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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Waitt Institute to Host Oceans-themed Wikipedia Edit-a-thon in Collaboration with the Smithsonian's Ocean Portal

*Groups aim to spark discussion and spread knowledge on
ocean-related issues*

Washington, D.C. -- In honor of World Oceans Day this June 8, the Waitt Institute is pleased to announce, in collaboration with the Smithsonian's Ocean Portal at the National Museum of Natural History, the first Oceans Edit-a-thon: an all-day event designed to generate coverage of ocean facts and ocean-related issues on Wikipedia.

The ocean accounts for roughly 71 percent of the earth's surface, and every day brings new discoveries, including evidence that many ocean species and habitats are in deep trouble. Despite the ocean's importance to food security, livelihoods, and human well-being, only one percent of our oceans are fully protected (MPAtlas.org, 2015). These are just some of the issues that the Waitt Institute and the Smithsonian Ocean Portal are hoping to highlight during the edit-a-thon.

However, the event is about more than just troubling news. Indeed, the organizers also aim to highlight Earth's wonder. The edit-a-thon will look to catalogue all manner of sea species, ecosystems, and ocean conservation success stories.

"The world's oceans are in peril, but the cause for hope should not be lost," said Nancy Knowlton, the Smithsonian's Chair for Marine Science and Ocean Portal Editor-in-Chief. "Ocean conservation and restoration are no different from other social movements: they too can go from seeming impossible to becoming inevitable with the efforts of individuals and communities."

Wikipedia represents the world's largest accumulation of knowledge and is free to everyone. The edit-a-thon's organizers hope to increase the number of ocean conservation-related articles and ensure that what information is already on Wikipedia is full and accurate. They are hoping to change this for one reason: Without greater access to free knowledge, communities lose out.

"Our approach to ocean conservation is science-based and community driven," said Waitt Institute Executive Director [Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson](#). "As [Mr. Ted Waitt](#), our Founder and Chairman says, the first step in building a constituency for ocean issues is raising awareness. Making sure the public has access to great information is key to our work, so we're excited to be collaborating with the Smithsonian and Wikipedia to improve the quality and quantity of ocean information people can easily access."

In many ways, the sheer extent of the oceans can overwhelm anyone attempting to think about marine conservation. Overfishing, pollution, habitat destruction, acidification, and warming—

the anthropogenic effects on oceans seem to be endless. This event aims to bridge the gap between what the public knows and the concrete actions needed to turn these trends around. The event will take place at The Waitt Institute headquarters on Monday, June 8, 2015 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m and will include tutorials for the beginner Wikipedian, ongoing Wikipedia support, and reference materials. Lunch and light refreshments will also be served.

About the Ocean Portal

Based at the National Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian's [Ocean Portal](#), is one of the top websites for learning about ocean science and conservation. More than 1 million students, teachers, and online learners visit the site each year for its in-depth resources on ocean topics. To find more information, visit the Ocean Portal on its [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the Waitt Institute

[The Waitt Institute](#) endeavors to ensure ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable use of ocean resources by partnering with governments that are committed to developing and implementing comprehensive, science-based, community-driven solutions for sustainable ocean management. For more, find the Institute on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

About Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History welcomed more than 7 million visitors in 2014, making it one of the most-visited museums in the world. Opened in 1910, the museum on the National Mall is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world's most extensive collection of natural history specimens and human artifacts. It also fosters significant scientific research and educational programs and exhibitions that present the work of its scientists to the public. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). Admission is free. For more information, visit the museum on its [website](#) and on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the Edit-a-Thon

The Oceans Edit-a-thon will be held at the Waitt Institute, located at 1201 Connecticut Avenue NW, #300 Washington, D.C. The event will be held on Monday, June 8, 2015 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. and will coincide with World Oceans Day.

Please visit www.worldoceansdayeditathon.splashthat.com for more information to RSVP.

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