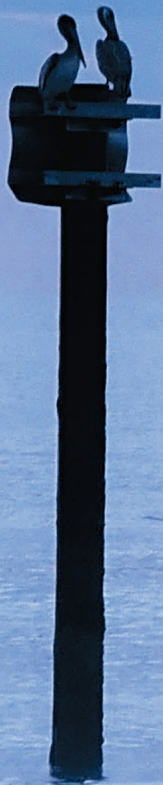


NCCOAST.ORG | *Working Together for a Healthy Coast* | SUMMER 2022

OUR COAST



North Carolina
Coastal Federation
Working Together for a Healthy Coast

CELEBRATING THE COAST
INTRODUCING THE 2022
PELICAN AWARD WINNERS

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of Our Coast,

Special people make an organization effective. Here at the North Carolina Coastal Federation, we are blessed with many generations of extraordinary people who help us accomplish our mission to protect and restore our coast. Our just-announced Pelican Award winners that you will read about in this edition of Our Coast illustrate the diverse talent pool that is consistently stepping forward to help us do our work.

The ranks of people who established the Federation back in 1982 are growing thinner. Don Ensley, our lifetime achievement Pelican Award winner this year, was an early Federation “adopter.” Don grew up in Belhaven in Beaufort County, loves to fish, and is passionate about looking out for the public health and welfare of the people who live along our coast.

When I first met with Don to see if he'd be interested in joining our board, we sat down in his double-wide office trailer next to the Belk Building on the ECU campus. During that visit, we spent most of our time talking about good fishing spots. He agreed to join the board if I took him fishing and we ate seafood at our meetings.

Don became a very active board president. He guided and promoted the Federation's work. He traveled with me to visit with potential foundation funders, helped me hire staff, and nurtured board relations, and he forced me to

take a break occasionally and go fishing with him. These times provided opportunities to reflect and discuss the future needs of our organization, at least that's what we told the rest of the board of directors.

Don brought his family to many of our meetings. His young daughter fell out of the bunk bed at the Hammocks Beach State Park lifeguard cabin where we all stayed for one of our on-island annual meetings. Her startled cries woke us all up but luckily she was ok. Don has dedicated the last couple of decades to caring for his wife who had a stroke during the prime of her professional career and has since been in a wheelchair. Through the joys of raising his daughter and the demands of taking care of his family, Don remained a loyal friend and part of the Federation's family.

His work with the Federation put Don on Governor Jim Hunt's radar, and he was appointed by the Governor to serve as a member of the N.C. Environmental Management Commission after he stepped down from our board. No good deed goes unpunished, and so he landed the job of the hearing officer to oversee the development of an environmental impact statement for a proposal to pipe treated sewage 30 miles from Atlantic Beach to ditched farmland in eastern Carteret County. Don presided at a public hearing at East Carteret High School that was attended by a crowd of more than 1,000 people. The crowd was outraged by the proposal, and due



Todd Miller - 1995

to the intense public opposition, the town's proposal quickly lost momentum and was not pursued after that public hearing—which let Don off the hook in terms of having to make recommendations to the Commission on that proposal.

Today, I'm just as excited and amazed by the work that our current board, supporters, and staff accomplish. Strong and persistent headway continues to be made by building strong partnerships that allow us to safeguard and enhance our coast's environment and economy. Our current efforts thrive because of the strong organizational foundation that Don and thousands of other people built over the past four decades. It is truly a remarkable time to reflect on our past efforts, and more critically, tackle our unfinished work to safeguard our coast.

Thank you to the generations of our supporters--past, present, and future.

Todd Miller



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This year's award photo is "Official Greeter" taken by Tom Earnhardt; writer, co-producer, and host of UNC-TV's "Exploring North Carolina."



2022 PELICAN AWARDS

Our 2022 Pelican Award winners are an outstanding bunch who have demonstrated exemplary commitment and undertaken meaningful actions to protect and restore the coast. Without these winners, the Coastal Federation would not be able to keep our coast healthy and beautiful. Congratulations to these dedicated people, organizations, businesses, and agencies who have made significant contributions to the coast. Collectively, they absolutely show just how much we can accomplish when we work together for a healthy coast.

We would like to thank our 2022 Sponsors for their support of our 40th Anniversary Celebration and Pelican Awards Program

Lead: Carolina Brewery | Restoration Systems | SeaGlass Wines

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Bronze: Beaufort Biscuits | Connecting Point Computer Center | Craig Harms | Peggy & Bill Birkemeier

NORTHEAST WINNERS

ANGIE WILLS

For Leadership and Dedication to Coastal Protection, Outreach, and Engagement



Angie Wills joined the Federation's board of directors in 2014. Angie is a rare leader in the environmental world. She has brought her passion for young people, her business administration background, and her love of the North Carolina coast together through her work and leadership roles. Originally fostering a partnership between the Federation and her youth program at River City YouthBuild, her involvement in coastal management and her desire to expand opportunities for minority involvement in coastal issues have grown. She has been a key leader in expanding the Federation's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work, serving on the organization's DEI committee and helping to identify short- and long-term actions that the Federation can implement to expand our DEI efforts. She has also taken on a leadership role in organizing resilience planning efforts for the northern coast through both her role as a facilitator of the regional RISE program and as one of the Governor's members of the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission. Angie dedicates her personal time for several of these commitments, carries herself with poise and always has a smile to share. We're grateful to have crossed paths with her years ago and for our lasting partnership.

CYNDY HOLDA

For Exceptional Volunteer Contributions to Our Coast



Cyndy joined the Federation's northern regional advisory committee in 2017. As a native of Manns Harbor and a retired public information officer for the National Parks Service, Cyndy brought a unique, local perspective to the committee. During her tenure on the committee, she could always be counted on to provide comment letters, reach out to local elected officials and critically review priority planning documents that were of interest to the Federation. Cyndy always shared a positive, relentless energy to what most may have considered mundane tasks. She helped to connect the Federation to local leaders and was passionate about inspiring the next generation of leaders. In line with this passion for the next generation, she co-created the Coastal Stewardship Award. Now in its fourth year, the award program has provided scholarships for 10 high school seniors who demonstrate outstanding dedication to the coastal environment.



IVY CAGE

For Outstanding Youth Volunteer Commitment

Ivy, a recent graduate of Manteo High School, is an inspiration. She is a beacon of hope for the next generation of coastal stewards. Ivy developed a love and passion for the coast at a young age as an avid outdoorswoman and seasoned mate on head boats. She brought this passion to the Federation first as the youngest volunteer for our northeast regional oyster shell recycling program and then as a summer intern for the Federation. As an intern, she helped to advance our communications around the N.C. Oyster Trail and assisted with regular maintenance on our demonstration oyster lease. Ivy continued volunteering with the Federation beyond her internship, eager and willing to help whenever needed. She hosted a booth on our behalf for a Women in Science event and has already made a positive impact as a role model in our community. She'll be entering college in the fall at N.C. State University majoring in biology. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for Ivy.

CENTRAL WINNERS



CITY OF JACKSONVILLE STORMWATER DIVISION

For Innovative Efforts to Reduce Marine Debris

Faced with the growing problem of pollution from abandoned and derelict vessels in the New River, the City of Jacksonville's Stormwater Division mobilized city leaders and departments to address the issue head-on. First, they amended a city ordinance to include the authority to remove abandoned and derelict vessels, and then they surveyed all the vessels in their jurisdiction. Staff worked with other city departments to successfully remove and dispose of 22 abandoned and derelict vessels in just a short time. The City of Jacksonville was innovative in its removals by using city staff and equipment, working with the streets and maintenance departments to demolish and haul the vessels to the landfill to help keep removal costs down. They were able to remove almost two dozen vessels at the projected cost for the removal of one vessel through a contract. This effort is just one component of many that the Stormwater Division has ongoing to protect and restore the New River. They have led oyster habitat restoration efforts, stream cleanups, and the development of the Sturgeon City Environmental Education Center on Wilson Bay.

MARY-MARGARET MCKINNEY

For Promoting and Increasing the Use of Living Shorelines in North Carolina

To preserve and restore our productive salt marsh and oyster habitats, one of the Federation's major goals is to make living shorelines the norm for shoreline stabilization instead of bulkheads.

Mary-Margaret McKinney, Director of Coastal Restoration at Restoration Systems, LLC, has been a driving force in helping us reach this goal. With her unstoppable and go-getter attitude, Mary-Margaret has learned and excelled at every facet of living shoreline implementation resulting in the establishment of Native Shorelines, formerly RS Shorelines, the first company in the state exclusively dedicated to building living shorelines. Mary-Margaret has also filled a critical need in the practice of living shorelines through the co-development of an innovative living shoreline material, QuickReef™, that reduces the use of plastic recycled oyster shell bags in living shoreline construction. Her passion for living shorelines has recently led her to pursue a Ph.D. at East Carolina University, researching the multiple benefits of living shorelines to continue to promote their use.



BEAUFORT, HAVELOCK, AND MOREHEAD CITY (SUNSHINE LADY) BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE COASTAL PLAIN

For Longtime Excellence in Community Engagement and Education

With a mission to "enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens," the Boys & Girls clubs of the Coastal Plain work to empower youth in eastern North Carolina. For the past several years, the Federation has partnered with Clubs in Craven and Carteret counties to offer STEAM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programming on living shorelines, oysters, marine debris, and water quality. Through this partnership, we have witnessed the vast dedication and care they extend to their students, always striving to do what is best for the children. The Clubs offer programs in five core areas, which include Education and Career Development, Character and Leadership Development, Health and Life Skills, the Arts, Sports, and Fitness & Recreation. Their efforts to establish strong connections with community partners and empower youth are truly immeasurable and we are honored to be a small part of the amazing work they do.

SOUTHEAST WINNERS



BRUNSWICK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MARINE PATROL UNIT

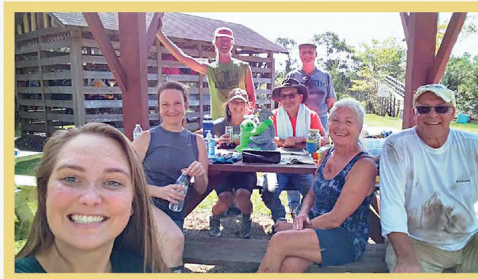
For Exemplary Efforts to Reduce Marine Debris

Faced with a problem of abandoned and derelict vessels and no clear authority to remove them, Brunswick was one of the first counties to put in place an ordinance in 2017 to address this persistent and growing issue. The Brunswick County Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol Unit was tasked to develop and operate a model program to monitor vessels. Unit staff take proactive measures and work with local and state agencies to reduce the number of vessels being abandoned or becoming derelict. Through its own initiative, the unit marshal's county resources whenever possible to safely remove and dispose of problem vessels, however, some require additional resources. When the Federation and the N.C. Division of Coastal Management received funding for vessel removal, Major Mose Highsmith had a list of vessels ready to go, and First Sergeant Jake Zaludek jumped into action. He and his team worked tirelessly and spent many hours, communicating with vessel and property owners, on the water ensuring safe conditions for the removal contractors, and fielding public inquiries about the project. The staff of the sheriff's office go above and beyond their required duties to keep our coastal waters free of abandoned and derelict boats.

JASON AND BEVERLY SIMAS, SHUCKIN' SHACK OYSTER BAR, SURF CITY

For Business Sustainability

Jason and Beverly Simas worked with the Shuckin' Shack corporate team to open their franchise location in Surf City, close to the world-famous oyster-growing waters of Stump Sound. Sustainability is integral to Shuckin' Shack, and the Simas exemplify this in their business. Hauling their shells to a recycling site, becoming an Ocean Friendly Establishment, joining the N.C. Oyster Trail, supporting local oyster harvesters and growers, and volunteering with the Federation to restore oysters. Vice President of Marketing and Creative for the parent company, Darren Keeler, has brought out teams of volunteers for Shuckin' Shack at almost every volunteer event hosted at the Morris Landing Clean Water Preserve. They actively participate to help us restore salt marsh and oyster habitats through their work to maintain living shorelines, plant marsh grass, bag up recycled oyster shells, and remove marine debris from the surrounding wetlands.



DAVIS CANAL MARSH CLEANERS OF OAK ISLAND

For Outstanding Volunteer Contributions to Our Coast

Hurricane Isaias' direct hit on Oak Island washed huge amounts of trash and storm debris into Davis Canal and the surrounding marshes. Two concerned citizens, Edward Lovett and Tierra Pointer came together through social media and formed the Davis Canal Marsh Cleaners. This all-volunteer effort quickly grew in numbers with dedicated folks (who have a wonderful sense of humor) as they worked tirelessly to wade into marsh waters and paddle out in canoes and kayaks to remove ugly and hazardous marine debris. They even resourcefully repurposed an abandoned catamaran to access and remove the canal debris, aptly renamed the "Trashamaran." Their efforts didn't stop at just trash. They have also assisted Brunswick County's Sea Biscuit Wildlife Shelter with rescuing and releasing rehabilitated native wildlife that depend on marsh habitats. The Davis Canal Marsh Cleaners' strength is not only sourced from their commitment to debris-free coastal waters, but also from the tight-knit community of support they have fostered in Oak Island, where their immensely positive impact is easily recognized.

COASTWIDE WINNERS



SUSAN HILL

For Dedication to Expanding NC's Oyster Mariculture Industry

Susan Hill is a quiet and dynamic force behind the growing oyster mariculture industry in North Carolina. Susan spent much of her childhood next to the people who worked at the renowned and historic clam house, operated by Elmer Willis in Williamston where she grew up. She loves science and has a deep passion for the fishing heritage of the coast. Susan and her husband bought the severely dilapidated clam house, and in 2015 began to rebuild it into what's now a vibrant and productive nursery for growing oyster seeds to a size they can be used by dozens of farmers on their leases. Their business has now expanded to provide gear needed by farmers as well. In addition, she's now started a commercial hatchery so that she can spawn and grow her own oyster spat and won't have to import it from other coastal states. Now in 2022, she is one step closer to becoming an ongoing hatchery through a collaboration with UNCW's research hatchery. In addition to her business support of the industry, Susan serves as a volunteer on both the statewide strategic mariculture plan committee and the N.C. Oyster Trail. She helps to connect both of these committees to the growers and producers who are working to build a \$100-million-dollar shellfish farming industry by 2030.

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HYDRAULICS UNIT

For Dedicated Advancement of Nature-based Resilience Strategies

Most people think that the N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) only builds highways, roads, and bridges. What they don't know is that NCDOT includes a Hydraulics Unit that's part of its Highway Stormwater Program (HSP) that works diligently to protect and improve water quality. This Unit has an incredible staff that has closely collaborated with the Federation for the past two decades. For starters, they were key partners in an EPA-funded project that revamped how the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries conducts its sanitary surveys for shellfish harvest, making them even more helpful in addressing pollution sources. In 2015, they installed an innovative stormwater retrofit project near the Lockwood Folly River in Brunswick County, providing new technology to reduce bacteria, nitrogen, phosphorous, and suspended solids from reaching the river. The team has installed multiple stormwater retrofits across the state and since 2020, they served a critical role in developing the Nature-based Stormwater Strategies Action Plan released by the Federation and The Pew Charitable Trusts in 2021. They are now updating their stormwater design manual to include more nature-based stormwater policies and design standards for transportation projects. The Unit is on the cutting edge of research and advancement of effective stormwater management. The Federation is honored to work with this amazing team, who are also known to even help shuck oysters at our oyster events in Raleigh.



DON ENSLEY

For Exemplary Lifetime Dedication to the Coast

Back in 1982, when the North Carolina Coastal Federation was formed, our first board president was Dr. Don Ensley. Back then he was a humble and young East Carolina University professor who grew up in Belhaven and became an expert in public health policy while still finding time to pursue his love of fishing and spending time on the coast. Don took his volunteer job as president very seriously, working closely with the Federation's very small staff to help them connect with community leaders and funders which eventually allowed the Federation to establish a strong track record of accomplishments. Don served as our board president for about 10 years until he was appointed as a member of the N.C. Environmental Management Commission by Gov. Hunt. For the past 40 years, Don has remained a close member of the Federation's family as we watched his now accomplished daughter grow up, and as he provides constant loving care for his wife. His passion for fishing and the Federation has never ebbed, and he rejoined our board after retiring from ECU. His institutional memory helps us understand our roots as we evolve our work for the future.



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Building a Strong Foundation for the Next 40 Years!



As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we are building a strong foundation for the next 40 years through the **Center for Coastal Protection and Restoration**. This new community hub will offer state of the art educational opportunities and provide key resources for coastal communities, immersing them in the protection and restoration of our coast.

View the new design & learn more at nccoast.org/CoastalCenter