



Thor Lassen

President, Ocean Trust, Arlington,



Ocean Trust President Thor Lassen is one of those people whose work is never really done.

At any given time, he could be working on a number of things: raising money to replace the hurricane-damaged roof at a sea turtle restoration camp in Mexico,

recruiting retailers to help fund a better way to assess fish stocks, or correcting misinformation on the state of the fisheries.

During this past year, Ocean Trust has organized and launched restoration projects in three areas: clam beds on Massachusetts' North Shore, a shallow estuary in Bahia Grande, Texas, and salmon spawning grounds in Bellingham, Wash.

Ocean Trust has worked with IMIole Foods to raise money for the Census of Marine Life project, a 10-year effort to improve fisheries research. It has continued the effort to restore endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtles and is working with Central American shrimp farms on mangrove conservation work.

Lassen is the one-man show behind it all.

"He's the quarterback and the fullback and the line and everything," says Lee Alverson, an Ocean Trust board member and chairman of Natural Resource Consultants in Seattle.

"[Lassen's work is] a fantastic help to the industry," adds Les Hodgson, an Ocean Trust board member and co-owner of Marco Sales in Texas.

Lassen's work centers on the mission of Ocean Trust: setting the environmental record straight by working to solve the industry's

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problems and by publicizing balanced information on the marine environment.

"We prefer to work cooperatively with folks in solving issues as they come up," says Lassen. "Don't let problems sit there. If you solve your own problems, then they won't be there to be used against you."

He studied environmental science at the University of Virginia and marine science at

the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

His industry work has spanned decades and includes affiliations with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the East Coast Tuna Association and the National Fisheries Education Research Association.

Lassen has worked closely with the industry since the National Fisheries Institute hired him in 1983 as a government relations representative. He left NFI in 1991 to head up the newly created Ocean Trust, an environmental organization initially funded with 5250,000 in contributions from seafood companies, including a 525,000 grant from NFI.

Ocean Trust's annual budget in 1999 was 5253,000, raised through donations from seafood companies, grants and marketing partnerships.

In the day-to-day work of running a business, it's difficult to keep on top of scientific reports about where the problems are and what should be done about them. That's what Lassen does.

"It's a very important role that's needed in the industry," adds Hodgson.

- L.D.