper has been providing classroom and outdoor education experiences to primarily low-income and minority students across the region, many of whom have never seen the ocean. To date, more than 3,000 students have taken part in the program.

"We are thrilled to have Miocean as a partner in educating youth about watershed management and stewardship," said Garry Brown, Executive Director of Orange County Coastkeeper. "Our like-minded goals of reducing urban runoff, protecting habitat and enhancing water quality will have an even broader impact when we work together."

The WHALES program has completed 260 in-class programs and 162 field trips at no expense to area schools. Funded entirely through donations, WHALES teaches students about the environmental impacts of urban runoff. It introduces students to environmental professionals and encourages youth to think broadly about their roles as watershed stewards. Most of the education associated with the program relates to science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Apart from classroom instruction, field testing and analysis, the program includes:

- **Watershed Career Network:** Coastkeeper promotes environmental career and education paths to local students by connecting its business and public agency partners with low-income schools, offering guest speakers, job-shadowing, industry tours and mentoring.
- **Watershed Hero Challenge:** Students investigate and protect their watershed at their own school, taking part in four challenges that can be done as a year-long project or as individual lessons. Final projects are presented by the students to a panel of school officials and environmental professionals.

“One of the keys to successfully preserving and protecting our oceans lies in our ability to educate and teach future generations about the importance of ocean stewardship and environmental protection,” said Ian Adam of Miocean. “Our Board of Directors was very impressed with the quality of education offered through the WHALES program, and we are happy to have a part in expanding it.”

The Miocean Foundation targets two to four projects annually for funding related to pollution prevention, education and structural improvements to reduce urban runoff and enhance water quality.

Visit www.coastkeeper.org/watershed-education/ for information on the WHALES program, to view slideshows of student presentations and see a list of just some of the schools to participate in the program.

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About Orange County Coastkeeper: Orange County Coastkeeper was founded in 1999 to identify pollution issues affecting water quality in local rivers, bays and coastal regions and to remedy them through education, advocacy, restoration and enforcement. For more information on the organization, visit www.coastkeeper.org

About The Miocean Foundation: Miocean is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to protecting and improving Orange County's 42-mile coastline by reducing urban run-off pollution. We seek to clean up our oceans with knowledge, passion and commitment, led by an all-volunteer Board of local business leaders who share a deep passion for protecting our ocean, and supported by an advisory board of corporate and private sponsors, local elected officials, community leaders and ocean-oriented industry leaders. www.miocean.org

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