

## **The Fisheries and Marine Institute and Ocean Net Ink Agreement For a Healthier Marine Environment**

As World Ocean Day approaches on June 8, 2008, the Marine Institute and Ocean Net have signed an agreement to combine their resources to advance education, awareness and action among youth to protect to the marine environment.

Ocean Net is a province-wide, award winning, volunteer organization dedicated to the integration of environmental stewardship and capacity building initiatives at the community level. Together, Ocean Net and the Marine Institute will coordinate summer programs such as Camp Snowflake and Camp Starfish and implement joint projects that will focus on youth and instill an ocean conservation ethic in Newfoundland and Labrador.



**L-r: Glenn Blackwood, MI's executive director, Bob O'Brien, founder and chair of Ocean Net and Justin Dearing, provincial director, Ocean Net**

On hand to sign the agreement was Mr. Glenn Blackwood, executive director of the Marine Institute, Bob O'Brien, founder and chair of Ocean Net and MI alumni Justin Dearing. Justin is a graduate of the Integrated Coastal Management program at the Institute and is now working as provincial director for Ocean Net.

"We are very pleased to partner with Ocean Net for the sustainability of our marine ecosystems," said Glenn Blackwood. "The energy of Ocean Net and all the work they have done to create awareness has inspired the Marine Institute to take a more active role in environmental conservation. We look forward to educating and empowering students through our programs on the ocean environment, and encouraging them to become stewards of the environment."

The Marine Institute will also take part in Ocean Net's Annual Beach Clean-up on June 7, 2008. To commemorate World Ocean Day, municipalities, community groups, schools, divers and individuals will join Ocean Net's Board, staff, and network of volunteers on beaches throughout the province to undertake beach, shoreline and harbor site cleanups in support of the marine environment. The Marine Institute will be participating by taking high school students from the St. John's area out on the MV Anne

Pierce to observe and monitor the beach clean-up. The goal is to educate students on the importance of conservation and encourage them to take a more active role in protecting the marine and ocean environment. Since 1997, over 30,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have cleaned over 1,500 beaches, shorelines, and underwater areas.

“We are delighted to be able to link Ocean Net with the capacity of Marine Institute,” said Bob O’Brien, founder and chair of Ocean Net. “Our partnership can only strengthen both the Marine Institute and Ocean Net as we share each other goals to benefit this province’s marine environment.”