



Biographies for Oyster Blueprint Launch Panelists

in order of appearance

Todd Miller

Executive Director, North Carolina Coastal Federation

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Todd Miller is the founder and executive director of the North Carolina Coastal Federation, a nonprofit with over 16,000 supporters working for a healthier North Carolina coast. A coastal North Carolina native from Carteret County, it was here in 1982 that Miller found his passion—working to keep the coast a great place to live, work and play. Forming partnerships and rallying volunteers, Miller grew the organization from a one-man (and a dog) venture in a back room of his house to three offices covering the North Carolina coast. With 30+ staffers and a multi-million dollar budget targeted for educating the public, advocating for a clean coast and restoring water quality and shorelines, the federation takes on projects, and partners with others in hundreds of endeavors that influence these priorities.

A graduate of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, from which he holds undergraduate and master's degrees, Miller was selected as a distinguished alumnus by the university in 2013 and honored with a 2015 "Hero of the Seas" award by the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards. Along with numerous other awards and recognitions, Miller is a founding board member of Restore America's Estuaries and currently serves on the Board of Visitors for the UNC Institute for the Environment and as a board member on the Policy Committee for the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary Partnership.

Since the launch of the federation, Miller has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the threats to the coast and advocate for access to clean coastal waters. In bringing together like-minded folks from all walks of life, from fishers to paddlers to boaters and beachcombers, the federation under Miller's leadership has succeeded in protecting and restoring tens of thousands of acres of North Carolina coast.

Erin Fleckenstein

Coastal Scientist; Manager, Northeast Regional Office, North Carolina Coastal Federation

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Erin joined the federation in February 2008 and manages the Outer Banks regional office from Wanchese. She holds a Master of Science in marine biology from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington and a Bachelor of Science in marine and freshwater biology from University of New Hampshire. She leads a variety of initiatives to restore wetlands, create oyster sanctuaries and living shoreline and build rain gardens. She is the staff lead on the federation's Oyster work and author of the 2021-2025 Oyster Blueprint.

Katherine McGlade

Hatteras, Slash Creek Oysters

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Katherine is the founder and owner of Slash Creek Oysters, an oyster farm specializing in boutique oysters grown in the briny, pristine waters of Pamlico Sound behind Hatteras Island. She has an undergraduate degree from Columbia University and a master's degree in coastal environmental management from Duke University. For 25 years she pursued a career in commercial real estate development, holding senior management positions at two major retailers. She lives in Hatteras with her husband, Spurgeon Stowe.

Simon Rich

General Manager, Partner, Stevens Towing Company

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Simon Rich is a partner and the General Manager of Stevens Towing Company of NC. The Company owns and operates a fleet of barges and tugs, and is primarily engaged in the transportation of freight and bulk commodities along the east coast of the United States. Since 2009, Rich and his company have worked with the NC Coastal Federation and Division of Marine Fisheries to build nearly 100 acres of oyster sanctuary in the Pamlico Sound. They are the contractor selected to build the 2021 Cedar Island Sanctuary which will begin in late May. Rich served on the board of the North Carolina State Ports Authority. He is a graduate of North Carolina State University and lives in Edenton.

Senator Norm Sanderson

Carteret, Craven and Pamlico Counties

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Norm Sanderson Jr. is a Republican member of the North Carolina General Assembly, representing the state's third House district, including constituents in Craven and Pamlico counties. He was first elected to office in 2012. Sanderson received a B.A. in Christian education from Logos University in 2002. His professional experience includes working as a sheriff's deputy and a real estate business owner. Sanderson has also been a small business owner for over twenty years, and currently owns Kids Heaven School Age Care Center.

Representative Pat McElraft

Carteret and Jones Counties

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Pat McElraft is a Republican representative for the 13th district in the North Carolina House of Representatives representing all of Carteret and Jones Counties. She was first elected to office in 2006. She is currently one of the Deputy Majority Whips. McElraft has worked as a technical sales representative and a real estate broker.

Media event Moderated by Leda Cunningham:

Leda Cunningham

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Leda Cunningham leads Pew's work in U.S. Atlantic waters to protect and restore ocean resources and coastal habitats, including seagrass and oysters, and to ensure sustainable fishing policies. She is based in Morehead City, North Carolina. She previously served as executive director of the Reef Environmental Education Foundation, where she led fundraising and strategic planning initiatives and managed a team of staff and volunteers whose achievements included developing the world's largest database of marine life sightings derived from citizen science. Before that, Cunningham coordinated outreach to the scuba diving community for the National Environmental Trust. Cunningham holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Macalester College and master's degrees in business administration and global environmental policy from American University.