

Center & Executive Director Honored by Common Cause Georgia

The Center's executive director was among those honored at *Common Cause Georgia's* annual Democracy Awards Dinner in Atlanta on April 27. Common Cause is a national non-partisan good government advocacy group dedicated to holding power accountable. Common Cause presented the award to **David Kyler** for the Center's efforts to strengthen Georgia's tidal marsh protection through an appeal of the marsh permit issued by DNR for the *Cumberland Harbour* project in St. Marys, Georgia.

The appeal was filed for the Center and others by *Southern Environmental Law Center*. The *Cumberland Harbor* case is now being reviewed by the **Georgia Supreme Court** and the hearing is scheduled for May 19 in Atlanta.

Accepting the award on the Center's behalf was **Ms. Dory Ingram**, an Atlanta resident who is an active Center member.

Ms. Ingram explained, "I was extremely honored to represent the Center for a Sustainable Coast, whose work is so essential to safeguarding our vulnerable coastal resources. Coastal Georgia is treasured by millions because of these magnificent natural resources, especially our marshes, which are the most beautiful and renowned feature of our coast. I am proud to be a member of the Center and extremely encouraged that the organization's work is being recognized."



Chris DeScherer
Southern Environmental Law Center

April Ingle
Georgia River Network

Jim Grode
Turner Environmental Law Clinic

David Kyler
Center for a Sustainable Coast

Gordon Rogers
Satilla Riverkeeper

Also honored at the ceremony were **Chris DeScherer** with *Southern Environmental Law Center*, **Steve O'Day** with the law firm of *Smith, Gambrell, and Russell*, and **Jim Grode** with *Turner Environmental Law Clinic*, who formed the legal team on the case, and representatives of the two other appellant groups, **April Ingle**, director of *Georgia River Network*, and **Gordon Rogers** of *Satilla Riverkeeper*.

Cumberland Harbour was the third in a series of marsh permit appeals that were filed for the Center by SELC, beginning with *Emerald Pointe* in Chatham County, followed by *Man Head Marina* in Glynn County. The Center is the only organization that was an appellant in all three of these cases. Consistent throughout these cases was our position that development projects requiring permits for structures built in the marsh must be evaluated in their entirety – including the uplands – as they affect Georgia's tidal marshes.

In presenting the award, Common Cause Georgia's executive director, **Bill Bozarth**, said: "At the heart of efforts defending the marshlands sits a dedicated non-profit group called the Center for a Sustainable Coast. Headquartered above a hardware store on St. Simons Island, the Center has stood as a guardian for eleven years to ensure that the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act is enforced."

David Kyler responded by saying that, "It was a real morale boost to receive this honor. It gives us a renewed sense that we are making a significant contribution toward the improvement of coastal protection and the region's long-term sustainability. On behalf of the Center and our fellow appellants and awardees, we sincerely thank *Common Cause Georgia* for their thoughtful acknowledgement of our endeavors. The Center is especially grateful for being credited as a coastal leader."

Common Cause Georgia is a non-profit, non-partisan citizens' lobby organization. They believe that by banding together, citizens can make a difference. Common Cause throws a spotlight on issues that affect all Georgians. The group works to strengthen public participation and to ensure that the political process serves the public interest, rather than the special interests. Their purpose is clear: make public officials and public institutions accountable and responsive to citizens.