NEW SUMMER EVENTS
AND PROJECT UPDATES
Dear Friend of the Coast,

On Saturday, Aug. 3, we will celebrate our annual Pelican Awards at the Crystal Coast Civic Center in Morehead City. Each year this lively, fun and culinary delicious event recognizes extraordinary achievements that go far beyond anyone’s normal expectations of what people should do to protect and restore our beautiful and productive coast. This year’s winners will again inspire us to carry on our efforts to keep our coast as one of the most spectacular places on Earth.

The few people we can select each year for these awards are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the large number of potential recipients we wish we could recognize.

One thing that’s so special about our awards is that our recipients are typically everyday people who never seek the public limelight. Many make significant personal commitments and sometimes take risks with their careers and finances to engage in coastal protection and restoration efforts.

We applaud these efforts because the Coastal Federation can only make significant, long-term differences when our work is grounded in the needs and aspirations of people from all walks of life who live, visit, work and play along our coast.

Almost daily, the staff here at the Coastal Federation is privileged to work with a diversity of people who really inspire us. These are people like George “Pat” Patrick from Hubert, North Carolina. After Hurricane Florence, he came to the office to talk about cleaning up a conservation easement on his property in Onslow County. More than 15 years ago, the Coastal Federation secured a grant from the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund to buy this easement on about a mile of waterfront along Queens Creek.

The hurricane left a lot of trash and debris littering the easement and it was really bothering Pat. Now, at age 92, he needed our help cleaning up the property because he just wasn’t able to do the work himself. While we figured out a plan to get the waterfront cleaned up, Pat talked about his love for the coast, fishing, hunting and wildlife. He told me about his days in the Korean War which he recounts in a book that he self-published. Pat’s decision to put a conservation easement on his land has kept this portion of the creek pristine instead of having it border by hundreds of houses.

Another Onslow County resident and landowner is Steve Schneider. Steve lives on a beautiful 140-acre family farm a few miles north of Swansboro on the White Oak River. For years, one developer after another has asked to buy his land. This year he sold the Coastal Federation 50-acres of his property for permanent conservation and he’d like to protect more acreage in future years.

Steve was not in a position to simply donate the land. When we finally secured funding to purchase the site he expressed great satisfaction that it would be protected in perpetuity.

Pat and Steve are just two of many people with an array of backgrounds, skills and interests who partner with the Coastal Federation. Anyone who tries to stereotype the people engaged in our work will get it wrong, unless they come up with a simple term that includes our diverse constituency of farmers, fishermen, government staff, elected and appointed officials, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, academics, retirees, engineers, developers, marine contractors, lawyers, doctors, business executives, active-duty military, environmentalists, prison guards and others. This variety of people is what makes our work so interesting, effective and rewarding.

— Todd Miller, Executive Director
2019 PELICAN AWARDS AND TASTE OF THE COAST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2019 | 5:30 - 9 P.M.
CRYSTAL COAST CIVIC CENTER, MOREHEAD CITY

Enjoy live music, a silent auction, local oysters and seafood while celebrating our coast!

Tickets are $50 for Coastal Federation members and $60 for non-members.

NCCOAST.ORG/CELEBRATE
MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBERS

Sarah Bodin, Coastal Specialist in the Ocean Office
Sarah joined the Coastal Federation in March of 2019. She works on coastal restoration projects, conservation monitoring and educational programs in the central region. She holds a Master of Science in biological science from Gacheon University in Seoul, South Korea, and a Bachelor of Science in environmental science and ecology from Averett University in Virginia. Sarah’s background includes shorebird and sea turtle population management, rare, endangered and invasive plant species population management and plant molecular biology.

Amanda Lyle, Development Officer in the Ocean Office
Amanda is a Carteret County native who returned to the area in 2015 in order to be near the water. Amanda joined the Coastal Federation at the beginning of May as part of the development team. She will be working to further the Coastal Federation’s mission through grant writing and donor engagement. Most recently, Amanda served as development coordinator and grants coordinator at Carteret Community College. She holds bachelor’s degrees in political studies and business administration from Meredith College.

CRO RECEIVES 26 NORTH CAROLINA PRESS AWARDS

Coastal Review Online (CRO), the Coastal Federation’s daily news service, won 26 awards at the annual North Carolina Press Association awards banquet in March. Among the awards racked up by CRO was first place for general excellence among online-only publications.

“The recognition by our fellow journalists makes me more confident than ever that Coastal Review Online is delivering what it was created to provide, hard-hitting, in-depth reporting on important coastal issues and the personal stories, culture and history that connect to those who call the North Carolina coast their home,” said Mark Hibbs, CRO editor.

“It also puts the pressure on us to maintain those high standards.”

The contest period was for work published between October 2017 – September 2018. CRO received awards in various categories including breaking news coverage, in-depth government reporting, feature writing, photography and columns.

The Coastal Federation launched CRO in February 2012 in order to provide coverage of issues relevant to the people, culture, history and environment of the North Carolina coast.
We lost a dear member of the Coastal Federation family on March 20 when our former board president Dick Bierly passed away at age 86.

Dick became part of our work to protect and restore the coast back in the early 1990s when he learned firsthand that wise management of coastal resources simply doesn’t just happen without public education and engagement. He retired with his wife Mary to Carteret County after a highly successful career as a business executive. He recounted many times how he helped IBM locate in North Carolina back when the Research Triangle Park was more of a concept than a reality.

About 30 years ago, Dick first came to the Coastal Federation because he and his neighborhood feared that there would be significant negative environmental impacts from a proposed nearby waterfront development. Dick quickly transitioned from someone asking us for help to becoming an advocate for sound coastal management in his own right. He read environmental laws and regulations, constantly attended all kinds of meetings and in typical Dick fashion reached out to all kinds of people from all walks of life for guidance, support and for their leadership.

Over time, Dick used his newfound knowledge and interests in coastal management to become one of our leading environmental advocates for our entire coast.

He joined the Coastal Federation’s board of directors and soon rose into our leadership. Because of his extensive corporate experience, he skillfully played the role of a board member with professionalism. He shared his considerable business knowledge and connections while not getting into the middle of how the staff at the Coastal Federation does its jobs.

It surprised many people who are engaged in environmental causes that Dick was a hardcore registered republican. He saw no conflict between being a republican and an environmentalist.

In fact, he called out elected officials from all political parties when he thought their votes and policies were not supportive of good environmental management. He viewed environmental protection as a sound business practice that should be a bipartisan cause.

Dick constantly challenged all of us to put aside our stereotypes and preconceived notions, and to find ways to reduce the political polarization that results in little enlightened public policy accomplishments these days.

It’s very sad to have lost such an important member of the Coastal Federation’s family. Dick was a lot more than a professional associate to all of us and he certainly left a lasting beneficial impact on everyone who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.

— Todd Miller, extracted from ‘Remembering a Tireless Coastal Advocate’ published by the Coastal Review Online.
Cleaning up Coastal Waters One Drop at a Time

The Coastal Federation and partners are dedicated to implementing the Bradley and Hewletts Creek Watershed Restoration Plan and have been working together to reduce runoff in New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington. Rain gardens, permeable paving and rain barrels are now reducing the volume of runoff entering the watersheds by helping rain water soak into the ground the way it did before buildings, roads and parking lots dotted the landscape with hard, impervious surfaces.

The Coastal Federation, City of Wilmington Stormwater Services, City of Wilmington Heal Our Waterways and New Hanover Cooperative Extension Service and the New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District worked together to reduce the amount of polluted runoff flowing into Bradley and Hewletts Creeks. At the following locations, they installed:

- Permeable pavers in the parking lot at Waterman’s Brewing Company.
- Permeable concrete in the parking lot at the New Hanover County Arboretum.
- A rain garden and rerouted downspouts at Wrightsville Beach Animal Hospital.
- Rain barrels at homes in the Palmetto Pointe subdivision.

The rain garden and permeable projects are also helping to make a case for low impact development (LID) techniques as simple and cost-effective ways to reduce pollution in our waterways.

Reducing runoff is the only sure way to protect and restore our creeks and sounds so they can be enjoyed for fishing and swimming.

Swansboro Middle School Plants Rain Garden

Over 20 eighth graders from Swansboro Middle School helped build a rain garden at Swansboro Town Hall this April. They planted native plants, spread mulch and learned about the importance of reducing polluted runoff at this community event.

Rain gardens are shallow landscaped depressions that work the way nature does to capture stormwater runoff so it can soak into the ground. This rain garden will now help reduce the amount of runoff being generated from the roof at Town Hall and it will provide a community living classroom and stormwater demonstration site.

In 2017, the Town of Swansboro worked with the Coastal Federation to make a plan for how to reduce stormwater runoff, as it is one of the biggest polluters of coastal waters. The watershed restoration plan focuses on ways to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff throughout the town by implementing projects like the rain garden.

The Onslow Soil and Water Conservation District provided funding for the rain garden and this support was matched with additional support from the North Carolina Division of Water Resources’ EPA Section 319 Water Quality Program that is currently funding several retrofits at Town Hall.

Last summer, Swansboro and the Coastal Federation installed a permeable parking lot at Town Hall and another one is currently under construction.

Visit nccoast.org/stormwater for more information on stormwater runoff reduction projects.

Preserve Closed to Public During Final Restoration

At North River Wetlands Preserve, ditched and drained wetlands are once again being transformed into coastal habitats like fresh water wetlands and salt marsh. The Preserve is currently closed to the public so this final phase of large-scale restoration can take place. The re-created wetlands will retain, filter and provide natural treatment of agricultural runoff from remaining upstream farmland. They will also help restore the natural hydrology of the land, trapping sediments, converting nutrients and preventing other pollutants from reaching the downstream coastal waters.

Public tours of the restoration project will be scheduled later this year. For more information visit nccoast.org/northriver.

Northeast LID Workshops Planned in May

The Coastal Federation is partnering with the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management’s Coastal Training Program to host two water quality workshops for real estate professionals, homeowner associations, and property owners. The free workshops will be offered on May 22-23 in Wanchese. Participants will learn how land use decisions impact water quality and how LID techniques can help protect it. For registration information, visit nccoast.org/events.
Living Shorelines Workshop Rescheduled

The third annual National Living Shorelines Tech Transfer Workshop has been rescheduled for Oct. 8-9 in Beaufort, North Carolina. The two-day workshop will feature presentations from experts in the field of living shorelines as well as group activities and field trips to living shorelines in the area.

The workshop is co-hosted by the Coastal Federation and Restore America’s Estuaries. Registration will open in early summer 2019. The agenda is available online at estuaries.org.

Streamlined Permitting Process Now in Place

Getting permits to build living shorelines along our coastal sounds became a lot easier this spring when the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers simplified their general permit process for marsh sills. The new state permit streamlines the process just like the Corps’ new general regional permit that was also recently approved.

“They’ll basically get their permit on site if they meet the conditions,” said Henry Wicker, the Corps’ deputy chief for the regulatory division at its Wilmington office, in an interview with Coastal Review Online.

The effect of this coordinated state and federal permit process is that property owners and their contractors can now get approval to build living shoreline projects as easily as they can get approval for bulkheads and other hardened techniques.

“Before changes were made, the cumbersome permitting process kept most people from even considering living shorelines because they could get a permit for a bulkhead in less than a week,” said Tracy Skrabal, Coastal Federation scientist.

“The new permitting process will really help with rapid review and approval for living shorelines.”

Grant Results in 26 Living Shorelines

The Coastal Federation recently completed the final phase of a large scale living shoreline project funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2015 Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants Program.

“Our goal with this grant was to ramp up the number of living shorelines along our coast and increase the demand for this more natural soundside erosion technique in the future,” said Coastal Scientist Dr. Lexia Weaver.

The Coastal Federation and its partners were able to construct 26 living shorelines that covered more than a mile of shoreline (5,771 feet) between 2016 and 2018 along the coast. The grant included a cost-share component for waterfront property owners in order to engage the public and demonstrate how living shoreline techniques could improve their properties. Homeowners learned firsthand how beneficial their living shorelines could be when the recently constructed shorelines stood up to Hurricane Florence much better than bulkheads and seawalls.

The NOAA project also provided resources to train local engineers and contractors on how to design, permit and build living shorelines.

Elementary School Students Build ‘Living Shorelines’

The Coastal Federation teamed up with fourth grade students from Bogue Sound Elementary School to create living shoreline models demonstrating their value to the coastal environment. Rachel Bisesi, Coastal Federation coastal education coordinator, worked with students and art teacher Emily Wikoff to kick off the project and teach the eager students about the importance of living shorelines.

They then created their own living shoreline models from everyday materials, such as dirt, rocks, shells and sand.

Other teachers at the school incorporated living shoreline and estuary lessons into their fourth grade curriculum as well.

“This is unlike any project that we’ve done this school year,” said Wikoff. “This project is really helping to make a difference where we live and that really elevated it to another level for the students.”

Coastal Federation staff selected their top four assemblages and one of them was displayed at the Emerald Isle St. Patrick’s Day Festival. All four models are now on display at the Coastal Federation’s headquarters office in Ocean.
Summit Showcases Economic Impact of Oysters

The Coastal Federation is working with state lawmakers to secure funding to implement the celebrated North Carolina Strategic Plan for Shellfish Mariculture: A Vision to 2030.

The plan, which was unveiled at the March 12 Oyster Summit in Raleigh, includes policy recommendations and appropriations designed to expand North Carolina’s oyster industry to $100 million in overall economic impact and create 1,000 jobs mostly in rural coastal communities.

The 2019 North Carolina Oyster Summit was co-hosted by North Carolina Sea Grant, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF).

The sold-out event featured presentations and interactive panels covering a wide range of topics from economic development to protecting wild oysters and promoting clean water to continued development of the mariculture industry, increasing tourism and marketing North Carolina as the “Napa Valley” of oysters.

Speakers and panelist included DEQ Secretary Michael Regan; Mary Penny Kelley from the office of the Governor; Rep. Pat McElraft, Carteret and Jones Counties; Sen. Norm Sanderson, Carteret, Craven and Pamlico Counties; Sen. Rick Gunn, Alamance and Guilford Counties; representatives from the Coastal Federation, DEQ, DMF, NOAA, Sea Grant, Nature Conservancy, Carteret Community College, North Carolina Shellfish Growers Association, UNC Wilmington, UNC Institute for Marine Sciences, North Carolina State University, Pew Charitable Trust, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, North Carolina Wine and Grape Council, North Carolina Craft Brewers Guild, Visit North Carolina and many North Carolina oyster growers and restaurateurs.

“[The oyster industry] is important enough to do whatever it takes…it is great economically, environmentally, for commercial fishermen and recreational fishermen,” said Sen. Sanderson.

The event was sponsored by Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership; Grady-White Boats; Kenan Institute for Engineering, Technology & Science; Rob Lamme and Associates; Restoration Systems; LLC.; LDSI; The Nature Conservancy; Atlantic Reefmaker; Backwater Environmental; Fred Adams Paving; Transfer Co. Food Hall; Locals Seafood; Locals Oyster Bar; Little Environments; PLLC.; North Carolina Sea Grant; Reef Innovations; and Sandbar Oyster Company.

Shell Recycling Program Kicks off in Wanchese

The Coastal Federation’s northeast office is stepping in to help recycle oyster shells in the wake of the states now defunct recycling program.

As of 2018, all state-run oyster shell recycling centers were removed, leaving a gap in how to save those precious shells from the landfill. Northeast staff quickly put together a volunteer pilot program. Twelve dedicated volunteers have helped lead the effort to pick up shells from three participating restaurants—Blue Water Grill, Sugar Shack and Coastal Provisions—and deliver them to two drop off points in Dare County. Impressively, in 14 months, the volunteers collected over 1,100 buckets of shell, weighing more than 16 tons.

This program not only aids in the construction of oyster reefs, but it engages the community in the importance of recycling oysters in order to increase the oyster population in North Carolina. The Coastal Federation plans to build on the success of this pilot program and grow the number of volunteers and restaurants involved along the northern coast.
Offshore Oil on Hold but Fight Continues

For now, plans are on hold for oil drilling off the North Carolina coast. This comes after an announcement by Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt. In late April, he announced the Department was waiting for a decision on appeals of a court order blocking offshore drilling in the Arctic and within specific canyons in the North and Mid-Atlantic before continuing expansions on the East Coast.

While the news is good, it is being met with cautious optimism and opponents to drilling are not letting their guard down.

“This ruling may have temporarily stopped the clock but it does not diminish the threat of drilling along the North Carolina coast,” said Todd Miller, executive director of the Coastal Federation.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management still has scheduled open houses in Kill Devil Hills and Morehead City later this year, indicating the East Coast could still be considered in long-term drilling plans.

Coastal Federation members are encouraged to call their state and federal representatives to express concerns about the detrimental impacts offshore oil and gas exploration and seismic surveying would have on our coast. We support and are encouraging state legislation that would prevent offshore drilling.

The Coastal Federation and Don’t Drill NC Coalition partners continue to track activity and are providing updates at nc-coast.org/oil.

Summit to Educate Public on Coastal Resilience

On June 11-12 the Coastal Federation and North Carolina Division of Coastal Management will host the North Carolina Coastal Resilience Summit in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.

The Summit will be held in Havelock, North Carolina and will discuss key issues and strategies that will be the foundation for developing the North Carolina Coastal Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan. Gov. Roy Cooper’s Executive Order 80 requested development of a plan to propel the coastal region’s preparedness for the effects of climate change including rising sea levels, increased frequency and severity of coastal and riverine flooding, increased extreme weather, changing groundwater conditions and other shifting natural conditions.

The summit will also showcase a wide range of existing solutions to address the identified challenges. Registration for this event is $45 and is open at nc-coast.org/events.

PFAS Forum Set for June

A public forum titled Emerging Contaminants (PFAS) in the Cape Fear Region: University Collaborations on Environmental, Drinking Water and Health Effects Forum will be held on May 31 in Lumina Theater at UNC Wilmington. This event will inform area residents and community leaders about PFAS Testing Network research, which is organized around baseline monitoring of PFAS in water and air and the potential health effects of PFAS exposure.

The PFAST Network is a collaboration of researchers from North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, UNC Wilmington, UNC Charlotte, North Carolina A&T and Duke University. This network received $5 million in state funding to study the environmental and health effects of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and the extent to which these compounds have infiltrated the state’s waterways.

“This forum will give residents and our leaders an opportunity to hear directly from top university researchers working to understand the scope and effects of the exposure to these contaminants within this region,” said Tracy Skrabal, Coastal Federation scientist.

“The issues surrounding emerging contaminants are incredibly complex and evolving and this targeted research is critically needed to inform North Carolina’s policy and enforcement actions statewide.”

This forum was organized by the Coastal Federation and the PFAST Network with generous support from the Orton Foundation.

Register for the forum at nc-coast.org/pfastforum.
Shellfish BMPs Created to Prevent Mariculture Debris

In March 2019, the Coastal Federation along with partners the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), North Carolina Sea Grant and commercial shellfish operations, wrapped up the development of the North Carolina Shellfish Mariculture Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the Prevention of Marine Debris. This plan includes the most effective methods for preventing and reducing debris from mariculture operations. The shellfish mariculture industry heavily relies on placing man-made gear in the marine environment. Producers need to be aware of the negative impact that gear can have if it escapes the farm and know how to be proactive in preventing that from happening.

“These BMPs are a product of a unique partnership with commercial growers who acknowledge the marine debris risk from the industry and want to keep the environment they rely on clean and healthy,” said Bree Charron, Coastal Federation coastal specialist in the central region.

The BMPs cover siting, design and maintenance strategies for mariculture operations and provide new growers and lease applicants key information on how to keep gear on the farm during normal operations as well as in preparation for a storm. The project was funded by a grant from NOAA’s Marine Debris Program.

The project also included the removal of 600,000 pounds of mariculture debris from an abandoned clam farm by volunteers and a marine contractor in 2017. The BMPs and a fact sheet are available at nccoast.org/bmps.

Florence Cleanup Efforts Continue

The North Carolina General Assembly allocated $400,000 to North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries to partner with the Coastal Federation to clean up marine debris that winds and waves of Hurricane Florence dumped along coastal waters.

After only a couple of months, third-party contractors have removed over 25,000 pounds of debris from estuaries in Carteret and Onslow counties. These contractors were commercial fishers and other residents hired at a daily rate to remove debris by hand.

Debris collected include plastic bottles, Styrofoam pieces, aluminum cans, food containers and an assortment of consumer and household debris. Several volunteer groups, including the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce, community volunteers and students from East Carolina University, also assisted in removing debris.

From the beginning of February 2019 through the end of March 2019, 26,805 pounds of marine debris have been removed by both the work crew and volunteers.

Beginning in April, a local marine contractor, Eric Pake Jr. Construction, Inc., will work to mechanically remove the large and heavy dock debris as well as several abandoned boats scattered throughout Bogue Sound.

The Coastal Federation is now working to secure additional funding to expand the project to surrounding counties that were affected by Hurricane Florence and are working with the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management to help the state secure additional federal assistance to expand the cleanup effort and to remove abandoned boats in coastal waters from Hyde County to New Hanover County.

Marine Debris Action Plan in Place

A draft plan is now in place that will serve as a framework for preventing and reducing marine debris along our coast. The Coastal Federation helped organize a recent workshop where participants learned about the development of the draft North Carolina Marine Debris Action Plan and offered input on how to manage the debris that plagues our coast. The draft plan includes strategies that cover major debris categories like preventing and removing consumer debris, fishing gear, abandoned and derelict vessels as well as research.

The Marine Debris Action Plan is a product of a marine debris assessment that was conducted in 2017-2018 called ‘The State of Marine Debris in North Carolina: An Assessment of Prevention and Removal.’

The plan was created by the Coastal Federation and partners including the Onslow County Solid Waste Department, North Carolina Sea Grant, North Carolina Coastal Reserve, National Estuarine Research Reserve and Duke University Marine Laboratory. For more information, visit nccoast.org/marinedebris.
For more details and more events, visit nccoast.org/events or call 252-393-8185.
Hop on board – let’s work together to protect the coast.

To join or renew your annual membership, visit nc-coast.org/membership.
You can also renew by mailing a check to 3609 N.C. 24 (Ocean), Newport, NC 28570.

Your membership helps keep our coastal waters clean and safe for boating, fishing and swimming.

Questions? Call us at 252-393-8185 or send us an email at nccf@nc-coast.org.

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SAVE THE DATE

The 2019 Living Shorelines Tech Transfer Workshop has been rescheduled for Oct. 8-9, 2019 in Beaufort, NC.

For updates about our upcoming events, visit nc-coast.org/events.

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