

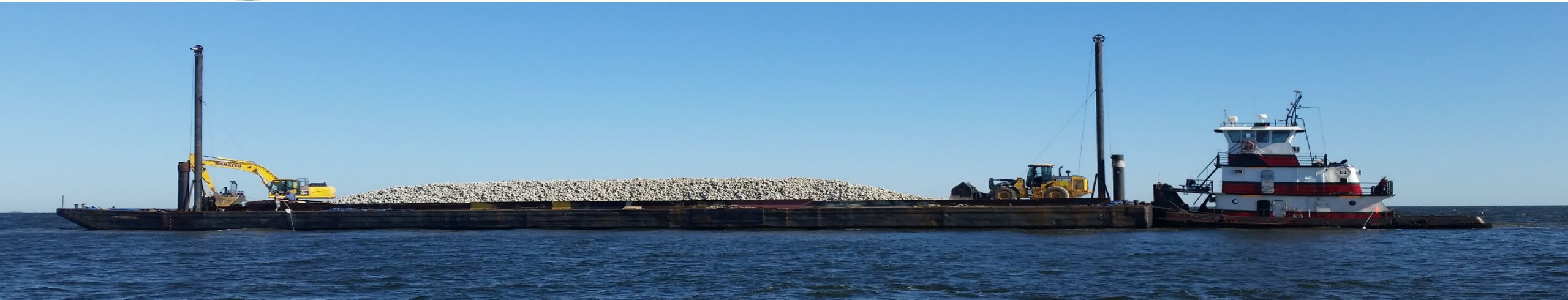


Investments in NC Shellfish Rehabilitation

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Marine Fisheries

NC Coastal Summit | Jason Peters | April 9, 2025





Economic

Oysters (harvest value)

Jobs created:

Maritime, government,
transport, quarries, heavy
equipment, fuel companies,
shipyards, tourism, fishing...



Ecological

Nursery and forage areas for fish

Defense against severe weather in
vulnerable coastal environments

Clean water: filtration and stabilizing
sediments

Store carbon and cycle nutrients



Social

Heritage: coastal identity

Tradition: community gatherings

Education: newcomers and youth



Long history of legislative support...

1822 – Legislature passed its first law governing fisheries in NC, focused on managing oysters to prevent overharvest



2025 - ?

1915 – NC implemented first documented state-led oyster reef building initiative

110 years of reef building

203 years of continuous GA support for oysters through laws and funding

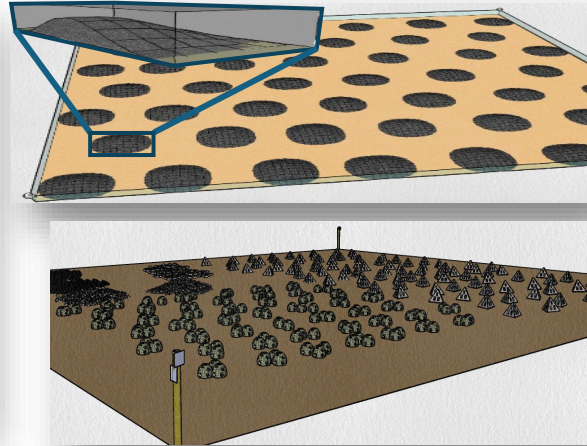
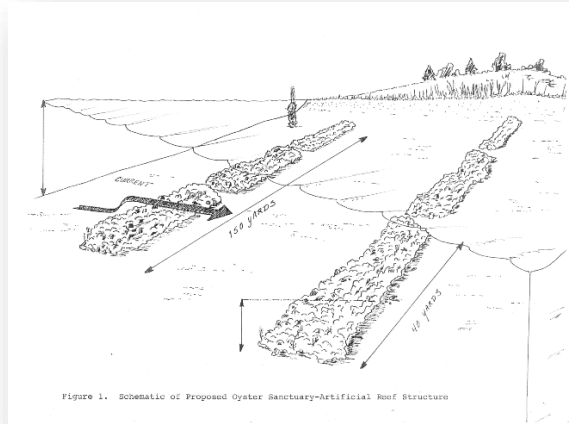
While the heritage of oyster harvest is something we celebrate in this state, ***oyster preservation and restoration are also deeply rooted in NC history***



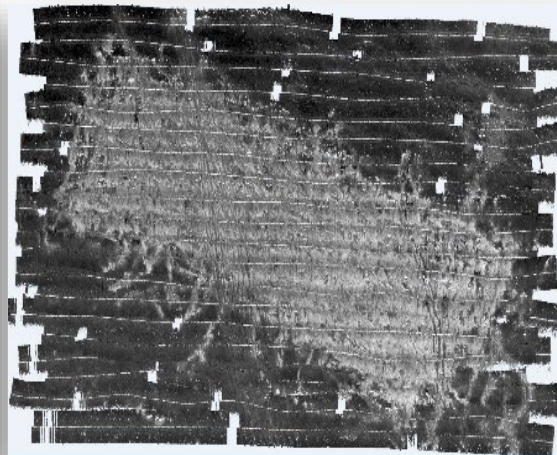
What does NC oyster restoration look like today?

A calculated two-part approach...

No Harvest Sanctuaries



Open Harvest Cultch Sites



Snapshot figures: Shellfish Rehabilitation

Oyster Sanctuaries (Closed Harvest)

- 17 sites, 449 total fully developed acres, 789 permitted
- Average # oysters >3": 627,263/acre
- Constructing ~50-60 acres per year

Cultch Plantings (Open Harvest)

- 2000+ sites built since the '80s
- Average # oyster >3": 109,269/acre
- Constructing ~40-50 acres per year
- ~4.8x more cultch planted than bushels removed due to harvest (2020-2022)



Interactive Cultch Map



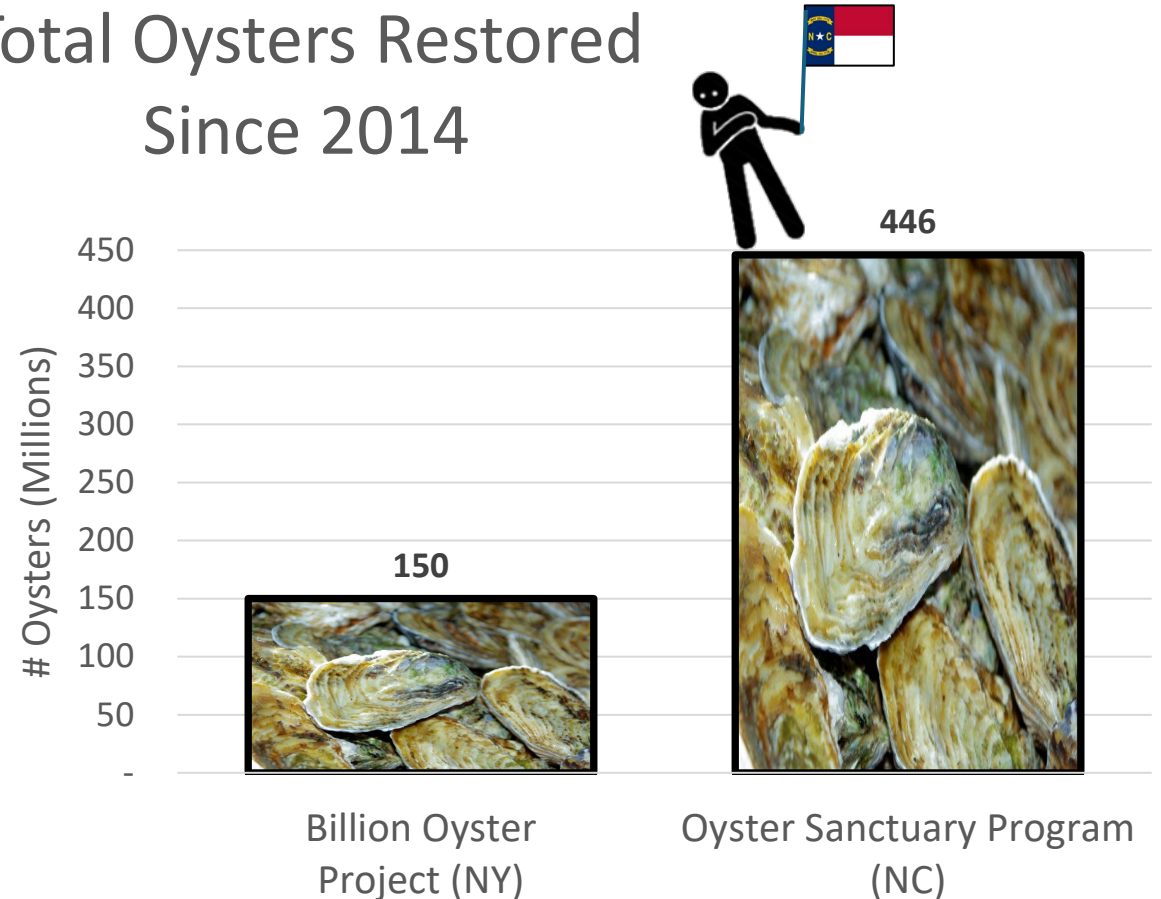
NC is the only state with a restoration model like ours:

- Combination of strategically located sanctuaries as a larval insurance policy AND continued development of open-harvest reefs

Our state has long term vision, investing in:

- Robust sanctuary sites to last decades or longer
- Reef building equipment and fleet capability to maintain or increase reef-building capacity in the future

Total Oysters Restored Since 2014



Among other states, we're revered as exemplary for our organizational structure, public-private partnerships, implementation success, and efficiency

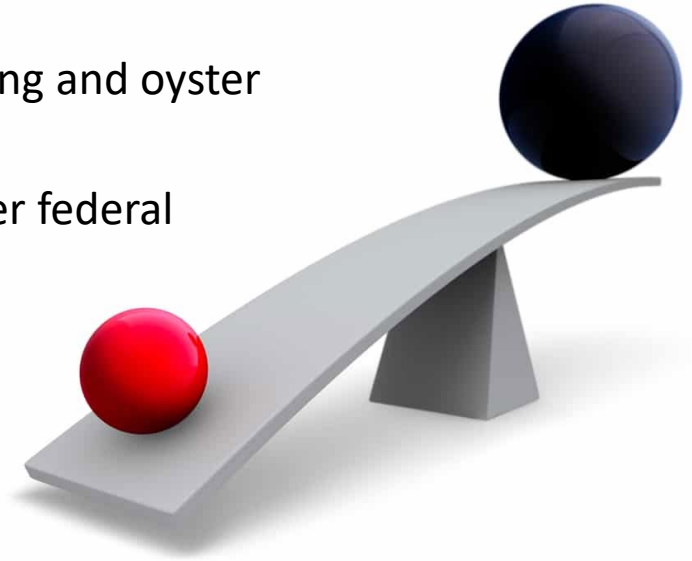


Leveraging Support and the Economy of Scale

Proven funding model

- **NC legislature = national leader**, providing a steady baseline of funding for cultch planting and oyster sanctuaries year over year
- Consistent appropriations have postured the DEQ, the NCCF, and their partners to garner federal attention and capitalize on additional funding opportunities

2022: \$1m investment by the General Assembly was instrumental in securing ~\$14.9 million in funding from NOAA for oyster reef building, graduate student training, and other educational initiatives



VS



Economy of scale

- Many restoration costs are fixed, such as equipment set up and breakdown
- As projects grow in scope, the cost per acre (for example) decreases
- In other words, additional investments can lead to exponentially more habitat restored

Why do we like to shop at Costco or Sam's club



Bulk = Savings!

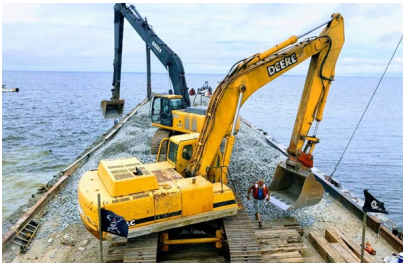


It takes a village!



Thank you!

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North Carolina
Coastal Federation
Working Together for a Healthy Coast

