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WEST MARINE ANNOUNCES \$30,000 IN MARINE CONSERVATION GRANTS AWARDED TO NON- PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

WATSONVILLE, Calif. (October 11, 2010) – West Marine, the largest specialty retailer of boating supplies and accessories, today announced **the recipients of their first annual Marine Conservation Grants program**. Grants for a total amount of \$30,000 are being awarded to non-profit organizations throughout the U.S. who are working to “improve and protect marine habitat,” which is part of West Marine’s mission. This year’s grant recipients reside in **California, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas**.

“We are proud to support recreational boating and fishing groups and marine environmental groups that put our resources first,” said Randy Repass, Chairman of the Board and Founder of West Marine. “The work of these organizations will benefit recreational fishing and sustainable commercial fishing as well as the goals of most marine environmental groups.”

The Recipients of the West Marine Conservation Grants for 2010:

1. California & Hawaii - The Ocean Foundation Tag-a-Giant Fund: The Ocean Foundation's Tag-A-Giant Fund supports research on highly migratory fish and promotes innovative policy and conservation initiatives based on this research. Led by Stanford University Professor of Marine Sciences, Dr. Barbara Block, it has played a key role in integrating cutting-edge research into discussions of fisheries policy.

Funds will be utilized to support the Great Marlin Race conservation research project. During the Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament, West Marine will sponsor a pop-up satellite archival tag for deployment on Pacific blue marlin. Findings from a previous race provided the longest electronic tracks ever measured in billfish.

2. Huntington Beach, California - Get Inspired: Funds will be used to continue Kelp forest ecosystem restoration by allowing Huntington Beach students to grow white sea bass in their classrooms and then restock them in coastal Huntington Beach. By being involved in the restoration of this species, students have a stake in the overall health of the oceans. The students take ownership of the fish that they help to raise. They actually “do” something to make the world a better place instead of just learning about it. This project aims to create Ocean Stewards and healthy kelp forests.

3. Sebastian, Fort Pierce, and Indian River Lagoon, Florida - Marine Cleanup Initiative, Inc (MCII): This organization was founded to clean our waterways of marine debris such as fishing line, plastics, casting nets, bottles, cans, anchors, batteries, etc. MCII uses volunteer divers, boat owners, commercial divers, cranes and larger vessels.

Funds will be used to chart the waters set aside for crab traps and clam farming. Derelict traps and abandoned nets will be identified and retrieved. Under direction of Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission aquatic creatures will be released and disturbed habitat will be restored.

4. Jacksonville, Florida - TISRI: TISRI stands for "Think It, Sink It, Reef It" and is focused on the creation and promotion of artificial reefs. Fishing line and trash creates an endangerment potential for all marine life. Funding will support "trash harvesting" dives. Reefs will be chosen based on local knowledge of fishing locations.

5. New Orleans, Louisiana - Marine Research and Assistance Council: The Citizen Sailor Program educates and equips coastal and blue water mariners to conduct basic scientific air and water sampling to be shared with environmental research organizations. Funding will be used to conduct sampling and to monitor the effects of the BP oil spill. Data will be shared with the Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation and the University of New Orleans.

6. New Orleans, Louisiana - Friends of the West End: This non-profit corporation is dedicated to the restoration of green spaces and shorelines on West End Park. Funding has been provided to clear tidal flow culverts that are heavily silted. This will have a positive impact on breeding grounds for multiple species of fish and crab.

7. South Carolina: Coastal Conservation Association (CCA): CCA South Carolina is the oldest, largest and one of the most respected non-profit marine conservation organization in South Carolina. As a grass-roots organization, 12 local CCA chapters, located in every corner of the state are made up of thousands of recreational saltwater anglers whose passion centers on the state's marine resources. Funding will support the Topwater Action Campaign, which focuses on oyster recycling, reef restoration and creation, water quality and education.

8. Texas - Coastal Conservation Association (CCA): CCA Texas has 50,000 members and the Nueces Bay Causeway marsh restoration project is a joint effort with the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP) to restore 160 acres of intertidal marsh habitat.

Funding will support a "grass planting day" during which volunteers can assist in planting. This critical marsh will provide essential habitat for shrimp, crabs, juvenile fish, as well as feeding grounds for birds and larger fish.

9. Orange County, California - Ocean Defenders Alliance (ODA): Ocean Defenders Alliance strives to make Southern California's coastal waters safer for marine wildlife by reducing dangerous man-made objects in vital habitat, focusing on abandoned commercial fishing gear that poses serious threats to numerous species. In the process of derelict gear removal, ODA carefully liberates wildlife found trapped in nets and pots that needlessly continue to capture and kill long after being lost by the fishing industry. Funding is targeted at removing derelict gear around the Channel Islands in Southern California.

The **Marine Conservation Grants** are awarded through a formal application process in which interested organizations must submit their proposal directly to West Marine. All applications are reviewed by the Marine Conservation Action Team (MCAT). Those applying must show sound financial policies and management with a key focus in marine conservation, habitat restoration and sustainable fisheries. These activities may cover water clean-up, habitat protection and restoration, ocean science and conservation projects that relate to key marine species, water quality, sustainable ocean use, etc.

Since 1994, West Marine has donated over \$4,500,000 to non-profit organizations that support youth boating, boating safety and the marine environment. For more information about the **Marine Conservation Grants** program, please visit www.westmarine.com.

About West Marine

West Marine, the largest specialty retailer of boating supplies and accessories, has more than 330 company-owned stores located in 38 states, Puerto Rico and Canada and two franchised stores located in Turkey. Our call center and Internet channels offer Customers over 60,000 products plus the convenience of exchanging catalog and Internet purchases at our Store locations. Our Port Supply division is one of the largest wholesale distributors of marine equipment serving boat manufacturers, marine services, commercial vessel operators and government agencies. For more information on West Marine's products and store locations, or to start shopping, visit westmarine.com or call 1-800-BOATING (1-800-262-8464).