

NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL FEDERATION

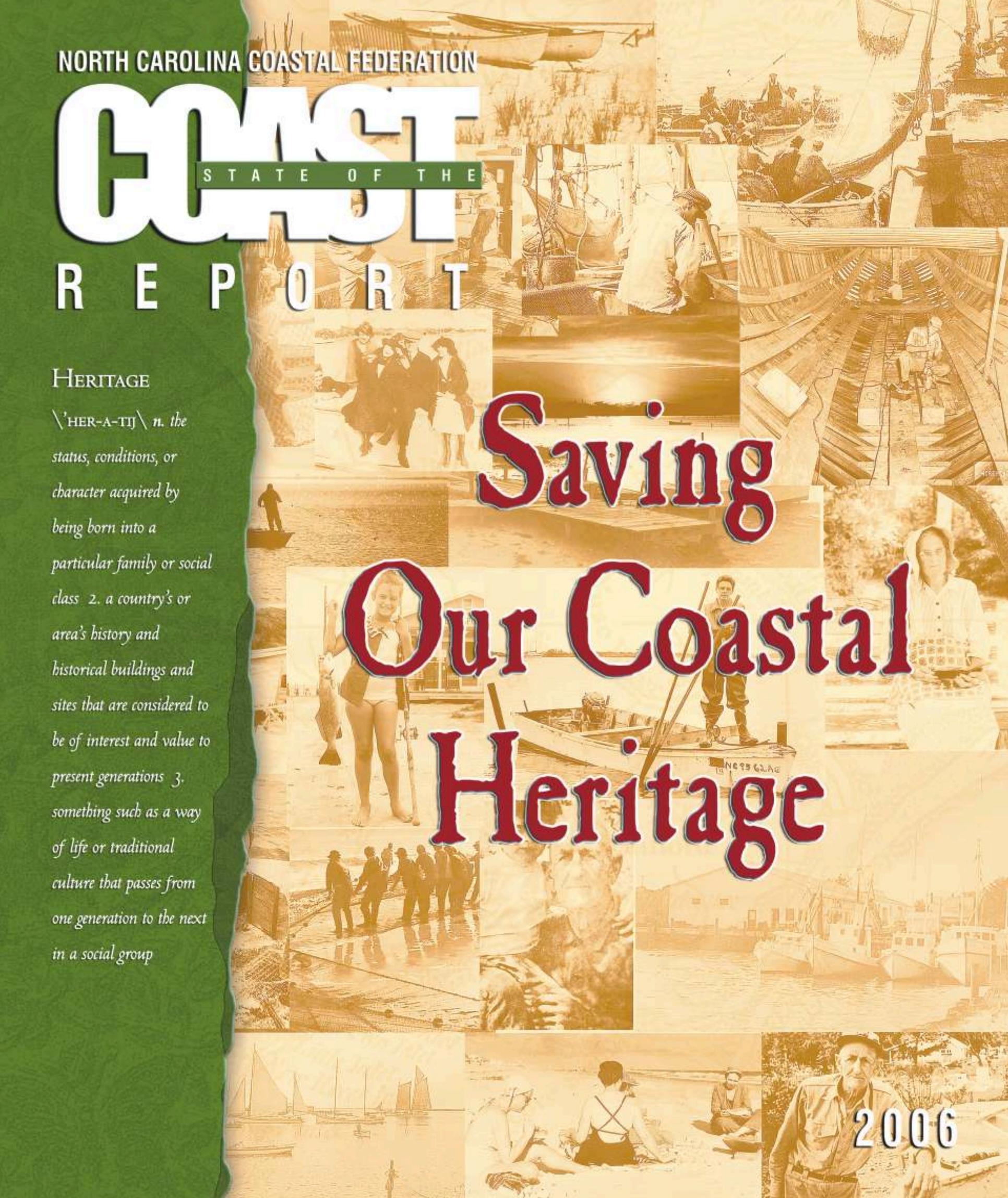
COAST

STATE OF THE

REPORT

HERITAGE

\ 'HER-A-TIJ \ *n.* the status, conditions, or character acquired by being born into a particular family or social class 2. a country's or area's history and historical buildings and sites that are considered to be of interest and value to present generations 3. something such as a way of life or traditional culture that passes from one generation to the next in a social group



Saving

Our Coastal Heritage

2006

COAST STATE OF THE REPORT

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The North Carolina Coastal Federation is the state's largest non-profit organization working to protect and restore the coast.

The NCCF headquarters is located in Ocean, NC between Morehead City and Swansboro. Visitors are welcome and the offices, Nature Library, Weber Seashell Exhibit and Gift Shop are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5 pm. The Patsy Pond Nature Trail is located nearby.

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COAST STATE OF THE

NCCF's 11th Annual State of the Coast Report

The intent of the *State of the Coast Report* is to provide citizens who care about our coast with a tool to better understand issues, challenges, and solutions that are key to our coast's health. We hope this publication will move you to participate in the restoration and protection of our coast. To learn more, call the NC Coastal Federation at 252-393-8185 or check our website, www.nccoast.org. The opinions expressed in the *State of the Coast Report* represent the views of the NC Coastal Federation.

Acknowledgments

This publication required a major effort that combined the expertise of many people. Frank Tursi, NCCF's Cape Lookout COASTKEEPER®, was the report's editor and lead author. Jim Stephenson, the Federation's Policy Analyst, and Jan DeBlieu, our Cape Hatteras COASTKEEPER®, also contributed major articles. Sally Steele, NCCF's Development Director, proofread the articles, and Anita Lancaster designed the publication.

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People Now Fight To Protect Water, Culture

BY TODD MILLER

Executive Director, North Carolina Coastal Federation



“I love the North Carolina kind of people,” were the lyrics of a 1970’s promotional song on television and radio urging people to vacation at the North Carolina coast. Back then people lived in mostly close-knit, rural and small town coastal communities. Many of them still depended on the land and water to make a living.

But, as another song of the era noted, the times they were a’-changing.

The growth of the “second-home” industry along the coast was already phenomenal. Flooding the coast were newcomers with lots of money to buy houses and land. At first, they started buying old homes in established island communities like Hatteras, Ocracoke and Salter Path. The influx of outside money pushed up land values overnight, and suddenly long-time residents found it hard to afford to live in their own communities.

This demand quickly outpaced the number of older homes available in established communities. That’s when most of the undeveloped barrier islands were quickly transformed into new towns. More than a dozen new beach towns incorporated after 1955. Growth in these towns took a while to get started, but by the 1970s mushroomed at explosive rates.

Already, land prices and shortages of barrier-island real estate had people looking toward the mainland and its more than 4,500 miles of shoreline to locate new development. More space was needed not only for vacation homes, but to provide permanent communities for people wanting to retire to the coast. While many people simply wanted a place to come and enjoy the water, others saw the coast as a good place to invest money. Speculators helped fuel the rush to buy coastal real estate.

No longer were the tide and the wind dominant forces shaping

coastal North Carolina. Much as a tidal wave, development surged over the landscape.

Some enlightened state and local leaders coalesced around the idea that it was vital for the future health of the coastal environment and its communities to manage development so that it was more in harmony and balanced with nature. A Republican governor and Democratic state legislature stepped forward, and in 1974 enacted the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) ushering in a new era in regulatory approaches to shoreline development.

The law passed by the slimmest of margins, and many coastal residents hotly resented being singled out for land-use planning and permitting. Opposition was extremely heated in Carteret County. In 1976, it was the only county out of 20 that refused to prepare its own land use plan. So the state stepped in and prepared it. When the Coastal Resources Commission held a public hearing at the county courthouse to receive public input, a mob scene had state officials fearing for their lives.

Since those days the tide has risen and fallen nearly 24,000 times. What seemed like intense demand for coastal property 32 years ago pales compared to today’s incessant and irrationally exuberant demand for waterfront land. More than ever, massive development pressures are being felt in almost every backwater area of the coast. The ability of government to effectively enforce environmental standards is overwhelmed. Most of the dire environmental problems that were forecast three decades ago and which resulted in the enactment of CAMA have sadly not been averted.

In this *State of the Coast Report*, you’ll read about how citizens in Carteret County and in other coastal communities are now fighting back to try to protect their coastal communities and environment. No longer are government officials

chastised for adopting environmental rules that are too tough. Conversely, there’s widespread and growing public outrage that government isn’t adequately protecting the coast, and the welfare of the people and their communities who have lived here for generations. People are scared that they’re going to wake up one day very soon and find themselves strangers in a changed land.

There are a number of heroes who emerge each year as leaders that help to resurge public interest in coastal protection. We’ve recognized a few of these individuals, local governments, and officials by giving them Pelican Awards. What’s most inspiring is that most of these winners are just plain ordinary people who accomplished extraordinary things by using their imagination, dedication, and pure persistence to benefit their neighbors and environment.

You’ll also read that most of the legal and planning tools exist to protect our coast and its people. We’ve described these tools in this report. In the final analysis, it all boils down to active citizen support for aggressive coastal management by state and local governments so that the coastal environment is protected. That’s the only way development decisions will be made that protect the long-term health and welfare of the people who already reside and visit here. No silver bullets – what’s needed are effective land use plans, strong implementation and enforcement of development ordinances and environmental protection standards, and a few innovative strategies that can help maintain working waterfronts and lower property taxes so that folks have good jobs and can afford to stay in their home places.

All we need is the political will and fortitude to do something. The rest, by comparison, is easy.

NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL FEDERATION

COAST STATE OF THE REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGES 4-5

CHANGING THE FACE OF OUR COAST

Unprecedented redevelopment threatens the quality of our coastal waters and the traditional coastal communities and industries that rely on clean water.

PAGES 6-7

NORTHERN COAST

The residents of Tyrrell County hope to capitalize on their environment, while the residents of Wanchese took to the streets to save their town’s heritage.

PAGES 8-9

CENTRAL COAST

A grassroots effort attempts to stave off unplanned development in eastern Carteret County that threatens that area’s rich maritime heritage.

PAGES 10-11

SOUTHERN COAST

A fisherman and a farmer fear that their way of life is disappearing in one of the fastest-growing counties in the country.

PAGES 12-13

PROTECTING OUR WATER AND HERITAGE

Experts discuss what the state and coastal counties must do to preserve what’s left and offer a toolbox of ideas.

PAGES 14-15

A SUCCESS STORY

Residents of St. Helena Island, SC, took steps 10 years ago to protect the last intact Gullah community.

PAGES 16-19

THE PELICAN AWARDS

PAGE 20

HOW YOU CAN HELP

How to help the North Carolina coast and the Coastal Federation

About the Cover

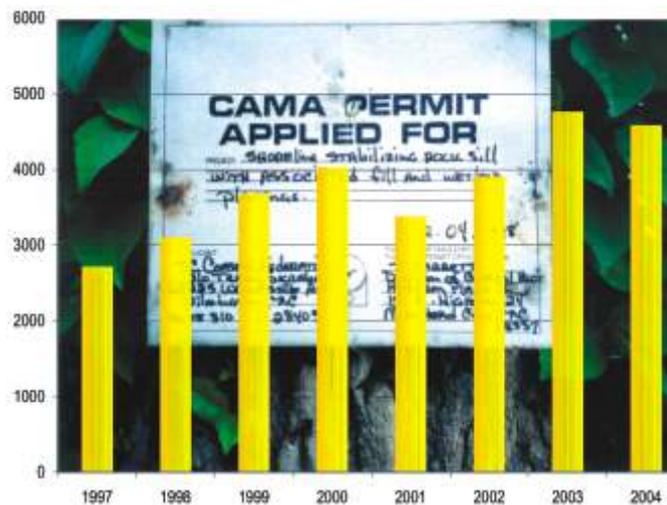
Special thanks to the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, Harkers Island and The History Place, Morehead City for providing cover photos.

Redevelopment Strikes at Soul of the Coast

Call them tales of the land rush. Everyone who lives on the coast or owns property here has one. A friend, a fishing buddy, a guy at work, a lady at church bought a lot two years ago for – fill in the blank – and sold it just the other day for double the original figure. If the land's on the water, triple it. Others tell of strangers knocking on their doors or calling them on the telephone to offer to buy their land right then. Million-dollar condos sell before the footings dry. Speculators snap up lots in waterfront subdivisions in a matter of days.

Coastal North Carolina is undergoing an unprecedented redevelopment. The family beach that generations of tourists visited each summer is fast disappearing. Condos are replacing the fishing piers – there is now only one on Bogue Banks. There were eight 10 years ago. The modest beach bungalow will soon be relegated to those coffee-table books with the pretty pictures of beaches past. Eight- and 10-bedroom rental machines are taking their place. Beachfront homes in Carolina Beach listed for \$500 a square foot last year. That's Beverly Hills prices.

On the mainland, where runaway development is moving along our sounds and up our coastal rivers and creeks, the effects are even more profound. There, in the small villages and rural counties, it is a struggle to preserve a way of life. It is the farmer in Brunswick County worried if his land in one of the fastest-growing counties in the country will soon become too pricey for soybeans. It is the crabber in Tyrrell County who must travel 30 miles to his crab pots each day because the high price of waterfront prevents him from finding a closer dock to tie up his boat. It is the retiree in Carteret County struggling to make ends meet who fears he may have to sell some of his land just to pay the property taxes. It is the oysterman in Onslow County who watches more shellfish grounds close each year because of pollution.



CAMA PERMITS ON THE RISE
State CAMA permits increased almost 69 percent in seven years.
Source: NC Division of Coastal Management

This edition of the *State of the Coast* is about them and about the thousands like them, people who feel as if they are in the path of a tsunami. They see what unplanned and largely uncontrolled growth has done to coastal Florida, to the Sea Islands of Georgia, to Hilton Head, to Myrtle Beach. They fear the wave coming from the south is upon them. "Sometimes, I think I have a bulls eye on my back," a shrimper in Brunswick County says.

Many people are fatalistic about the forces of development and growth. You can't stop it, some say. We best get used to it, others advise. People, though, are trying. This *State of the Coast* is about them as well. You will read about the people of Wanchese who went door to door to fashion a zoning ordinance that controls growth yet preserves the traditions of that old fishing village. You will read about a partnership between residents, their government, and the Coastal Federation that is attempting to preserve the environment and culture of one of the last remaining rural watersheds in Brunswick County. You will read about fledgling efforts to provide access to the water for commercial and

recreational fishermen, and you will read about Down East, the rural eastern end of Carteret County where hundreds of people have risen up in a grassroots campaign to demand better land-use planning and controls on growth.

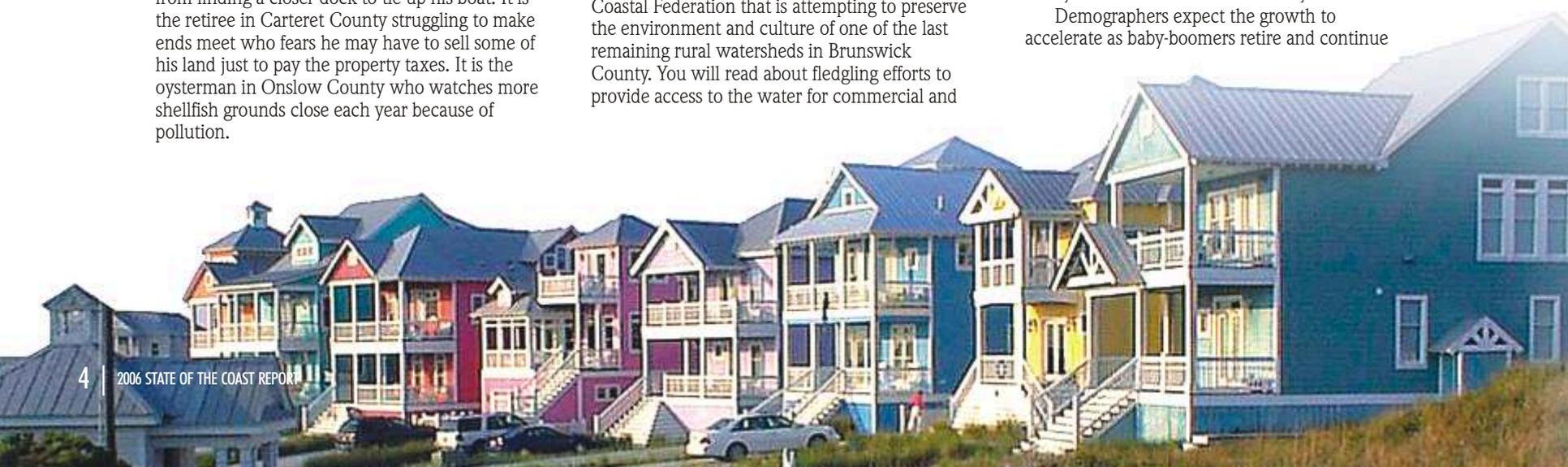
The Hilton Headization of the Coast

Most North Carolinians probably couldn't find Camden County on a map. Certainly few would guess that this narrow finger of land up near the Virginia border is one of the state's growth hotspots. Known for its lovely views of the Pasquotank River and the brooding beauty of the Dismal Swamp, Camden is also a short commute from Norfolk and Chesapeake, Va. Spillover from those metropolitan areas has fueled a population boom that has made once out-of-the-way Camden the fastest-growing county in the state since 2000. Its population increased almost 29 percent during that period.

Neighboring Currituck County wasn't far behind. Its population grew almost 25 percent in five years. Brunswick County, at the other end of the coast, experienced a 20 percent increase. In fact, seven of the 20 coastal counties saw double-digit growth since the turn of the new century, and two others exceeded the state average of 7.7 percent for the period. Most county managers would trumpet such rates of growth over a decade, let alone half of one.

All these newcomers need a place to live. Annual residential building permits in Bertie County more than doubled since 2000, increased from about 1,300 to 3,700 in Brunswick County and from about 300 to 1,000 in Pender County. Chowan County issued 41 permits for single-family homes in 2000 and 114 last year.

Demographers expect the growth to accelerate as baby-boomers retire and continue



the trend of moving close to the water. The population in the coastal counties, according to the forecasts, will approach 1.2 million in 2030, a 43 percent increase since 2000. If the forecasts are right, four coastal counties will be among the 10 fastest growing in the state. The populations of Camden, Brunswick and Currituck counties should more than double.

Cheerleaders for unfettered economic growth smile at such numbers. They see salvation in the demographic trends. People are the answer to Eastern North Carolina's long-standing economic problems, they say. One official at a leading business school in North Carolina recently suggested that the Eastern counties should lure those aging baby boomers, who come with lots of money and no kids. Provide them with comfortable houses on the water and reap the benefits of a population that places little demand on public services.

In other words, turn a third of the state east of I-95 into one vast Hilton Head Island.

We'll ignore the ecological implications of thousands of new people moving close to the water, and focus on the economic miscalculation. Before embarking on such a policy, it may be worth checking in with those who run Beaufort County, SC, the home of the real Hilton Head. They, too, thought that rich retirees were the answer until they took a closer look last year. They learned that when all those ritzy subdivisions in the southern half of the county are built out in the next 15 years, providing roads, parks, schools, libraries and police and fire protection to all those new residents will cost almost \$345 million more than state and federal funding will cover. It seems that every rich, childless, retired couple needs someone to cut their lawn, fix their plumbing, wire their garage, make their beds and cook their meals. The people in those service jobs are young with kids and needs. Those jobs don't pay them enough to afford a house in one of the golfing subdivisions on Hilton Head. So they drive in every day, making the need for new roads critical, or they use a bus system that the county pays for.

It also may be worth talking with Emory Campbell. He is a native of Hilton Head, one of the few remaining Gullahs on the island. Descendants of West African slaves, Gullahs and Geechees once owned most of the Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands along the South Carolina and Georgia coasts. Campbell must now get the approval of a man guarding a gate at one of the island's numerous private subdivisions in order to visit the grave of his great-grandmother. Gullahs built their cemeteries near the water so that the souls of the departed could cross the ocean back to Africa. Rich retirees also like the water, but probably for different reasons, and most of the Gullah cemeteries are now behind someone else's fence.

"It's all gone," Campbell said, as he walked through a small graveyard hemmed in by a golf course and multi-million-dollar houses. "Our culture here has all but disappeared."

Coastal NC Is Losing Its Heart

Anthony J. Criscitiello is the director of planning in Beaufort County, SC. You will meet him later. He has this theory. The character of any county, he says, is defined by its rural areas. Preserving a county's heritage, he notes, means protecting its rural places.

Think about it. Most towns in the modern South have this cookie-cutter sameness to them. Their central cores may have a distinct architecture or sense of history, but the commercial areas leading to them are an unending stretch of strip malls and big-box stores. One Home Depot or Circuit City, KFC or Starbucks is pretty much like any other. The outlying residential subdivisions look like they were ordered from a catalog. Only their names, which usually are taken from the natural habitat the subdivision replaced, are different, though there is probably a Whispering Pines or River Bend in every town.

To find the soul of a county, then you have to take a ride out to the country. There, the tractors ready the fields for this year's crops. Roadside vegetable stands beckon with collards or homegrown tomatoes. Dirt roads lead to ramshackle fish houses, where shrimp trawlers rise and fall with the tide. People gather at crossroad stores to share news about their neighbors.

Fill those empty spaces up with people, replace the fish house with condos and the tractors with subdivisions and a place loses its heart. In New Hanover County, less than 5 percent of its residents now live in what the US Census Bureau considers "rural" areas, which are places outside cities or towns with at least 2,500 people. New Hanover is now among the most densely populated counties in the state. About 88 percent of residents in neighboring Brunswick County lived in rural areas in 1980. Only two-thirds did 20 years later. More than 80 percent of Carteret residents lived in rural places in 1980. Only 38 percent did in 2000. Dare County went from 100 percent rural to 30 percent in the same period.

With the rural land go the farm fields. Most of the 20 coastal counties have long been known for their agricultural productivity. But since 1982, the number of acres used for farming increased in only five. Farmland decreased by more than a third in Pender, Brunswick and Currituck; by 20 percent in Bertie; and by double digits in four other counties.

Commercial fishing, another traditional industry in coastal counties, is also on the decline. Landings are down and fish houses are disappearing. The last commercial fish house on Ocracoke closed in December. The land is too valuable for weighing fish and crabs. A fish house in Calabash sold in a day. A shrimp trawler was part of the deal. It will remain as a sort of prop for the new condominium project that will be built there.

Some People Fight Back

Uneasiness is rising here and there. Residents of Georgetown, a 100-year-old, mostly black community on the New River in Onslow County packed public meetings on a new waterfront subdivision because they're worried about water pollution and the effects on their way of life. People in Holly Ridge opposed new subdivisions that will add thousands of houses to the small town because they feared what will happen to Stump Sound. Fishermen in Tyrrell County are worried that new waterfront subdivisions will make access to the water unaffordable.

Camden County officials called a time out two years ago when they approved a building moratorium on new subdivisions in order to give them time to get better growth controls in place. They have since extended the moratorium twice. Residents in eastern Carteret County, facing a similar growth explosion, have asked their commissioners for a temporary building moratorium on high-density development while they consider controls. NC Sea Grant is working with state legislators to form a study committee that will make recommendations to the General Assembly on ways to preserve commercial, recreational and industrial waterfronts.

Even the tourists are beginning to notice. Jonathan Tourtellot, an editor for *National Geographic Traveler* magazine, left his audience at the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau a bit astonished in March. The islands, long renowned for their history, culture and environment, are in danger of being spoiled, he said. A global survey of more than 200 specialists in sustainable tourism and destination quality, gave the Outer Banks just a middling score, Tourtellot told his audience. Experts rated the aesthetics and tourism management as bad and gave a warning on environmental conditions. The evaluations were based on ecological quality, social and cultural integrity, condition of historic buildings, aesthetic appeal, quality of tourism management, and outlook for the future. With giant houses taking over the horizon and chain restaurants and stores replacing the quirky mom-and-pop establishments on the Outer Banks, tourists are taking note, Tourtellot said as he read some of their recent comments: "junk tourism," "abuse of the word 'ecotourism' to promote visitation," "grossly overdeveloped," "massive second home development."

Chuck Ball, the mayor of Kill Devil Hills, took the message to heart. "How many more times will people from overcrowded places like Ohio and New Jersey come to a place that's overcrowded?" he told a local newspaper.

Speaking of New Jersey, here's a bit of sobering news: North Carolina will surpass that state in population some time this year.

Wanchese: Taking Zoning to the Streets

In Dare County, Lorraine Tillett is considered something of a miracle worker.

The Wanchese resident didn't just convince the village's famously independent-minded residents to accept the county's zoning of their property. She got them to wholeheartedly embrace it.

"We couldn't have done it with the kind of zoning that was on the county's books," she says. "To keep the village the way we wanted it, we had to design something unique."

The story of how Wanchese got zoned begins in late 2002, when Dare County was updating its Land Use Plan. On their draft map, county planners designated the south end of Roanoke Island, including large tracts of wetlands, as generic community use.

Manteo Mayor John Wilson and Wanchese native Sybil Daniels Ross told residents they needed to get active or risk losing the beauty and working-class flavor of their village. Some residents feared the southern part of the island would be taken over by upscale condominiums and marinas. "We knew we didn't want that," says Joanne Baum Clift of the small settlement of Skyco. "We got together and told the commissioners we wanted the marshes put back on the map as a conservation district." They also asked that the rest be designated "village community," a use that prescribes mixed commercial and low-density residential development.

In early 2004, the Dare Board of Commissioners began taking steps to zone the unincorporated parts of the county. All Wanchese was to be zoned S-1, an open classification that allows dense development but carries requirements like property line setbacks and replacement of non-conforming buildings. Fishermen and fish house owners began spoiling for a fight.

The commissioners approached Tillett, the long-time county zoning administrator, and asked her to work with residents to design an acceptable zoning map. She agreed, though some warned her that she would be tarred and feathered.

She met with the village fish dealers and asked if they would support zoning if it included special stipulations: scaled-down parking requirements, room for out-buildings on residential lots, a relaxation of property line setbacks to allow wharves over the harbor, and others. "They said they didn't think it would happen," she recalls. "But they told me if I could do it, they'd support me."

More than 45 residents attended Tillett's first meeting, held in an old schoolhouse that serves as a community center. "They had plenty of questions, but we were ready," she says.

The second meeting drew 65 people, "and all of them wanted to know about their own properties."

Tillett had assembled a committee of 20 volunteer helpers. Overwhelmed by individual inquiries, she asked the volunteers to split up the village and examine it street-by-street to make sure the zoning designations would preserve traditional uses. Button Daniels, a kindergarten teacher, spent dozens of hours posting flyers and making phone calls to publicize the effort. Over a year and a half the women organized 45 community meetings. "Every Monday night at 7 o'clock you could come to the schoolhouse and hear something about zoning," Tillett says.

The result is a zoning crazy quilt that restricts development but still allows for net houses, crab shedders, chicken coops, and small, on-site businesses. The tiny community has 11 different zoning districts, each of which was set up in consultation with residents.

Tillett retired from her job in July 2005 but continued to work on Wanchese's zoning as a volunteer. The Dare commissioners approved the zoning at a March 20 public hearing. Even then individual property owners had questions – but almost everyone had praise for Tillett, Daniels, and their committee.

"I knew we were going to have to be creative to make it work," Tillett says. "We just had to get out in the community and talk to people to find out what they wanted Wanchese to be."

Tyrrell Struggles with Controlling Growth

Downtown Columbia is an appealing slice of small town America. Brick buildings front Main Street, adorned with colored awnings. A statue of a Confederate general stands next to the courthouse. A tiny town park opens to the deep blue waters of the Scuppernong River, and a boardwalk stretches from the US 64 bridge to some slips filled with sailboats. Pedestrians wave to each other on their way from offices to a new eatery. Across the highway, an expansive wood-and-glass building holds the headquarters for the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the nonprofit group Partnership for the Sounds.

It's surprising how well things turned out, given the desperate straights in which Columbia's and Tyrrell County's leaders found themselves twenty years ago.

The question is, where do they go from here?

The Prospects of Peat

Imagine that you're on the governing board for a town or county that's losing population. Farming families are breaking up as corporations gobble up cropland for tax write-offs and young people move away. Commercial fishing boats are landing smaller catches. Desperate to increase tax revenues, you might find the prospect of peat mining pretty appealing.

In 1979, an energy company named Peat Methanol Associates proposed building a plant that would burn peat for conversion to methanol fuel. Investors claimed that the plant would employ 1,100 people during construction and 300 once it opened. To Tyrrell County officials, it sounded like manna from heaven.

There was only one catch – and it proved to be significant. The peat soils of the region capture the heavy coastal rains and release filtered runoff into coastal waters. When fishermen and environmentalists, including the fledgling NC Coastal Federation, raised objections because of potential water pollution, the peat-mining scheme collapsed. A proposal for a hazardous waste incinerator and a munitions plant also fell through.

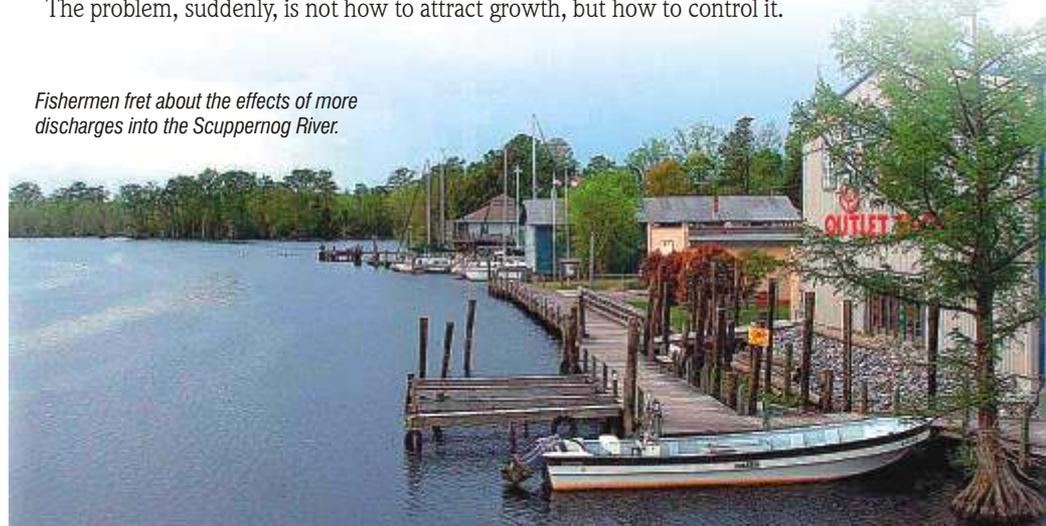
Faced with a bleak future, Tyrrell and Columbia officials enrolled in a program that radically altered the region's economic development. The Coastal Initiative, funded by Gov. Jim Martin's administration, took them through an intensive planning exercise on how to build on the county's strengths. Afterwards, town and county leaders set out to cultivate ecotourism, capitalizing on the Scuppernong waterfront and Albemarle Sound shore.

When the site of the would-be peat plant was purchased for the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, local leaders persuaded the federal government to build a visitor center on the Scuppernong. They built the boardwalk and boat slips in Columbia and made county land available for a soundfront Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Conference Center.

The Pocosin Arts cooperative opened a center on Columbia's Main Street. An old movie theater became a museum. The Palmetto Pear Tree Preserve, a 10,000-acre reserve owned by the Conservation Fund, opened east of town. Land values inched up. With the Outer Banks badly overbuilt, Tyrrell became the next desirable spot for real estate investors.

The problem, suddenly, is not how to attract growth, but how to control it.

Fishermen fret about the effects of more discharges into the Scuppernong River.





Downtown Columbia still maintains a small-town flavor.

A Struggle for Hometown

One week in March 2006 some hopeful developers hosted a “charette” in the old Columbia Theatre (at a charette, community stakeholders air their views about a new project. The very use of such a term signals that change is afoot). Area residents could walk in and chat with the builders about plans for a 300-unit development on an 84-acre farm field east of downtown.

Inside, a map of the proposed development was sandwiched between historical displays. Sheets of newsprint were covered with residents’ comments. “What do you like about Columbia?” one sheet prompted. “Friendly,” the answers read. “Laid back.” “People look out for each other.” On other sheets, residents expressed fears that Columbia will lose its small-town atmosphere.

“We’re trying to make sure this fits with the overall feel of Columbia,” explained developer Bob Oakes, a Nags Head commissioner. “We don’t want to come in and take over.”

To that end, Oakes and his partner in the project, Durwood Cooper, Jr., are designing streets to connect with others in town so residents will be able to walk or bike to the riverfront. They’re also including some low-priced residences – though just how low is unclear. Whether this approach will preserve the hometown feel remains to be seen.

Another subdivision with 648 units is planned just to the west, and a 60-unit apartment building is in the works. In the last three years the town’s holdings have expanded from 239 acres to 550 acres, as developers have requested annexation to hook into sewer and water lines. Plans are being laid for numerous subdivisions on county property, including a gated community on the Little Alligator River. Almost all the land slated for development was once wetlands. Ditched and drained for farming, it’s now eligible for building – though the wetland soils remain.

With the pressure for so much growth, Town Manager Rhett White and County Manager Willie Mack Carawan know they need to move cautiously. White notes that towns and counties must pay for infrastructure expansions well before they receive additional income from growth. “There’s a lag that can cause quite a crunch,” he says.

He and Carawan say they want to avoid problems through careful regional planning. In March, Columbia was selected by the NC Rural Economic Development Center to take part in a three-year Small Towns Economic Prosperity demonstration program. They hope the benefits to the region will be similar to those gleaned two decades ago from the Coastal Initiative.

Fishermen Fret About Impacts

Commercial fishermen fret about the potential impacts of such rapid growth on their livelihoods. Already the Tyrrell fleet, comprised of roughly 30 crab boats, has lost three harbors to development. Shoaling is also a problem; watermen say most canals and harbors can no longer handle boats that draw more than two feet. Since the salinity of the sound varies wildly, fishermen need to moor boats in different places at different times of the year.

“The last pot I’m running to is 27 miles from the dock,” says crabber David Gallop. The long run costs both gas money and time. “I could be making more, no doubt, if there were more places to tie up.” The productive waters of the lower Albemarle aren’t being fished, he says, because they’re too hard to reach.

Many Tyrrell watermen say they feel disenfranchised by local politics and don’t look to local leaders for solutions. They’ve talked with Sen. Marc Basnight’s office and NC Department of Transportation officials about preserving a dockage on DOT land at the western terminus of the Alligator River bridge. “We could only tie up about 10 boats there max,” Gallop says, “but it would help relieve a lot of the pressure.”

They also worry about increased discharges from sewage and reverse osmosis plants as the county grows. Officials are working to double the size of Columbia’s wastewater treatment plant, to 600,000 gallons a day, and the county has asked for state review of a proposed reverse osmosis plant that would discharge brine and chemicals into the sound at Dewey’s Pier, a productive fishing area.

“We don’t need any more direct discharges. We need to get rid of the ones we’ve got,” says Willy Phillips, a crabber and seafood dealer. The flow from wastewater treatment and RO plants should be filtered through wetlands “and not just heaved overboard,” he says. “There are innovative design ideas out there. They cost more money than the county wants to spend. But once these waters are gone, and they’re going, we’re not going to get them back – unless a half-mile-wide inlet breaks through the Outer Banks.”

Camden: High Growth Has County Talking Trash

Randell Woodruff has a very large problem. The manager of Camden County needs to figure out how to get new schools built and finance a sewer system expansion in an area with explosive residential growth, but no tax base.

“We’re a low wealth county,” he sighs, “but thank goodness we’re also a low poverty county. If we had a high rate of poverty too, we’d be in financial ruin.”

Camden is a long, thin county on the Virginia line, within commuting distance of the Norfolk metropolitan area, known regionally as Hampton Roads. For 140 years its population was stable. “It was just one big farming community,” Woodruff says. “Everybody knew everybody. The county didn’t even do growth planning. There was never any need for it.”

Then in the 1990s the population exploded. By 2000, there were 6,885 residents, nearly 1,000 of them new. That’s a growth rate of almost 17 percent – an increase other rural farming communities might well envy. But Camden’s growth has all been residential, which places severe strains on the county’s budget. Public services required by new residences usually exceed the property taxes they bring in. Educating the kids is a county’s largest tax burden. The number of school children in Camden, now around 1,800, is expected to double in seven years, Woodruff says. The county has a single elementary school, middle school, and high school. All have outdated sewage systems. A second elementary school is under construction, funded by a recent 15-cent increase in property taxes.

Faced with a looming crisis, in November 2003 the county Board of Commissioners placed a moratorium on new subdivisions. In early April commissioners extended it for another year, making it the longest-running in state history. Board members say they will not renew it again.

In the meantime, they are pinning their hopes on a highly controversial revenue-raising plan: construction of a mega-landfill that would accept trash from other states. At capacity the landfill would be 280 feet high and stretch for two-and-a-half miles. County officials say it would provide Camden with between \$2.8 million and \$4 million in annual revenue from tipping fees.

Woodruff was not hired as county manager until the fall of 2003, a year after the commissioners voted to sign a franchise with Black Bear Disposal, LLC, which would run the landfill. He supports it, with a caveat. “That landfill is going to be a great thing for this county, in terms of revenue,” he says. “But it is not going to fund all our needs. Without some good planning, we could be in the same kind of trouble in a few years.”

And the landfill is not a sure thing. The proposal ignited a fury of protest from some area residents, environmental groups (including NCCF), and the county’s neighbors. The City of Chesapeake, VA, has sued to stop the project, supported by adjacent Currituck County, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, and the Camden Citizens Action League. Camden officials have filed counter suits.

Tracy Bland, who with husband Bill heads the Camden citizens’ league, says noise and smells from the landfill will ruin the quality of life. “If you look at the landfills that are in North Carolina, they’re in rural, poor counties,” she says. With its high growth rate, Camden can afford better – if officials plan carefully, she says. “My question to the county is, what are you doing to attract commercial development? A lot of businesses won’t come to the community until the population reaches a certain level.”

Why doesn’t the county levy impact fees on new development? Woodruff cites a lawsuit being heard this spring in Durham County that challenges impact fees as unconstitutional. Still, he says, the county may start collecting impact fees and holding them in escrow until the case is decided. He also talks hopefully of plans for a small shopping center with a Food Lion grocery. “If they build that one little shopping center, we can significantly increase the amount of sales tax we collect,” he says.

And what if the landfill proposal fails? Woodruff shrugs. “We’ll just have to struggle on and attract commercial development as best we can.”

Down Easters Rise Up to Protect Their Heritage

The 15 or so people who gathered at a pizza shop in Beaufort in mid-January were neighbors drawn together by a common fear. They all live in eastern Carteret County, a once remote region of small fishing villages tucked amid the salt marshes and piney woods. “Down East,” as it’s called in these parts, also contains the last remaining large tracts of undeveloped waterfront in the county, and the madcap rush to the water’s edge has begun.

Developers have proposals for subdivisions and marinas in various stages of design. Major subdivisions are planned in several Down East communities, and condominiums are proposed on Harkers Island. Real-estate ads announce “unrestricted” waterfront tracts, alluding to the region’s lack of zoning or meaningful laws to control development. Speculators are knocking on doors offering to buy the owner’s land.

No one sitting around the long table in the restaurant that day had ever seen anything like it. They had lived for generations in relative isolation, but their remoteness has now become a marketable commodity as the rest of our coast gets over-developed. Like many of their neighbors, the people in the room were scared. They were scared that their heritage will be swallowed up; that, like their neighbors in Ocracoke, they will be taxed off land that’s been in their families for generations; and that all this development will pollute the water from which so many eek out a living. They knew but one thing to do: Fight.

“This is our Alamo,” Danny Styron said that day. But how many would actually take up the cause? The little group had been meeting for months, with each successive gathering attracting a few more people. They formed a

loosely knit organization that they called Down East Tomorrow, or DET, and had even persuaded their representative on the Carteret County Board of Commissioners to hold a series of meetings on growth and development in the region. The first one was scheduled for the elementary school in Smyrna in a couple of nights, but no one knew whether the personal passions and fears expressed at their weekly meetings extended much beyond the little group. Would anyone show up in Smyrna?

Almost 400 people filled the little school auditorium that night. More than 300 showed up the following week on Harkers Island, and an equal amount packed the school in Atlantic for the last, emotional meeting. There, they talked about incorporation. They talked about zoning. They talked about the possibility of a temporary moratorium on development. But, mostly, they talked about what they might lose. Speaker after speaker went to the podium to tell stories about their grandparents, about fishing in Core Sound, about losing it all.

I. Worth Mason Jr. paraphrased Joni Mitchell. “What a pity. We can’t understand what we’ve lost until we’ve lost it,” he told the crowd. “Learn the truth. Stand your ground because there’s little ground left to stand on Down East.”

After almost 1,200 people attended the three weeknight meetings, even the county official who had belittled the Down Easters’ fears in a sarcastic email a few days before the first meeting must have realized it: A movement had been born.

DET has since organized community groups in each of the Down East villages. It sponsored a public educational forum on issues such as zoning and land-use planning and gathered

almost 3,000 signatures in support of its call for a temporary building moratorium on high-density development Down East. The group has persuaded hundreds of people to attend county commission meetings about the moratorium or to pack other public meetings on proposed development projects. The commissioners hadn’t decided at press time whether to grant the moratorium, but Gerry Barrett considers the grassroots movement a success no matter what happens.

“We have raised the level of awareness about growth, development and water quality not only among people Down East but among people all over Carteret County,” explained Barrett, DET’s co-chair. “We are not going away, no matter what happens.”

The Ding Batter and the Natives

Barrett seems miscast as one of the leaders of this unlikely uprising. A tall, lanky fellow with long white hair, Barrett isn’t a Down East native. In the parlance of those who are, he’s a ding batter. A native of Chapel Hill, Barrett lived for years in Chatham County. He moved to the Down East community of Atlantic three years ago to escape the rapid development going on in the Triangle.

“I said that it would be five years before we were discovered and 10 years before we got slammed,” he said one crisp winter morning on the bow of his small skiff as he cast grubs for trout in Drum Inlet. “We’ve been discovered in less than three years and we’ll be slammed in five.”

Barrett has done a lot in life, including piloting rafts for tourists on the Delores River in Colorado. He’s also done some developing. Yes,

More than 300 people attend a meeting in Smyrna.





Down East commercial fishermen haul in fish to the beach at Cape Lookout.

that's right. He's a developer. He's built a residential subdivision in Chapel Hill and is currently working on one along the Haw River. "But I do things in the exact opposite from the way others do it," he said.

That project along the river, for instance? He's divided it into four tracts and has attached covenants to the deeds that limit the damage to the river. The owners can't further subdivide the land or cut down large trees, for instance. Neither can they pave their driveways.

Barrett couldn't refuse the co-chair of DET because he wouldn't stand idly by as his adopted home was invaded. "When I got down here, I thought I was going to stay under the radar screen. I was just going to enjoy life," he said "When I saw what was going to come, the intensity of it and the havoc it was going to bring, I couldn't keep quiet."

Carolyn Mason, the other DET co-chair, is Barrett's opposite. A native Down Easter, she has spent most of her life in the area working in Marine libraries at Camp Lejeune and at the Cherry Point air station. She lives with her husband, PD, a commercial fisherman, on the banks of Wards Creek in Bettie where she cares for horses culled from the wild herd on Shackleford Banks.

While Barrett's response to most issues is measured, Mason brings a fire that's fueled by her intense desire to help her neighbors. "I live here. I grew up here. I like it here. I think the people who live in an area should have some say to what happens to an area," she said.

For Karen Amspacher, this is a fight about the land, about preserving people's connections to it. Amspacher is a native of Harkers Island. She grew up on Red Hill, on land that her great-grandfather bought in 1904 after he left Diamond City on Shackleford Banks. "Even as a child growing up I knew that land was sacred," she said.

It's not for sale, by the way. Not for any price, she said.

Amspacher worked tirelessly behind the scenes during DET's early days arranging meetings, offering encouragement, doling out assignments. She is the group's heart and soul. "This is important because I have children, because I have a past that I learned not everybody has," she said. Why wouldn't I do this? It's the only thing I have."

Going Up Against the Growth Machine

The Down Easters made a simple and seemingly reasonable request of their county commissioners: Place a one-year building moratorium on certain types of high-density development to give residents time to devise a comprehensive land-use plan and ordinance that recognize the region's special environmental and cultural qualities and set growth policies to ensure that those features aren't destroyed by rampant development.

To get the time out they wanted, the Down Easters thought all they had to do was show up in large numbers and make a loud enough fuss. Government would respond to the obvious desires of the governed, using laws designed to protect the water and control development. "Like many, I assumed that there were laws to protect wetlands," Carolyn Mason said. "I also assumed that there were agencies that took care of the issues we raised. It's been very frustrating to learn that there seems to be other agendas at work that don't involve the Down East citizens."

They quickly learned that the playing field was tilted against them, that the rules, laws, and governing bodies and agencies are biased towards more and more growth. They learned that rules meant to protect the environment are

often vaguely interpreted to allow the most-intense type of development. They learned that environmental enforcement is lax and that the state-mandated land-use plans are little more than paper tigers.

Their elected officials were less than enthusiastic. Though the county commissioners held the required public hearing on the moratorium request, only two commissioners have said they would support it. Four will be needed to pass the moratorium. "It's been a fight every step of the way," Barrett said.

Regardless of the outcome, Down East Tomorrow has succeeded in educating hundreds of residents about water-quality and growth issues. Hardly an issue of the local newspaper is published without a letter supporting the moratorium, and growth management has become an issue in local elections.

"Everybody told me this effort wouldn't work because it hasn't worked in the past Down East. To be a small part of this wonderful group effort, to have gotten this far despite all odds, is way cool," Barrett said. "It shows that people have power when they have intentions and when there's a situation that calls for action. When there are enough people who feel the pressure, people can matter."



The digging of the marina for Snug Harbor, a residential subdivision in Sea Level, triggered the concerns of Down East residents.

Life in One of the Fastest-Growing Counties in the Country

WARNUMTOWN – It was the kind of day for talking, a lazy sort of early spring day, warm enough to serve as a reminder of the summer to come.

Yet, the cool breeze off the river warned that winter hadn't totally given up. It was just the sort of day for a fisherman and a farmer to sit down on the tailgate of the pickup, like we used to do, and talk about their futures living in one of the fastest-growing counties in the country.

Enis Swain has been a farmer all his life, once growing tobacco and soybeans and raising a few hogs and chickens, on land he grew up on in this small town in Brunswick County. His lifelong friend, Danny Galloway, has been shrimping for 40 years, tying up to docks that his family owned along the town's waterfront on the Lockwood Folly River. Neither is very confident that his way of life will survive much longer.

Swain worries that the skyrocketing cost of land will drive up property taxes and make his fields more valuable to plant condominiums than soybeans. Galloway fears that imported shrimp, high diesel prices and the value of waterfront land along the river will combine to kill his livelihood. It's already so bad that a man can't sell his shrimp trawler even if he wanted

to get out. And the kids? Forget it. They, too, see little future in it.

Welcome to the new North Carolina coast, the one they don't tell you about in the brochures, where traditional lifestyles are being uprooted by the rush of tourists and retirees.

"They call it progress, but let me tell you what progress has done to the fishing industry. It's taken the land out of the fishing family," Galloway explained. "A man's got a fish house ... and he's made a living all his life with it. He's getting kinda up in age and somebody comes and offers him a million dollars for his lot. He's probably not going to make \$100,000 for the rest of his life. He'd be foolish not to take it, but everybody else from that generation down who's going to depend on it, it's gone. You couldn't think about buying a waterfront lot now and putting a fish house on it and make enough money to pay for the lot. So there ain't going to be any fish houses. That's what will put an end to the shrimping and fishing industry, I'm afraid."

Swain nods and tells about the phone call he got recently from a man he never heard of who found Swain's land on the county's on-line tax records. He made Swain an offer right then and there. "He never saw the land. Just found it

on the Web," Swain said incredulously. "I turned him down because I don't require much money, but it's only a matter of time. I might hold it off but what's the next generation gonna do? I don't know about the future."

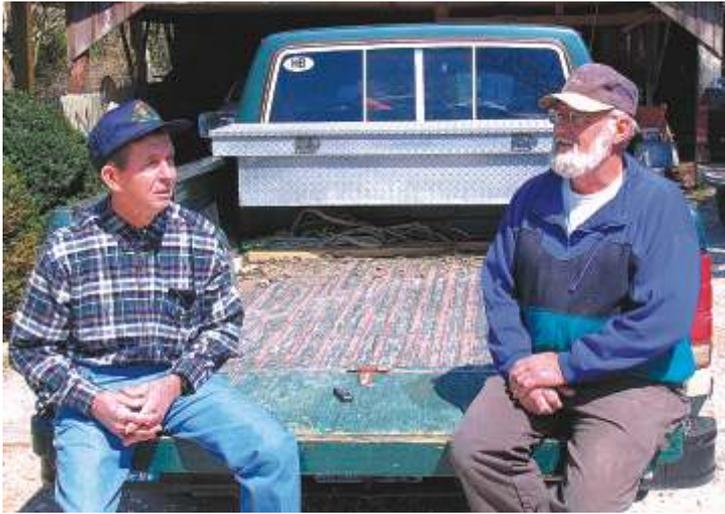
Brunswick County's future is no secret. Its population of about 89,000 has grown more than 20 percent in just five years, turning a once-rural county into one of North Carolina's boomtowns. Its one-year growth rate of 5.4 percent, ending in July 2005, ranked it second in the state after Union County near Charlotte and 29th in the country. State demographers expect the growth to continue as the baby boomers retire to the water. They estimate that about 150,000 people will live in the county in 25 years.

All these newcomers have, among other things, ignited a building boom. The average cost of an existing house in Brunswick now exceeds \$300,000, a 77 percent increase in just five years. The tax value of all property in the county soared from \$2.6 billion in 1990 to more than \$11 billion in 2004, the latest year such numbers are available.

Higher property values only mean higher taxes for people like Swain. "I ain't getting a bit out of the invasion," he said "It's only cost me. My taxes aren't a bit less."



Low shrimp prices, and the high price of fuel and waterfront property persuaded Gary Galloway to sell his fish house.



Enis Swain, left, and Danny Galloway spend a lazy afternoon talking about the future of their small town.

While much of the past growth has been centered in the county's popular beach towns, it is now creeping inland along the rivers. Yes, even little Varnumtown, population 500, isn't immune. Two huge subdivisions stretch for 1,000 acres along the river just outside of town. Residents became so alarmed by the sudden growth that they voted to incorporate in 1988. "We saw the handwriting on the wall," Galloway said. "We didn't want to be taken in."

The subdivisions, like so many being built along the coast, are surrounded by fences and guarded by uniformed men. Good fences do not, in this case, make good neighbors. At least, that's not the way the men on the tailgate saw it that day. They used to hunt on that land, put a boat in the river at the landing. It was part of the community. Now, it's apart from it.

"When you bring a group of people in like that, they want to go in our river," Galloway said. "They want to come down and watch us fix our nets and do this and everything. But they're so good that they go in their houses and go to bed and they don't even want you within two miles of them. Yet, they can come here and do what they want to. That bothers me a little bit."

The effects such subdivisions have on waterfront land are a more immediate threat to shrimpers like Galloway. The 10 trawlers tied up to the town's docks represent the largest remaining shrimp fleet in the county, but their days may be numbered even if imported shrimp disappeared and the price of fuel dropped. The boats may have no place to go.

Three of the town's six fish houses have been sold in the last two years, including the one where Galloway ties his boat. His nephew, Gary Galloway, owned it. Like most of its kind, the fish house is a bit ramshackle and shows its 22 years. But it supported a whole family of shrimpers. "I made money in that fish house the first 10 years," Gary Galloway said. "But the last 10 years I haven't done nothing. You can't make it shrimping anymore."

So, he sold it to a man who says he wants to keep running it as a fish house. Uncle Danny knows better. "The man who bought it is going to sell to somebody else to put up a condo," he said. "That's the bottom line. We'll have no place else to go. That will leave two fish houses in the community."

Swain, who has been the town's vice mayor since incorporation, worked for the Army Corps of Engineers when he wasn't farming. He traveled up and down the coast surveying channels for the Corps. He's seen what's happened to other coastal communities once they're "discovered." He has a good idea of what's coming. "I hope 20 years down the road we don't cuss the day that we allowed this to happen, cuss that day that we allowed Myrtle Beach to flux right on up," Swain said.

This "flux" of new people in their fancy houses behind the fence has already had a profound effect on the community, Danny Galloway noted.

"People around here didn't know they were poor until the rich started coming. Everybody was kinda equal," he said sort of wistfully. "Everybody fared good. The kids got along good. Now you put one rich family and that kid's got a four-wheeler and what's gonna happen to all the other kids? They want a four-wheeler. That family's got a new house. That family drives a new car. All the families want that. First thing you know, you just got a conglomeration where nobody enjoys nothin'. They're just rats trying to survive 'till they die. I remember when people would sit on a porch and talk for four hours. Now, you stick up your finger as you go by because you don't have time to wave twice."

Or to sit on the tailgate of the pickup for a lazy day of talking.

Welcome to the new North Carolina coast.

Residents, County Attempt to Protect Brunswick River

Residents of one of the few undeveloped watersheds in quickly growing Brunswick County have joined with their government and the NC Coastal Federation to find ways to maintain and restore water quality in the Lockwood Folly River.

The 150-square-mile Lockwood Folly watershed is in the center of the county. Growth is encroaching from Myrtle Beach to the south and from Wilmington to the north. Intensive development is starting to take its toll on the watershed's waters and resources. Unless development practices change, the Lockwood Folly will share the same degrading sprawl that covers neighboring communities. Not only could area waters be lost permanently to shellfishing but also polluted waters could have a detrimental effect on tourism, and traditional use of the resources could be lost forever.

With a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency, Brunswick County and its partners aren't trying to stop the development, but are instead working to devise a strategy for maintaining and restoring water quality within the Lockwood Folly watershed as it develops.

People who live in the watershed will have a hand in trying to protect it. The Brunswick County commissioners appointed eight citizens to serve on a roundtable that will oversee and guide the project. This group is charged with preparing a strategy for the Lockwood Folly watershed. Bill Farris, a planning consultant and member of the project team, has developed a land suitability analysis that looks at specific land areas and compares soil types and the land's suitability for development based on natural constraints.

In another component of the project, staff from the state Shellfish Sanitation Section with the NC Division of Environmental Health conducted a water pollution survey to take a closer look at some of the pollution sources. Survey results and information contained in an environmental assessment report prepared by the Ecosystem Enhancement Program will help provide the basis for the Roundtable's proposed watershed strategy. NC State University is preparing an economic analysis that will compare the cost of conventional development to low-impact strategies that attempt to control stormwater with the use of engineered systems. The draft strategy will be based on the results of these surveys and analyses.

The Lockwood Folly Roundtable is preparing this first draft of a strategy. Some ideas that have been suggested for inclusion in the strategy include support for Low Impact Development principles; coordination of state, local and federal regulatory programs; creation of a land acquisition strategy and a financial incentives program.

The draft strategy will be the topic of three community meetings scheduled for late summer 2006. The project is scheduled for completion in early 2007.

Solutions Vary to Protect Coastal Communities

Gene Orage and Danny Galloway are shrimpers. They have a lot in common. Like shrimpers everywhere, they are trying to struggle through tough times brought about by high fuel prices and a flood of cheap, imported shrimp. Living as they do in two of the fastest-growing places in the country, they also must contend with runaway real-estate markets that are making waterfront land unaffordable and threatening their very existence.

Orage is one of the last shrimpers on Hilton Head Island, SC. Galloway is among the last of his kind in Brunswick County. Fish houses where Orage and Galloway land and weigh their catches and the docks where they tie their boats are becoming scarce in both places because the high price of waterfront land encourages property owners to sell to developers who then tear down the fish houses and build condominiums.

There, the similarities end, though. The fish house in Brunswick County where Galloway ties his boat was recently sold. He fears the new owner will eventually tear it down for a condo, and Galloway will have no place to go. That won't happen to Orage. The economics of shrimping may still do him in, but for as long as he has a trawler, he'll always have a place to tie it. The people of Beaufort County, SC, want it that way.

They passed a \$40 million bond referendum several years ago to buy open space and critically important land. Some of that money was used to buy development rights at fish houses and commercial docks, like the one Orage uses. Selling such rights greatly restricts what the property owner can do with the land. It also lowers property taxes because the land can't be converted to a higher-value residential use.

"The only reason I'm still here is because the county stepped in," Orage said. "This is one of the last places on Hilton Head where we can tie our boats, where people can come and buy fresh, wild shrimp. The county thought it was important to protect that."

Without such help, Galloway fears he's a marked man. "The state or the county will have to do something like that here," he said. "Otherwise, I believe the commercial fishing industry will be gone because the fish houses won't survive."

Diversifying the Waterfront

And the state's shoreline will be lined with sub-divisions and condominiums, and North Carolina will be poorer for it, said Walter Clark, coastal policy specialist with the NC Sea Grant program. "You lose that diversity when you develop a homogeneous shoreline," he said "I equate that to my friends who tell me you must diversify your portfolio to have a healthy

financial future. You also must diversify your shoreline."

Clark's agency has joined with the state's Coastal Resources and Marine Fisheries commissions in lobbying the NC General Assembly to form a study commission this year to look at ways to preserve waterfront access for commercial and recreational fishermen and for industrial users. The commission would then make recommendations to the legislature.

Protecting so-called "working waterfronts" is critical to preserving traditional coastal communities, explained Barbara Garrity-Blake, a commercial-fishing sociologist and member of the Marine Fisheries Commission who lives in a fishing village in eastern Carteret County. "What I worry about is the sociological implications of coastal towns cutting the fishermen off the water and resource and tilting the battle toward residential and retirement communities, full of people who are well meaning but they're not dependent on the resource," she said. "It has huge implications."

Anyone studying the problem will certainly look north, to Maine which has an active program to protect its commercial and industrial waterfronts. That program also began after a study by Maine's legislature, noted Jim Connors, the senior planner for that state's coastal program. Commercial fishermen, marine-trade groups, government agencies and non-profits formed a coalition that raised public



The high price of waterfront threatens commercial docks, like this one on Silver Lake in Ocracoke.

Tools for Survival: Six Strategies to Preserve Traditional Communities

awareness and devised legislative proposals, he said.

"It's important to understand that not every proposal will work in every instance," Connors explained. "You really need a variety of tools in the box."

Maine voters changed the state's constitution to allow owners of working waterfronts to pay lower property taxes, and the legislature created a pilot \$2 million fund to buy development rights to commercial-fishing properties. "If we can find really good projects, we should be able to go back to legislatures and voters and show that there is a need and get more money," Connors said.

Any program to protect waterfront access shouldn't overlook the shoreline's job potential. Boat building, for instance, is still one of the largest employers in Carteret County, said Dave Inscoe, executive director of the county's economic development council. To build a boat, though, a manufacturer needs access to the water. Boat builders are being pushed out of Florida because of the high price of waterfront there, he said, and they're looking for places to relocate.

"We're seeing incredible opportunities to grow our boat-building industry, but we're having a very difficult time finding a place to put them," Inscoe said. "We have a history and a tradition and a culture of boat building. We've got to use this industry to help our economy. We can't live on the wages that are paid by the tourist industry."

Good Planning the Key

It's easy, it seems, to fall victim to the allure of tourist dollars. Lots of people have. From Florida to Maine, town councils, boards of commissioners and state legislatures have encouraged the flood of tourists and second homes, reasoning that increasing property values are good for the economy and standard of living. Invariably, though, everyone's property taxes rise, the environment declines and the qualities that attracted the tourists in the first place diminish. By the time the study commission gets to figuring out ways to protect what's lost, the boat has left the dock.

We're lucky here in North Carolina. We still have places left to save. To protect them, though, we first have to decide they're worth saving. That's not as easy as it sounds. Almost everyone we talked to for this *State of the Coast* stressed the importance of planning for the future, planning for growth, planning for ways to protect traditional communities and cultures.

"It just doesn't happen," Connors said. "You have to make it happen."

Good plans aren't drawn up by professionals like Connors. They are drawn up by people like you. Good plans involve good people sitting down and coming up with a vision for their communities, deciding what's worth saving. Local governments can then fashion ordinances that enforce the goals and policies of the land-use plan. Optional categories in zoning ordinances can protect commercial fish houses or allow people to build boats in their front yards. Special cultural or conservation overlays can protect water quality or a place's ethnic or cultural identity.

It's all possible if that's what people want. Anthony Criscitiello, the director of planning in Beaufort County, SC, sees it at work everyday in the land-use plan and accompanying zoning ordinance that residents of St. Helena Island devised 10 years ago to protect their culture and environment. "With a good plan and a progressive government, you can accomplish good things," he notes.

- **Protect the Water.** Preserving a maritime culture means preserving the quality of the water on which that culture depends. We have, in most cases, good laws in North Carolina to protect coastal waters, but the state must finally get serious about enforcing them. Regulatory agencies have been understaffed for far too long, and the fines assessed against polluters are too low to encourage compliance. Legislators must find the political backbone to withstand the inevitable challenges from homebuilders and other special interests and increase staffing. Local governments must realize they, too, share responsibility for protecting the water, especially in controlling stormwater. There's no end of the pipe technology that's good enough to keep our coastal waters pristine and healthy. Local governments must work to prevent water pollution through appropriate land use policy. If they rely on the state or federal agencies to do the job, their waters are doomed to pollution.
- **Plan to Preserve the Future.** Protecting a community's culture and environment is complicated. The answers aren't always apparent. That's why comprehensive land-use planning is essential. We're not talking here about the slap-dash, consultant-driven efforts that go into most land-use plans required by the Coastal Area Management Act. We're talking about bottom-up planning that involves residents setting a vision for their communities. We're talking about ecosystem-based planning that puts the land, the water and the people first and encourages development that doesn't overwhelm traditional cultures or destroy water quality. Land-use ordinances that enforce the goals of the plan could include zoning ordinances tailored to meet the individual needs of each community or restrictions that preserve cultural identity.
- **Provide Access to the Waterfront.** The NC General Assembly should appoint a study commission to recommend ways the state can encourage varied waterfront uses, such as commercial fish houses, industrial and recreational marinas and recreational fishing piers. The commission should also study ways to provide public access to estuarine waters. Meanwhile, local governments need to use their zoning and subdivision authority to require that new development set aside space for public and commercial access. For example, local governments have the authority to require access for commercial fishermen in any new marina -- even those built for private real estate development.
- **Invest in Our Communities.** The NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund has invested millions of dollars to protect water quality across the state. We need similar programs that invest in the future of traditional coastal communities. Local governments should sponsor bond referendums that provide money to buy development rights or conservation easements to land that is ecologically or culturally significant or that provide waterfront access to commercial or recreational fishermen. Using money from the new saltwater fishing license, the state could provide grants to communities that are trying to preserve their waterfronts.
- **Make Housing Affordable.** One of the casualties of soaring real-estate prices is affordable housing. The market value of housing in resort areas will outpace the ability of traditional communities to compete for land and homes. Active intervention in the marketplace to provide affordable housing is possible such as has been done to provide homes for elderly and low- to moderate-income people. Local governments can require that a certain percentage of all new homes be "affordable" as part of their subdivision and zoning programs, and they can work with non-profit housing authorities to direct affordable housing tax credits to benefit places where the resort real estate market is pricing average working people out of the housing market.
- **Provide Tax Relief.** The NC General Assembly should propose amending the state constitution to create new provisions that allow counties to provide relief from high property tax, which encourage owners to sell their land to speculators or developers. Options include allowing property owners to defer paying their property taxes each year, freezing a property's value until it's sold or valuing property by its current use rather than its "highest and best" use.

Preserving the Gullah Culture Meant Protecting the Land and Water

ST. HELENA ISLAND, SC – Cross Cowan Creek and travel back in time. Here, the marshes and open water stretch to the horizon. There are no fast-food restaurants, no chain stores, no subdivisions with gates to keep people out. Here, dirt roads snake back into compounds where descendants of slaves live in family clusters as their ancestors did in West Africa.

“We saw what happened to Hilton Head,” said Ralph Middleton, a St. Helena native who lives in a sturdy house off US 21 that his carpenter uncle built in 1912. “We didn’t want that to happen here.”

To most Americans, the golf courses and resorts for the wealthy on nearby Hilton Head typify the islands that hug the border between South Carolina and Georgia. Those who read Pat Conroy’s *The Water is Wide* or saw the movie version *Conrack* may remember that all these islands were once inhabited entirely by Gullahs or Geechees, descendants of West African slaves. The plantation owners fled after Union forces captured the islands early during the Civil War, and the freed slaves and their descendants lived for generations in relative isolation. They developed a unique culture and language that is a Creole blend of Elizabethan English and African languages.

And it’s all disappearing. Their farms, their fishing holes and the sea grasses that fueled their artistry in basket weaving have fallen victim to bulldozers. Other traces of the culture – the cooking, medicines, and storytelling – are increasingly harder to find.

“Losing the land hurts the most,” said Emory Campbell. A native of Hilton Head, he has spent his life trying to preserve his native Gullah culture. “This land is valuable to us because it symbolizes freedom,” he said, as he drove down the quiet side roads on St. Helena. “We’re the ones who stayed here and withstood the heat, the mosquitoes and the malaria. It hurts to see what happens when highways and streets are paved, access to waterways is privatized and we are blocked out.”

So, saving St. Helena as one of the last remnants of a disappearing culture became important in the mid-1990s when Beaufort County began preparing a state-mandated land-use plan. The island was still rural and relatively undeveloped. Most of its 9,000 or so residents were Gullahs. While residents in other places in the county bickered among themselves about what they wanted for their communities, everyone on St. Helena agreed.

“There was a unified vision out there,” remembered Reed Armstrong, a St. Helena resident who works for the Coastal Conservation League. “It was divided in other places. People in those communities felt the time had already passed them by. But on St. Helena, they knew what was important and what they wanted to save.”

They were united by a sense of history that had been fostered for more than a century by the Penn Center, a former school for blacks that is now a Gullah cultural-resource center on St. Helena. Most of the community leaders – in an effort to save the island – were graduates of the school. Many had taken courses on land-use planning and environmental protection offered by the center.

Campbell, the executive director of the Penn Center at the time, sat at a table in Gullah Grub, a restaurant on St. Helena that serves authentic native foods, and explained why it was important for a center devoted to preserving culture to also stress protecting the environment.

“To protect the culture, you have to protect the environment,” he said over a plate of mustard greens, ox tails and rice.

“Sam and His Environment”
This artwork by Pris Buttler depicts the front yard of St. Helena’s famous folk artist, Sam Doyle. Sam’s yard served as his “gallery” for many years.



“They’re inseparable. The water and the land are important parts of who we are.”

Middleton took the classes and served on the St. Helena committee that the county formed to devise the land-use plan. “I think those classes were very useful in that they got people interested in what was going on. They had never been interested before,” he explained. “That gave us influence. We had people from all levels. It got the community aroused and people knew what was going on.”

Having an enlightened county government was another critical ingredient, said Anthony Criscitiello, Beaufort County’s planning director. “What it really comes down to at the end is if you have the elected leaders who say they want this. If you do, then you can make a lot of progress,” he said. “We had a (county) council at the time, who had an enlightened view that allowed this comprehensive plan. They were very interested in character, image, aesthetics and those kinds of things.”

Using a grassroots planning effort that encouraged people to take part in shaping the future of their communities, county planners held hundreds of public meetings on St. Helena. The result is spread out in Armstrong’s office in Beaufort where a zoning map covers a table. The comprehensive plan that the county council passed in 1997 and the accompanying zoning ordinance reflect the wishes of the people on the island. Almost the entire island shows up in various shades of green on the map, illustrating its agricultural and low-density residential zones. In fact, most of the farmland left in rapidly growing Beaufort County – it’s the fastest-growing county in South Carolina – is now on St. Helena.

Knowing that elected representatives and zoning districts change, island residents demanded more permanent security. “The sentiment of the community was that the cultural history and the traditional communities were far too valuable to be left to chance and developers,” Armstrong said. “They could take it away from us, and it really would have to be protected and preserved.”

The county council responded in 1999 by approving special zoning restrictions for St. Helena. The so-called Cultural Protection Overlay (CPO) District aims to preserve the ethnic heritage, land-use patterns, historic structures, and significant cultural features of the island. That would be hard to do if people were locked off the land. So the CPO doesn’t allow gated communities, such as those on Hilton Head where the few remaining native islanders must get permission from a rent-a-cop at the gate to visit ancestors who now lie in Gullah cemeteries that are behind the fence. Neither does the CPO allow golf courses, resorts or franchise stores.

A headline on a newspaper column written at the time by a Gullah historian summed up the feelings of most islanders in their native language: “Sumthin’ Tuh Shout ‘Bout.”

That was then. The comprehensive plan was only good for 10 years. The meetings have already started on the new plan, which the county council will vote on next year. Many fear that the current council won’t be nearly as understanding. “Oh, it will be a battle again,” Campbell said.

He stopped the car on Sam Doyle Road, in front of the fallen down wood-frame house that belonged to the road’s namesake. Doyle was probably St. Helena’s most talented and most famous folk artist. He was even invited by Nancy Reagan to display his paintings at the White House.

“Sam Doyle used to have all his paintings out in this yard,” Campbell remembered. “Sam had the history of St. Helena Island painted in this yard. You’d come through and all you’d see is vibrant colors. People came from miles around to buy Sam’s art.”

Sam is gone. His heart gave out on him. Campbell hopes the county doesn’t. “We need to protect the culture that created Sam Doyle,” he said, finally as he drove away. “It’s more important now than it ever was.”

Penn Center: Preserving the Past for the Future

ST. HELENA ISLAND, SC – The missionary school that prepared former slaves for freedom became 130 years later a driving force in preserving the Gullah culture and sea island environment of their descendants.

“This place has always been about change,” said Emory Campbell, as he walked through the grounds of the Penn Center. “In the 1860s, it was helping black people become citizens. In the 1960s, it was a place that was driving desegregation, and in the 1990s it was teaching people how to preserve their culture and protect their land and environment.”

Campbell stopped under a stand of ancient live oak trees, their branches dripping with silvery Spanish moss. A former director of the center for 22 years, Campbell worked vigorously before retiring in 2002 to revive the old place’s historical significance as a center of sea island culture. “People must never forget who they are,” he said. “That’s when they get lost.”

Penn’s York W. Bailey Museum should remind them. Housed in a stout brick building that once taught young blacks to become carpenters or tanners or blacksmiths, the museum displays the artifacts of a disappearing culture. Black-and-white pictures line the walls. They show groups of blacks smiling wanly in front of dilapidated shacks and black children toting water or working in the fields.

Many of the photos were taken soon after two white women, Laura Towne and Ellen Murray, arrived on St. Helena from Pennsylvania in 1862. They had come to teach the newly freed slaves. They would stay for 40 years.

The school they started was one of the first in the South for the freed slaves. During the years of segregation that followed, Penn School was one of the few along the South Carolina coast for black children. Many of its graduates went on to Howard, Hampton, Tuskegee or other black colleges.

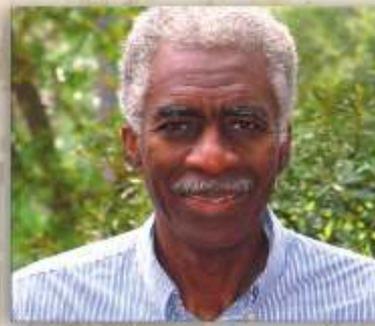
The school closed in 1953, but it continues on as a cultural-resource center meant to preserve and promote the history and heritage of the sea islands and to continue to help the people who live on them. It offers day-care and after-school programs, and a leadership institute for teenagers.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. enjoyed the center’s serenity and peacefulness. He visited often during the civil-rights battles of the 1960s to rest and regroup. The US Department of Interior recognized the center’s historical importance in 1974 when it placed the Penn Center on the National Register of Historic Places.

It was during Campbell’s tenure as executive director that the center began to take a lead role in protecting the island’s abundant natural resources. He started the Preservation School, which taught dozens of residents and local government officials about the need for strong land-use planning. The center’s Land-Use and Environmental Education Program assists native sea islanders in maintaining their land and cultural practices in the midst of environmental change.

Reed Armstrong saw the dividends of such programs when Beaufort County began devising its land-use plan for St. Helena. A resident of the island who works for the Coastal Conservation League, Armstrong attended hundreds of public meetings dominated by Penn School graduates. At their insistence, the county approved a plan with tough restrictions to protect the island’s environment and culture.

“The graduates of that school provided leadership for the community. Most of the graduates stayed around,” Armstrong said. “When people ask what is special about St. Helena, the first place I take them is to the Penn Center.”



Photos from top right: (1) Emory Campbell has spent his life preserving Gullah culture; (2) The old Corner Store, once the center of mercantile trade on St. Helena Island, now sells Gullah art; (3) Penn Center began as a school for freed black slaves; (4) Ralph Middleton, a leader in the effort to preserve St. Helena, grows indigo for native craft demonstrations; (5) The road through the Penn Center travels through a tunnel of live oak trees.



2005 Pelican Awards

Lifetime Achievement

Gene Tomlinson

Legislator of the Year

Sen. Charlie Albertson

State Government

Mike Street

Local Governments

Northern Coast: Chesapeake, VA

Central Coast: Cape Carteret

Southern Coast: Holly Ridge

Citizen Action

Northern Coast:

Wanchese Zoning Committee

Central Coast:

Down East Tomorrow

Southern Coast:

Brunswick Citizens for a Safe Environment

Environmental Educator

Margery Misenheimer

Environmental Research

Ronald Hodson

NCCF Volunteers of the Year

Northern Coast:

Mike Halminski

Central Coast:

The "Library Ladies"

Sarah Hamilton, Dot Reist, and Ann White

Southern Coast:

Tom Tewey

Conservation & Restoration Project

Northern Coast:

Chris McClung

Central Coast:

Onslow Bight Conservation Forum

Southern Coast:

David Nash

The Pelican Awards

The Pelican Awards recognize the effective work of citizens, government officials, legislators, journalists, nonprofit organizations, educators and researchers to improve environmental quality on the North Carolina coast. These award winners have demonstrated exemplary commitment and undertaken meaningful actions to protect and restore our coast in 2005. Congratulations to all!

Lifetime Achievement

For a legacy of service to the coastal environment, we have selected **Gene Tomlinson** for our Lifetime Achievement Award. For 28 years, he was the heart and soul of the NC Coastal Resources Commission (CRC). He was its chairman for 12 years and was at the helm when the CRC approved most of the major controls of coastal development that have stood the test of time. Born in Fayetteville, Tomlinson spent most of his life in the seaside town of Southport, where he served intermittently as mayor from 1957 until 1983. He was appointed to the CRC in 1977 and became its chairman in 1993.

An engineer by trade, Tomlinson understood the complex workings of coastal processes. He also had a keen sense of the political machinations of making policy. Tomlinson could bring people together on issues of adversity, and passionately, yet calmly articulate the need for action. He played a key role in the turbulent passage of the ban on seawalls on the oceanfront and inlets.

In a 1995 interview, he said "And we see (nursery areas and productive fishing grounds) being gobbled up by people who would bulldoze in the marshes, who would put in bulkheads and fill behind them, who would bulkhead the oceanfront so that we become like New Jersey or Miami Beach." His vision for the CRC's role was to protect natural resources "... through its regulations to keep development oriented to that which we can actually sustain."

Tomlinson was presented with the Eure-Gardner award in 2005, an honor bestowed on individuals who have made significant contributions to protecting the natural, cultural and economic resources of the coastal area.

Legislator of the Year

This year's Pelican Award goes to **Sen. Charlie Albertson, D-Duplin**, for his role in the passage of a major oyster initiative and a bill creating a Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change. Albertson held a hearing and passed the Oyster Restoration and Protection Act and sponsored a bill to provide tax credits to individuals who donate oyster shells for restorations. Much of the Oyster Restoration and Protection Act was funded by the General Assembly last year. He also sponsored and passed a bill that created the first state climate change commission in the southeastern United States.

Known as the "singing senator," Albertson is a man of many talents. He is a professional musician and songwriter who has performed at the Grand Ole Opry several times. Albertson was a USDA Plant Protection and Quarantine officer who ran for the NC House 17 years ago and has served in the General Assembly ever since. He now represents Duplin, Lenoir



Left to right: Former CRC chairman Gene Tomlinson, EMC vice-chairman Pete Peterson and former MFC chairman Jimmy Johnson.

and Sampson counties in the state Senate. Albertson has emerged as a key player in the Senate and serves as the chair of the Agriculture and Environment Committee. He also co-chairs the Joint Legislative Commission on Seafood and Aquaculture.

State Government

Mike Street has been a devoted conservationist his entire career with the NC Division of Marine Fisheries, which has spanned over 36 years. Although he has held various responsibilities, the past seven years he has been in charge of the Division's Habitat Section. Street's tireless dedication the last eight years has been focused on the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP). Street, along with other dedicated division staff, strove to make sure that the CHPP had the best science contained within, so as to guide others to the facts.

His exceptional knowledge of fisheries conservation in North Carolina gave him the benefit of recognizing that the CHPP was developed at a critical time for coastal North Carolina. The Coastal Resources Commission, the Environmental Management Commission and the Marine Fisheries Commission signed the CHPP in February 2005. Those of us that enjoy North Carolina's fish and coastal environment owe a great deal to Mike Street, a true and dedicated conservationist.



Sen. Charlie Albertson

Local Governments

■ **Northern Coast:** When Camden County officials signed a franchise agreement with Black Bear Disposal LLC to build a mega-landfill just south of the Virginia state line, officials in **Chesapeake, VA**, saw red. The landfill site was once part of the Dismal Swamp but was ditched and drained for crops. Fearing for the safety of local waters, NCCF wrote letters to the state objecting to the project. But Chesapeake officials went one better: They sued to stop it. A tributary for Chesapeake's main source of drinking water, the Northwest River, lies only a few hundred yards over the state line. The suit alleges that Camden officials did not follow proper procedures in approving the franchise. Chesapeake officials have also energetically lobbied state and federal officials to block the project. Thanks largely to their efforts, the US Army Corps of Engineers agreed to revisit the question of whether the proposed site contains jurisdictional wetlands.

■ **Central Coast:** The **Cape Carteret** Town Commissioners, in approving a controversial proposal to build a Lowe's home-improvement center in the small town, required that the company design a stormwater system that far exceeds state requirements. Several hundred people attended three public meetings on the proposal. Many feared that stormwater from the store's six acres of parking lot would pollute an already degraded Deer Creek. The commissioners, working with Lowe's and NCCF, required that the store's stormwater system hold enough water to contain an 8-inch, 24-hour storm. To qualify for its state's stormwater permit, the company would have only been required to build a system that would hold a 1.5-inch, 24-hour storm.

■ **Southern Coast:** In 2004, NCCF in cooperation with the NC Division of Marine Fisheries acquired a 52-acre site along the banks of Stump Sound in Onslow County through a grant from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund. The Morris Landing site was purchased to protect water quality, stockpile oyster shells and launch oyster restorations in Stump Sound. The landing is a favorite spot for people from Holly Ridge and vicinity to swim, launch boats, fish, harvest oysters and, when the sun sets, to frolic. The heavy unrestricted use of the area had caused degradation of the shoreline and habitat loss due to vehicular traffic, erosion, and dumping of trash. The **Town of Holly Ridge** stepped up to the plate and entered into a formal agreement with NCCF and took over the daily maintenance and oversight of the public pier and walkway built by NCCF, and legalized the Town enforcement authority at Morris Landing. The Town is providing essential police surveillance, enforcement, and trash collection on the property, which will allow people to safely enjoy access to the natural beauty and bounty of Stump Sound.



Mike Street

Citizen Action

■ **Northern Coast:** Hats off to the committee of 20 or so volunteers who worked tirelessly to help craft a unique zoning plan for the village of Wanchese on Roanoke Island. County officials had been trying to zone the village for nearly 20 years but had always been vigorously rebuffed. Working under the direction of Lorraine Tillett and Button Daniels, the **Wanchese Zoning Committee** members talked with property owners on all 50 of the village's streets. "We were really surprised there were that many streets in town when we counted them," Tillett says. The new zoning code is unusually detailed, with stipulations that will allow the small businesses and commercial fishing activities that give the village its flavor, but that outlaws high-density residential use. It is being used as a model for other zoning efforts in traditional communities, including those in Down East Carteret County.



Morris Landing sill and marsh planting.



Margie Misenheimer helps eighth graders at Smyrna Elementary School place marsh plants in their outdoor nursery.



"Library Ladies" – Ann White, Dot Reist, and Sarah Hamilton



Mike Halminski

■ **Central Coast:** The residents of eastern Carteret County proved that you can fight city hall, or in their case the county courthouse. The target of the next wave of waterfront development, the residents of the rural and relatively undeveloped portion of the county, called Down East, rose up in protest. The grassroots citizens group, **Down East Tomorrow**, that they formed persuaded the Carteret County Board of Commissioners to hold public meetings on growth and development issues. More than 1,000 attended. The group then petitioned the commissioners to issue a one-year moratorium on high-density development while the residents work with the county planning staff on an ecosystem-based comprehensive plan that protects Down East water quality and preserves the region's rich maritime heritage. The group is also asking for a land-use ordinance to enforce the goals and policies of the land-use plan. More than 500 residents attended the public hearing on the moratorium. The commissioners had not decided whether to issue the moratorium before we went to press.

■ **Southern Coast:** When the Town of Navassa annexed the proposed Hugo Neu industrial landfill site by satellite annexation, and began the process to rezone it and issue conditional use permits, the **Brunswick Citizens for a Safe Environment** was formed to stop it. The members of BCSE simply did not accept that land filling three million cubic yards of automobile shredder residue was a safe "recycling" project or that a 350-foot high landfill on 170 acres would not impact their homes and families, and their well water. Brunswick County Commissioners also opposed the project. Many dedicated

individuals have put many hours into the fight, and BCSE has held off Hugo Neu for two years with a combination of political, technical and legal activities. The company has many permits to go before it can start and the members of BCSE will be there for the long haul. There is just too much to lose. (To sign the online petition opposing Hugo Neu, go to www.stopthedump.com.)

Environmental Educator

She is the teacher you always dreamed of having – she works to provide hands-on projects for her students in all subjects and takes groups into the field at least once a month.

Margery Misenheimer has been a teacher in the down east school system for over 10 years, currently teaching at Smyrna Elementary School. She has worked with NCCF's education program in several capacities over the past eight years. Margie assisted in the development of NCCF's classroom curriculum *Coastal Connections*. She brings her students on field trips to help with plantings at North River Farms and is involved with NCCF's wetland nursery program. Margie is a partner with the National Science Foundation Graduate Teaching Fellows Program at Duke University – she works with PhD students each semester in her classroom to teach them how best to communicate information to students. Margie also applied for and received a Bright Ideas mini-grant from Carteret/Craven Electric for a classroom project to raise and release native fish. Margie was recently named Mid-Atlantic Marine Educator for 2005 and was also nominated for the national award.

Environmental Research

Ronald Hodson has served as a voice for the fish. As director of North Carolina Sea Grant, he not only conducted cutting-edge

research on finfish aquaculture, he also supported the research of other scientists and the outreach to citizens on a variety of issues important to North Carolina's coast.

Hodson in his own right is one of the nation's leading experts on the culture of hybrid striped bass and pond management. He's a major participant in the multi-disciplinary Oyster Steering Committee and a driving force behind the development and implementation of the Oyster Protection and Restoration Plan. North Carolina Sea Grant provided major funds and staff support for the Oyster Summit in 2005 and for continuing outreach activities to educate both citizens and decision-makers.

Hodson retires from his 33-year career with North Carolina Sea Grant on June 30. With appreciation and admiration for a remarkable career, we present him with the Pelican Award for Environmental Research.

NCCF Volunteers of the Year

■ **Northern Coast:** It's a challenge to volunteer for NCCF on the northern coast, where we're still developing our programs. Nonetheless, **Mike Halminski** of Waves has managed to find plenty of opportunities. The well-known nature photographer has sent us numerous photographs about potential enforcement issues, as well as providing artwork for the Pelican Awards and *State of the Coast* reports in 2004 and this year. Mike took the COASTKEEPER® Captain volunteer course in 2005 and is collecting water samples for the COASTKEEPER®'s study of stormwater outlets into the state's shellfishing waters. An oyster aficionado, he's working with Carteret Community College's Skip Kemp to test methods of shellfish cultivation in Pamlico Sound. For the recent oyster forum, he put together a display about shellfish

gardening and helped lead a field trip to New Inlet. A resident of Hatteras Island for more than 30 years, Mike has a gallery of his photographs in his home.

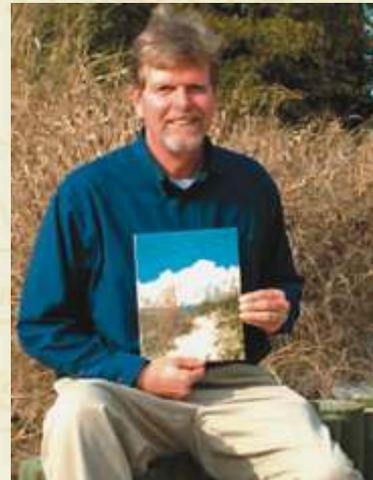
- **Central Coast:** Whether you're hunting for a great crab cake recipe, a coastal gardening book or a video on water quality, the library ladies can help you in your quest. Carteret County residents **Sarah Hamilton, Dot Reist, and Ann White** have created what is called "the best little nature library" at the Coastal Federation headquarters. For the past 15 years, the library ladies have gathered weekly at the Federation to be sure the Nature Library is well-stocked, well-organized and an enticing destination. They've catalogued more than 800 books, hundreds of periodicals and dozens of videos – all focusing on the coastal environment and heritage that they love. In just the past year, they have together, amassed almost 300 hours of service in the NCCF library. Sarah, Dot and Ann share their enthusiasm and energy outside the library as well and are often seen at public hearings, workshops and NCCF events. The Coastal Federation is fortunate to have three such dedicated friends.
- **Southern Coast:** **Tom Tewey** is a dedicated volunteer committed to protecting water quality in the Cape Fear region. A long time volunteer for Cape Fear River Watch where he served as a CreekKeeper® and worked with their environmental education program, Tom graduated from NCCF's first COASTKEEPER® Captain volunteer training course in 2005. He put his new knowledge and experience to work right away. Tom and members of the Birch Creek Homeowners Association organized Creek Week, a series of workshops and field trips focused on Downey Creek that flows through the community into Burnt Mill Creek before draining to the Cape Fear River. In conjunction with his neighbors, NCCF, the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County and the Soil and Water District, Tom is setting up a monitoring and stewardship program for the creek. He is also monitoring a storm drain emptying into Hewletts Creek as part of the COASTKEEPER® stormdrain monitoring program.

Conservation & Restoration Projects

- **Northern Coast:** **Chris McClung** knew she needed to do something to halt the erosion of her shoreline along Yeopim Creek in Albemarle Plantation, south of Hertford. Wakes from passing motorboats were eating into her bank. But she hated the idea of putting up a bulkhead, which can destroy fisheries habitat. So she contacted NCCF for information about "living shorelines." After staff members suggested she use Coir logs to stabilize the property, she set out to learn all she could about them. The logs are made of tightly packed coconut fibers and are laid just offshore, anchored in place with stakes. They can be planted with wetlands grasses and shrubs. McClung liked the idea so much she convinced eight other adjacent property owners to install them, too. The result: a thousand feet of shoreline stabilized in an attractive, natural fashion. McClung shopped around for good prices and managed to have the logs installed and planted for less than a conventional bulkhead. The project is so attractive that the owner of the Albemarle Plantation is using Coir logs to stabilize 172 feet of shore along the development's marina. McClung hopes to convince other area property owners to use them as well. She and her husband, Mick, are training consultants and avid conservationists.
- **Central Coast:** For centuries our coastal economy has been driven by the three Fs: farming, fishing and forestry. Add in tourism-driven population growth and military bases, and the potential for land use conflicts looms large. The **Onslow Bight Conservation Forum** is a partnership of military bases, state and federal agencies and private conservation groups dedicated to protecting our natural heritage in a nine-county coastal region. Conservation projects in the Onslow Bight partnership have tapped \$2.6 million from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and over \$8 million in matching funds to conserve over 25,000 acres of land thus far. With funding from NAWCA and the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the NC Coastal Federation was able to conserve the Quaternary Tract, which consists of 1,443 acres of bottomland hardwoods, marsh and uplands along seven miles of the White Oak River. With partial funding from the Marine Corps, The Nature Conservancy similarly conserved 2,500 acres adjacent to the Camp Lejeune tank and rifle ranges that was under threat of development for 3,000 housing units. It's a public/private partnership that is working.
- **Southern Coast:** Sisyphus, the legendary king of Corinth, was condemned eternally to repeat the cycle of rolling a heavy rock up a hill in Hades only to have it roll down again as it nears the top. By contrast, **David Nash** with the NC Cooperative Extension Service has made a career out of restoring beach dune systems that can be flattened by major hurricanes. Dunes are the first line of storm protection for buildings and infrastructure. Nash has become the NC coast's master gardener of dune plants. The plants capture sand necessary to build dunes and provide habitat to animals. Nash assisted Oak Island to establish a greenhouse, secure seeds and grow seeds through a floating germination system. The result has been the planting of more than a million sea oats, bitter panicum, seabeach amaranth and seashore elders on Oak Island dunes. Nash has also assisted Emerald Isle and other beach towns. He coauthored a book called *The Dune Book* in cooperation with North Carolina Sea Grant.



Tom Tewey



David Nash holds "The Dune Book," which explains dune management and beach protection methods. Photo by Art Latham



Purchase of the Quaternary Tract on the White Oak River is the result of the Onslow Bight Conservation Initiative. Photo by Lisa Schell

NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL FEDERATION

COAST STATE OF THE REPORT

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future reference. If not, please recycle it.*



North Carolina Coastal Federation

The mission of the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is to provide citizens and groups with the assistance needed to take an active role in the stewardship of North Carolina's coastal water quality and resources. NCCF has worked with citizens for almost 25 years to protect the coastal creeks, rivers, sounds and beaches of North Carolina.

We are the state's only nonprofit working full-time to protect and restore the state's coast. We work in partnership with individuals, groups and government officials to identify environmental problems and implement solutions. Over the past quarter of a century we have won the respect and support of more than 8,000 members, 200 partner groups and 600 active volunteers. Our staff now numbers 14 full-time professionals. They include scientists, educators, journalists, planners, and policy analysts. Join us as we work to restore and protect coastal North Carolina for future generations.

How You Can Help



Join the NC Coastal Federation



Buy a Federation license plate



Contact local decision-makers and let them know you support strong protection for the coast



Make a donation to support any of the many Federation programs



Volunteer

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Email: _____

SIGN ME UP FOR MEMBERSHIP AT THE FOLLOWING LEVEL:

\$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000

I'd like to make a donation of \$ _____ to the following Federation program:

Restoration Advocacy COASTKEEPERS® Education Land purchases

I'm interested in volunteering. Please let me know how I can help. I'd like to buy a license plate. Please send me an application.

Please make check payable to NCCF and mail with this form to:

3609 Highway 24 (Ocean) • Newport, NC 28570

You can also charge your membership by calling us toll-free at 800-232-6210 or visit our website at www.nccoast.org.

Applications and more information also can be found on the North Carolina Coastal Federation's website at www.nccoast.org or call 252-393-8185 or visit us at our headquarters at 3609 Highway 24 in Ocean, NC Monday through Friday between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm.