

*A Natural Partnership*



# NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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## **Coastal Conservation Association Georgia and Building Conservation Trust Provide \$20,000 for Artificial Reef Enhancement**

SAVANNAH, Georgia – (Monday, June 26, 2017) – Coastal Conservation Association Georgia (CCA Georgia) and CCA's National Habitat Program, Building Conservation Trust (BCT), presented a check for \$20,000 on Tuesday, June 20, 2017 to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR). These funds will be put towards the High Point Inshore Artificial Reef Enhancement (also known as "Big Mud").



"We are so excited to join forces with BCT and give to this important project in our great state," said Tom Rood, chairman of CCA Georgia. "Not only will the Big Mud project enhance recreational fishing habitat adjacent to Sapelo Island, but it will also pave the way for more opportunities to do great habitat work through the CCA Georgia/BCT partnership."

The purpose of this marine habitat project, which employs concrete culverts and footers, is the development of long-term sport fisheries habitat through the enhancement of inshore artificial reefs. This will increase recreational fishing opportunities in Georgia's estuarine waters.

A marine contractor will load donated materials onto a barge at a waterside staging area – Liberty Harbor – and provide inshore transport and deployment of materials by pushing them off the barge at the High Point reef site. Materials deployed within inshore habitat restoration and enhancement projects quickly become colonized by oysters and barnacles, providing the basis of food webs that will attach sheepshead, spotted sea trout and red drum for recreational anglers to target.

“CCA Georgia’s continued financial commitment to habitat restoration and enhancement has allowed the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to increase the number of projects completed per year,” said January Murray, habitat unit leader of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. “CCA Georgia has provided financial donations, facilitated materials for donation and provided volunteers to complete partnered projects. On top of that, GADNR is happy to establish a partnership with BCT and is excited for the benefits this will bring to the state of Georgia.”

Building Conservation Trust was created to provide vital funding for grassroots-driven projects that achieve one or more of five key objectives: Restore degraded habitats; Create new habitats; Advance the science of coastal habitat and marine fisheries conservation; Foster habitat stewardship; and Educate coastal communities on the value of conservation.

“Partnering with the CCA states is a vital part of making our habitat enhancement and restoration work come to life,” said Sean Stone, executive director of Building Conservation Trust. “Our partnership with CCA Georgia is growing rapidly, and the High Point Inshore Artificial Reef Enhancement carries out several of our shared core values.”

Deployments for Big Mud are set to begin in the summer of 2017.

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*The Building Conservation Trust (BCT) was founded in 2013 as the national marine habitat program of Coastal Conservation Association. BCT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization exclusively dedicated to providing funding for local, state and national fisheries, habitat conservation and restoration projects. BCT has created a model for the successful collaboration of business, non-profit organizations and government agencies to revitalize critical habitat and establish a vibrant foundation for the marine ecosystem.*