



North Carolina
Coastal Federation
Working Together for a Healthy Coast



ANNUAL REPORT 2013

“Things that start in the community are the things that will have the most impact. It’s not going to get done in Washington (D.C.) or Raleigh. People on the local level have to get involved and stay involved. People working together on what might appear to be something small can have a tremendous impact.” – Kristen Daly, 2013 Stanback intern in the Coastal Advocacy Institute

The N.C. Coastal Federation faced 2013 recognizing the immense need to educate decision-makers about our coastal environmental challenges and opportunities. We rallied our large membership, incredible fleet of volunteers, loyal funders and experienced staff to help us directly connect the people who are most dependent on a healthy and prosperous coastal environment – our coast’s residents and visitors – with the people who decide our coast’s fate. When we found road blocks, we found compromise; when we met adversaries, we made friends; and when we saw needs, we gleaned creative solutions. Using our over-arching goals as guides, much was accomplished to protect and restore coastal habitats and water quality, engage and educate people of all ages, and advocate for our spectacular coast. Please take a few minutes to review the year and celebrate the successes made possible by you and our other many good friends. We are grateful for your help that continues to make our state’s coast the envy of the nation.



CHRIS HANNANT

MANTEO CRABBER TROY OUTLAND PULLED HIS 32-FOOT MANNING BOAT ASTRIDE A BARNACLE-COVERED CHUNK OF WHITE BUOY WHILE MATE DEREK THACKER PULLED

it from croatan sound. "That one's been there for a while," Outland said, eyeing the dripping remnant of a crab pot. The line was slimy with algae and grass and attached to the rusted remains of the pot's metal bottom frame. Bingo: A derelict pot. Thacker wound up the line and stashed it at the stern. Outland recorded identifying information, time and location and started his motor to look for more.

So began day one of the N.C. Coastal Federation's two-year pilot project to collect lost or discarded fishing gear littering waterways in northeastern North Carolina.

Outland, a full-time crabber for 37 years, was one of nine watermen hired to scour the waters for two days, coming behind the annual cleanup done by the N.C. Marine Patrol.

These derelict crab pots, once destined for landfills, will go back in coastal waters with a new lease on life. The pots will be recycled into novel "artificial reef balls" that could enhance oyster habitat – and future oyster populations. "Many of my commercial fishing friends lament about disappearing substrate for oyster larvae to settle and survive," Joel Fodrie, a UNC assistant professor of coastal biological oceanography points out. "Yet, out on the water we all come across abandoned or lost crab pots covered with oysters."

The second year of the pilot project, funded with a \$35,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an \$18,000 grant from North Carolina Sea Grant and \$10,000 in matching funds from federation members, will be conducted in the same time period next year.

The trash-to-treasure project underscores the connection between healthy habitats and healthy fisheries. *(Excerpted from Coastal Review Online)*

Highlights:

- Prepared the Mattamuskeet Drainage Association Watershed Restoration Plan, which was approved by the state. This plan creates a road map for large-scale wetland restoration efforts taking place in Hyde County on over 42,000 acres. As part of this plan, nearly half of the watershed is being restored as wetlands that are engineered to filter and absorb much of the farm runoff and prevents it from entering Pamlico Sound.
- Awarded grants from N.C. Sea Grant and NOAA to the federation to employ commercial fishermen to remove marine debris from northeastern North Carolina waters over two years. This project demonstrates the partnership opportunities that exist between watermen and conservation organizations and will serve as a model for future debris removal partnerships. It has gained state and national attention.
- Completed a living shoreline project on Hatteras Island that has restored nearly 1.2 acres of coastal marsh, protected over 300 linear feet of shoreline from erosion, and subsequently provided protection to Hatteras Harbor. This project has also gone a long way to demonstrate alternative shoreline protection measures and foster new, non-traditional partnerships between private landowners, a non-profit organization, and the county government.
- Closed on the sale of a permanent conservation easement on 2,168 acres on North River Farms to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The sale netted about \$3 million, which will be used for additional conservation work on the property. The sale will permanently protect the property while providing public access. A portion of the sale proceeds (\$1.9 million) were used to purchase 1,435 acres of restored farmland at North River Farms. The federation now owns 5,594 acres of the 6,000-acre farm.
- Constructed six patch oyster reefs using approximately 6,000 bushels of recycled oyster shells covering 15,000 square feet, built 250 linear feet of sills and 80 linear feet of marsh toe revetment and planted almost 20,000 plugs of smooth cordgrass along the shoreline of Jones Island in Onslow County. These restoration techniques provide valuable estuarine habitat and help to reduce erosion of the island and clean the water of the White Oak River.
- Built nine patch oyster reefs using 7,200 bushels of recycled oyster shells to reduce shoreline erosion and create habitat at Beacon Island in Pamlico Sound, one of only nine remaining pelican nesting sites in North Carolina. A total of 250 plugs of smooth cordgrass were also planted along the island's shoreline.
- Launched Estuary Restoration Act projects in the southeastern region with the construction of a 200-ft Living Shoreline project along with the shoreline of WaterWay Park in Oak Island.
- Completed construction of a stormwater reduction project with the Town of Wrightsville Beach, including installation of six cisterns that will capture and re-use collected stormwater runoff from the town's new 15,000 square foot public safety building and parking area.
- Helped to develop the stakeholder-driven Manns Harbor Commission and brokered a deal between the county, state and local Commission to manage the first shared-use Wildlife Resources Commission access area. Both recreational and commercial fishermen are provided docks at this facility, funded by the Waterfront Access and Marine Industry Fund.
- Worked with 170 volunteers, contractors and staff to build a 305-ft Living Shoreline project at Morris Landing. Two oyster reef sills and a vertical wall sill were built with oyster domes. An additional oyster reef sill was built using 3,000 oyster shell and marl bags and more than 3,500 salt marsh plant seedlings were planted behind the sills to create marsh.





LIKE OTHER DEVELOPERS, BURROWS SMITH USED PIPES, PONDS AND OTHER CONVENTIONAL TECHNIQUES TO DIRECT AND CONTROL STORMWATER RUNOFF ON HIS PROJECTS. BUT HE'S MADE THE SWITCH TO A RELATIVELY NEW

approach that attempts to mimic the land's natural ability to absorb rainfall. Smith tells people that using low-impact development or LID, as it's called, is not only good for coastal waters, but it is often good for the developer's pocket book.

"I look at [LID] as a tool," said Smith, who's been specializing in the construction of new developments in New Hanover County for 30 years. Most of those years were spent building projects that relied on conventional techniques to control stormwater, now the largest source of water pollution along the coast.

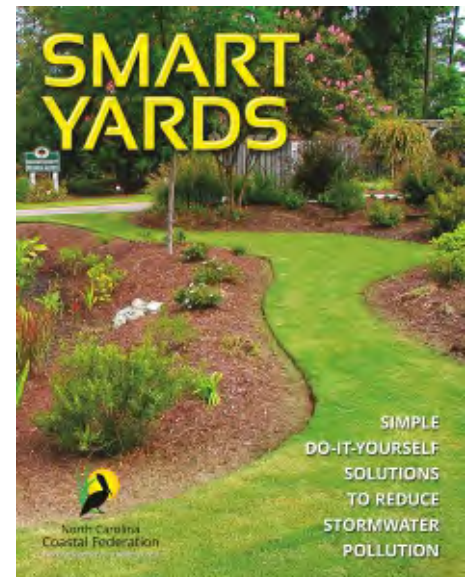
However, conventional systems for treating stormwater runoff are not only expensive, but they concentrate pollutants and eventually direct them into coastal waters. Today thousands of acres of shellfish beds are closed across the N.C. coast because of the dangerous levels of bacteria found in stormwater.

Smith is working on a planned development on the Northeast Cape Fear River near Castle Hayne called River Bluffs. Smith's 257-acre development will have 193 homes in its first phase and a 143-slip marina on the river. The gated community will sit on a bluff overlooking the river with a native hardwood forest expanding over its rolling terrain.

The roads in River Bluffs will not have curbs and gutters, a cost savings of \$500,000, Smith estimates. For the developer, one of the greatest benefits of LID is its cost savings, Smith said. With LID, homeowner dues will be quite a bit less than is typical because maintenance is much lower.

Rather than clear an 80-foot wide path through forest to put a stormwater pipe into the ground, the lower forested areas will double as green space for the residents and stormwater management systems. That's another cost savings.

Other LID features will include pervious driveways that allow stormwater to penetrate into the ground; cisterns that collect rainwater that will then be used to automatically irrigate lawns; native plants for landscaping, which require less water and fertilizer; and downspouts that direct stormwater to grassy areas rather than to the streets. The last line of defense will be roadside swales, which will collect any polluted runoff before it has the chance to reach the river.



Highlights

- Prevented Titan from receiving any permits in 2013. The air permit is still under legal challenge by the federation. This project has been delayed for over three years due to the opposition coalition that the federation leads. Titan Cement wants to build the largest cement factory east of the Mississippi along the Cape Fear River. The plant would jeopardize health, the environment and the economy.
- Represented coastal residents by serving on project review teams and providing comments on the four terminal groin projects that are proposed for the southern coast. This gave us the chance to provide permitting agencies with science and public input on the projects, which otherwise might not be offered. The federation is working to avoid or minimize the negative effect of groins or hardened structures on our public beaches, public waters and natural resources.
- Worked with Brunswick Habitat For Humanity to develop a set of stormwater retrofit designs for target Habitat homes and a set of LID designs for landscaping/stormwater management on new Habitat construction sites.
- Worked with the EPA wetlands staff in DC to organize an invitation-only living shorelines workshop on April 11 at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, MD. The goal was to foster a unified national policy on estuarine shoreline stabilization.
- Developed and distributed a [Smart Yards Guide](#) for property-owners that contains simple, do-it-yourself solutions to stormwater pollution.
- Organized Low Impact Development workshops in Dare County and in Greenville. Almost 100 participants, including local and state planners, engineers, state agency representatives and members of the public attended to learn about LID, the state Division of Water Quality's commitment to LID and to discuss ways that local governments can work with the state to advance LID.



PETER ZAYOSKI, A DUKE MASTER'S STUDENT IN COASTAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, WAS ONE OF NINE COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE FEDERATION'S SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM, THE 2013 N.C. COASTAL

Advocacy Institute. Peter said the experience of working on the stormwater project was both valuable and very challenging. But he enjoyed some of the field work most, and pointed to a trip to Beacon Island, in Pamlico Sound. It's one of only nine remaining sites for brown pelican nesting in North Carolina, and the federation staff and volunteers are planting thousands of bags of oyster shells to build sills to slow erosion and protect that critical habitat.

"We took the boat through all the pound nets and then you finally get there and you see that tiny island," he said. "It gives you a real appreciation for the North Carolina coast and its resources and how important it is that those resources be preserved."

At the beginning of the internship, he said he wanted to learn more about the inner workings of a nonprofit organization, and the federation had been the perfect place to do that. "The volume of work surprised me," he said. "This is a small organization in terms of the staff and the building. You can drive by it and blink and not see it. But the amount of work that is done is tremendous."

"It's a beautiful coast with unique resources," Zayoski said. "There has been historical degradation, and it's going to be a continual struggle to protect it, but with a lot of effort and commitment, it can be done."

Highlights:

- *Coastal Review Online (CRO)* was accepted as a member of The N.C. Press Association – the state's only professional journalism trade organization. Membership marks *CRO* as a legitimate news outlet and increases access to the state legislature.
- Received Earth-Wise Farm in Ocean, N.C. from the family of Teddy Miller. A management plan is being created to use the farm for educational purposes.
- Continued our partnership with River City's YouthBuild program along the northern coast, by training students in low-impact development techniques. This program provided hands-on classroom activities, as well as, field experiences to the students in their community and on the Outer Banks. The program's goal is to empower disadvantaged youth with education and new employment skills.
- Published 246 *CRO* stories. Our website had 65,000-70,000 visits a month. Most stories were picked up by other media and many had a direct influence on issues. The story on the wetlands in Pamlico stirred up public interest that caused the county commissioners to step in and ask EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to explain why no permits were issued. The story on the revamping of the Coastal Resources Commission and the possible loss of federal funding caused the legislature to step back and modify the bill. A less drastic measure was eventually passed.
- Designed and piloted the new Students Restoring Community Creeks education program with students rerouting 12 downspout projects. A website for teachers and students, lesson plans, field trip activities and the ReRoute a Downspout service learning project were developed.
- Graduated nine interns from the federation's Coastal Advocacy Institute. The program integrated practical, educational and field work components to offer participants real-life exposure to environmental careers.
- Engaged 3,682 volunteers in building oyster reefs and living shorelines, conducting wetland plantings and clean-ups and other federation led activities. Volunteers racked up 27,480 hours, valued at \$619,674.
- Educated 23,519 individuals through workshops, classroom and in-the-field instruction, programs and presentations.



Bob O'Quinn grew up in the home known by locals as the Palmgren-O'Quinn house. The beautiful craftsman style home built in 1943 was saved from demolition when the owners heard the Coastal Federation was looking for a new southern office. Thus began the story of a house that became a local legend, and launched a great partnership between the town of Wrightsville Beach and the federation. The federation kicked off a \$600,000 campaign to move, renovate, furnish and landscape the federation's new Coastal Education Center and Southeast Office. The house was moved in the summer of 2013 to its permanent location to the Wrightsville Beach Historic Square amid much publicity and renovations were begun.



North Carolina Coastal Federation

Working Together for a Healthy Coast

MISSION

To provide people and groups with the assistance needed to take an active role in the stewardship of North Carolina's coastal water quality and natural resources.

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Thank You!

We are grateful to the hundreds of friends who joined, renewed and donated to the Coastal Federation in 2013. Memberships and donations allow us to conduct our day to day work, projects and programs. Here is a listing of those members and donors who gave at recognition levels.

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REVENUE & EXPENSES

Revenue and expenses for the year ending December 31, 2013

PUBLIC SUPPORT

Memberships \$174,247
Donations 214,047
Campaign Donations 554,536
Events Net. 20,176
Grants 2,152,960
Rental Income 151,590
Sale of Easement. 3,900,478
Investment Income 176,702
Miscellaneous - 1,336

TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT \$7,343,400*
and REVENUES

A copy of the 2013 audit can be found at www.nccoast.org and is available on request.

HOW WE SPENT YOUR DONATIONS



TOTAL EXPENSES \$3,650,357
Change in net assets \$3,693,043

** Reflects grant funds carried over to 2014 for projects and programs, and restricted funds for the North River Farms property.*

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