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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New Fishermen's Cooperative Brings Hope *and* Seafood to the New Year

Beaufort, North Carolina (January 21st, 2011) – It's been another difficult year for commercial fishermen in North Carolina, but for a forward-thinking group of people in the fishing industry like Bill Rice and Paul Russell, there are plenty of reasons to be hopeful.

Beginning January 1st, a newly formed fishermen's cooperative will assume leadership of Walking Fish, a community supported fishery (CSF) that links fishermen on the coast to consumers in Durham.

To date, the Walking Fish CSF has delivered over 40,000 pounds of fresh, local seafood to consumers in the Triangle, including species like triggerfish, blue crabs, hard clams, and flounder. The CSF, which was launched with help from graduate students at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, is based on the popular community supported agriculture (CSA) model, in which consumers pre-payment for a 'share' of the catch. CSFs seek to reconnect communities with their food system, encourage sustainable fishing practices, and build relationships between fishermen and consumers.

The cooperative, which plans to build off the success of the Walking Fish CSF, will supply high quality, fresh, local seafood to markets in North Carolina. Central to the cooperative's mission is a desire to build a transparent, local chain-of-custody in which fishermen and consumers benefit.

"The cooperative," explains Rice, "is not just about fishermen. This will benefit anyone who eats seafood and cares about coastal communities. This is a way to ensure that consumers have access to local seafood at a price that is fair to everyone involved."

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Debra Callaway
Cooperative Coordinator
Board of Directors, Walking Fish Cooperative, Inc.
info@walking-fish.org

Joshua Stoll
Advisory Board
joshua.stoll@duke.edu
509-637-5795