



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **White River Marine Group announces Zach Kauk as incoming president**

*Experienced manufacturing leader to oversee world's leading manufacturer of boats  
with iconic brands and worldwide network of 700 dealers in 30 countries*

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** — White River Marine Group, the marine manufacturing division of the Bass Pro Shops family, today announced that Zach Kauk will become its next president to guide the next era of growth while maintaining a commitment to its core values. Kauk will begin immediately and assume full leadership responsibilities on September 1, 2019 following the retirement of outgoing president Les Crawford.

Kauk joins as White River Marine Group, the world's largest manufacturer of boats by volume, is poised for an exciting future. The company's iconic brands – including TRACKER, NITRO, TAHOE, MAKO, RANGER, TRITON, SUN TRACKER, REGENCY and ASCEND – are recognized leaders in their categories with best-in-class, all-American manufacturing capabilities and a growing international independent dealer network spans more than 700 dealers across 30 countries.

Kauk brings more than 30 years of global manufacturing expertise and product management at Caterpillar, Inc., one of the most respected equipment companies on the planet. From his humble beginnings in rural Kansas and his start at the Peoria, Illinois-based company as an engineer, Kauk has gone on to hold a variety of product development, sales, marketing and manufacturing leadership positions with Caterpillar, including heading international operations in Europe and Asia. Kauk most recently served as Vice President of the multibillion-dollar Excavation Division where he managed complex product portfolios and grew sales and global market share across multiple categories. Kauk also has extensive experience partnering with Caterpillar's worldwide network of independent dealers to ensure their success, and will continue that effort at White River Marine Group and its robust independent dealer network.



“We are very excited for Zach to lead our marine manufacturing division at a momentous time for our company,” said noted conservationist and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris, who revolutionized the marine industry more than 40 years ago by introducing the world's first professionally rigged and nationally marketed boat, motor and trailer packages. “Beyond his leadership and expertise, we appreciate Zach's Midwest sensibilities and keen understanding for the role our products play in helping families make lifelong memories in the outdoors.”

At a time when White River Marine is blazing new trails and living up to its reputation as an industry disrupter with the recent introduction of TRACKER OFF ROAD all-terrain vehicles and side-by-sides, Kauk will guide its continued tradition of delivering outstanding customer service, a commitment to offering outstanding quality and overall unmatched value with a dedication to ongoing innovation.

“I am deeply humbled to join the remarkable team producing and delivering the world’s most beloved boat brands,” said Kauk. “Driving my excitement is Johnny’s incredible vision to help more families create lifelong memories on the water and in the outdoors. I couldn’t be more excited to carry on this proud tradition and help our team members and independent dealers make our customers’ dreams become a reality in the years to come.”

Kauk will succeed Les Crawford, a marine industry leader who first joined Bass Pro Shops 35 years ago as a controller and helped the marine manufacturing division grow to become a key part of the overall business.

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### **About Bass Pro Shops**

[Bass Pro Shops](#) is North America’s premier outdoor and conservation company. Founded in 1972 when avid young angler Johnny Morris began selling tackle out of his father’s liquor store in Springfield, Missouri, today the company provides customers with unmatched offerings spanning premier destination retail, outdoor equipment manufacturing, world-class resort destinations and more. In 2017 Bass Pro Shops acquired [Cabela’s](#) to create a “best-of-the-best” experience with superior products, dynamic locations and outstanding customer service. Bass Pro Shops also operates [White River Marine Group](#), offering an unsurpassed collection of industry-leading boat brands, and [Big Cedar Lodge](#), America’s Premier Wilderness Resort. Under the visionary conservation leadership of Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops is a national leader in protecting habitat and introducing families to the outdoors and has been named by Forbes as “one of America’s Best Employers.”

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