



Press Release

Recreational Fishing Alliance

176 B South New York Road, Galloway, NJ 082054
P: 1-888-564-6732 F: 609-404-1968

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jim Hutchinson, Jr.

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jhutchinson@joinrfa.org

EIGHT RESPECTED INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS JOIN RFA BOARD TOP TACKLE, TOURNEY & MEDIA REPS UNITE TO PROTECT ANGLER RIGHTS

In its ongoing efforts to build strategic alliances within the recreational fishing and boating industry while strengthening its representation of individual members, the Executive Board of Directors for the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) appointed eight, highly qualified new members to begin two-year terms starting in 2009.

The eight newest members of the RFA Executive Board include Dean Travis Clarke, Executive Editor of *Marlin Magazine* and *Sportfishing Magazine*; William "Jamie" Wilkinson, Senior Director of Event Operations at *ESPN Outdoors*; Phil Keeter, President of the *Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA)*; Dick Wood, President of *Wood Advertising*; Ken Ehlers, Northeast representative for *Lamiglas* and *Wizard Lures*; Jim Motsko, *White Marlin Open*; Joey Prochazka, Director - Saltwater Division for *Z-Man Fishing*, and Peter Harper, Business Solutions Manager for *GE Capital*.

The newest RFA "Directors at Large" join an RFA Board that also includes RFA co-founder Bob Healey, Chairman and CEO of the Viking Yacht Company; Jerry Straub Sr., Chief Financial Officer of Viking Yachts; Patrick Healey, Viking Yachts; Anthony Hsieh, Crow's Nest Yachts; Jim Simons, World Billfish Series; Mike Leech, Director of the World Cup Blue Marlin Tournament; and Mat Dunn, Legislative Director for the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA).

"When we first incorporated back in 1996, the RFA's goal was make positive changes in the way that our government manages our nation's saltwater fisheries by combining the voting power of a large grassroots membership with the economic power of the fishing industry," said Jim Donofrio, Executive Director of the RFA. "I'm proud to work on behalf of our national membership, and with the guidance and direction of this current board, I'm confident that we can properly address the marine fisheries issues that affect our recreational fishing community today."

Following his recent appointment to the position of RFA's Managing Director, Jim Hutchinson, Jr. resigned his position as member of the Board. Hutchinson was originally appointed to the RFA Executive Board in 2006, but joined the RFA fulltime in February. "With the lineup of Directors now in place, I think the sportfishing community is well-represented," Hutchinson said. "I'm particularly excited about the newest Board members because of their knowledge of saltwater fishing and awareness of the individual fishing communities along our coast."

As ESPN Outdoors' senior director of event operations and business development, Wilkinson said it's a great honor to serve on the RFA Board alongside others who truly understand what's at stake today within the recreational angling community. "If we are not willing to change the way we approach fisheries management, we will lose not only valuable species, but the tradition of recreational angling for future generations," Wilkinson added.

For Motsko, what's become known today as the world's largest billfish tournament nearly came to an end when federal regulators were looking to enact Endangered Species Act protection on white marlin, a drastic measure which would've permanently affected not only the White Marlin Open, but nearly all offshore fishing

tournaments along the East Coast where similar fishing tactics are deployed for other species like yellowfin tuna or blue marlin. “Without the RFA and its lobbying efforts, we would not be fishing for white marlin now,” Motsko said. “I realized that having a voice in decision making within the government, and with the RFA's input, realistic regulations were formed that would allow the recreational fisherman to continue his or her favorite pastime.”

The Executive Editor at the leading national fishing publishing group in the world, Clarke understands the need to unite business leaders with the individual anglers they serve. “The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a group of people with a common goal - protecting recreational anglers' rights to fish,” explained Clarke. “Yes, indirectly it promotes fisheries conservation and responsible angling, but the RFA has as its main mission making sure that recreational fishermen are not shut out of the resource by more powerful interest groups.”

For tackle representatives like Ehlers, the current economic climate is having an obvious effect on business. “I've been doing this for over 35 years, and this is about as bad as I've ever seen it,” said Ehlers who explained that heritage companies like Lamiglas and others will make it through the tough times, but wondered what will happen to fishing communities in general along the way.

“My biggest concern is with the differing views within the fishing community,” said Ehlers. “I can't help but think about this whole management mess we have in the northeast, particularly with summer flounder regulations dividing the anglers of New York and New Jersey. You have 20 different groups arguing over 20 different views,” Ehlers noted, saying “at some point you have to just have bring it all together, and I think the RFA can bring the unity we need.”

Clarke agreed that there's strength in numbers, adding “My efforts alone would be insignificant, but when associated with a group of like-minded individuals, we can move mountains. That's why I agreed to become a board member of RFA.”

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The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. The RFA Mission is to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine, boat and tackle industry jobs, and ensure the long-term sustainability of our Nation's saltwater fisheries. For more information or to join, call 1-888-JOIN-RFA or go to www.joinrfa.org.