

## Supporting the Blue Economy - SECOORA Annual Meeting

Hyatt House Charleston/Historic District, 560 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403

May 22-24, 2018 | [Website](#) | *Speaker Biography*

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### Lad Akins



**Lad Akins**  
*Reef Environmental  
Education Foundation*

Lad Akins is the Director of Special Projects for REEF. He started with REEF as our first Executive Director in 1990, and held that position until 2006 when he shifted gears to focus on Special Projects such as REEF's artificial reef assessments and exotic species programs including work on the invasive lionfish issue. Lad has helped develop many of REEF's long standing programs including the fish survey project and continues to lead a number of field expeditions each year. He has served as a US Delegate on the Bi-national Commission on Marine Protected Areas with South Africa, piloted Deepworker submersibles to assess fish assemblages at depths over 500' and discovered and described new species of fish from the Gulf of Mexico.

As a US Coast Guard licensed Captain and a dive instructor with over 10,000 dives, Lad has been recognized as NOAA Environmental Hero and an Oris Sea Hero. Lad's current focus on invasive lionfish includes serving on numerous federal and international panels and working groups, working with major media, and co-authoring over 20 peer reviewed papers on the issue. Lad lives on his 54' motor sailer and dives in his spare time.