



Center for Coastal Conservation

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Conservationists form new marine conservation group *New group to focus on federal policy and elections***

A coalition of individual conservationists, businesses and associations has formed the Center for Coastal Conservation, a non-partisan national organization dedicated to enacting sensible marine conservation laws through education and political action.

“The Center fills a vacuum that existed on the national scene for a business-oriented organization dedicated to protecting America’s coastal resources through involvement in the political process,” said Jack Lawton, Jr., the group’s founding chairman. “The Center is already involved in the 2008 election process through support of candidates for the U.S. House and Senate who we believe can support our goals.”

The Center brings under a single umbrella the leading advocates for marine recreational fishing and boating. The new organization promotes sound conservation and use of ocean resources by backing federal legislators who support its goals. The Center will focus on promoting a quality recreational fishery; ending overfishing; rebuilding plans for fisheries; improving angling and boating access, and working waterfronts and marinas.

While the Center shares many goals with organizations like the Coastal Conservation Association and The Billfish Foundation, its focus is more targeted. With more than 100,000 members in 17 state chapters, CCA focuses on state and federal policy issues and services to its individual members. The Billfish Foundation likewise is an effective advocate for change, synthesizing science and policy into effective fishery management solutions.

“The Center focuses on helping elect conservation-minded men and women to the U.S. House and Senate and educating all Members of Congress regarding issues that are important to recreational fishing and boating,” said Lawton. “We have an active PAC, and we are engaging in more than 30 races.”

Jefferson Angers of Louisiana is the Center’s first president. He previously served as executive director and CEO of the Coastal Conservation Association of Louisiana for 15 years.

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“We’re committed to conservation policies that conserve natural resources while keeping them accessible for recreational fishing, boating and other uses that don’t cause harm,” Angers said. “Some seem to believe that good conservation can only be best achieved by restricting access to our resources, and others favor exploiting resources with few restrictions. Our philosophy is that we can balance effective conservation with sensible access.”

Center PAC, the Center for Coastal Conservation Political Action Committee, was established so Center members can fully participate in the federal election process.

Current Center members represent a wide range of Americans interested in sound conservation. They include individual citizens committed to marine conservation as well as associations and business groups representing the conservation movement, boat manufacturing, retail stores, fishing tackle, development and distributors.

The Center’s officers are Lawton, chairman; Jack Mayfield Jr., vice chairman; Kevin Bankston, secretary, and Gus Schram III, treasurer.

In addition to the officers, other members of the Center’s Board of Directors include:

- Kris Carroll, president of Grady White Boats;
- David Cummins, president of Coastal Conservation Association;
- Berwick Duval II;
- Walter Fondren III;
- Scott Gudes, vice president of National Marine Manufacturers Association;
- Rob Kramer, president of International Game Fish Association;
- Mike Nussman, president of American Sportfishing Association, and
- Ellen Peel, president of The Billfish Foundation.

For more information, visit [www.CoastalConservation.US](http://www.CoastalConservation.US).

*The Center for Coastal Conservation is a non-profit organized under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Center’s mission is to promote good stewardship of America’s marine resources. Members of the Center can participate in federal elections through gifts to its political action committee, Center PAC. Both Center membership dues and Center PAC contributions are not tax deductible.*