



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 13, 2010**

**Contact:** Sally Steele

**Phone:** 252.393.8185

**Email:** [sallys@nccoast.org](mailto:sallys@nccoast.org)

## **Sneads Ferry Native Wins Lifetime Achievement Award**

OCEAN – Melvin Shepard Jr., a Sneads Ferry native who serves on the state's Coastal Resources Commission and has for decades been an influential voice for protecting the coast's water and marine habitats, has won the N.C. Coastal Federation's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Opponents of Titan America's plans to build a cement plant near Wilmington and an employee of Wrightsville Beach who was instrumental in stopping boats from discharging sewage in local waters were the other winners along the southeast coast of the federation's coveted Pelican Awards. The non-profit group gives the Pelican Awards annually to people, groups, businesses and local governments to recognize extraordinary work that protects or preserves our coastal resources.

Shepard and the other 11 award winners will be honored at a ceremony Saturday, May 15, at the federation's main office in Ocean in Carteret County.

Shepard has a long history helping commercial fishermen and the marine habitats they depend on. A one-time commercial fisherman himself, Shepard and his son Brian own New River Nets and Cofish International in Sneads Ferry. The company sells commercial fishing supplies.

Shepard has served on various state and federal fisheries management boards. He was appointed to the state committee that developed the Fisheries Reform Act in 1996. Passed by the N.C. General Assembly, the bill overhauled saltwater commercial and recreation fishing. While serving on the committee, Melvin proposed and then promoted the development of Coastal Habitat Protection Plans, which became a hallmark element of the reform law. These plans are now recognized as one of the most innovative habitat protection measures in the nation.

A member of the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission since 2000, Shepard has also been president of the federation's board of directors for 16 years. He had led us through tremendous growth and our evolution as a respected and effective organization.

Shepard is as comfortable building nets as he is walking the halls of the legislature and influencing lawmakers. His close community ties and love of the coast drive his dedication to working on behalf of what is best for our coast and its people.

The Pelican Award winners from the southeast coast are:

**Dr. Robert A. Parr, citizen action:** For over 25 years Par and his wife, Pam, have been working to protect the tidal creeks and coastal habitats in the Cape Fear region. Parr has also been an outspoken advocate for strong environmental rules and enforcement of existing regulations. As a practicing physician with a master's degree in biological oceanography, Parr is well-versed in the vital connections between human health and the environment. In 2009, he was one of over 240 Wilmington physicians to voice their opposition to Titan plans. Bob has worked tirelessly researching the complex issues connected with the proposed cement plant. He has shared all of his valuable research with the coalition of groups fighting to stop Titan.

**Cortech Solutions, business:** Lloyd Smith, president of Cortech Solutions, and his wife, Jen, have spent countless hours working with the Friends of the Lower Cape Fear Inc., a non-profit organization founded to stop the Titan proposal. He is vice chairman and she is the group's treasurer. But the Smiths knew that it's not enough to fight against a single bad proposal. They promote the idea that healthy economic development can exist alongside environmental protection. To work towards the goal of local economic growth and coastal resource protection, Lloyd is the founder and current president of the Cape Fear Economic Development Council Inc., which promotes environmentally clean technology and renewable energy products for successful local economic growth.

**Steve Delles, local government:** After studies connected swimming advisories to sewage discharges from boats, Delles, Wrightsville Beach's stormwater manager, headed up an effort to establish a No Marine Discharge Zone in Wrightsville Beach. He then worked doggedly to solicit New Hanover County, Kure Beach and Carolina Beach to petition the state and the federal Environmental Protection Agency to pass a county-wide discharge zone. The EPA approved the zone in February.

Since its grassroots formation in 1982, the federation is the state's only non-profit organization that focuses exclusively on protecting and restoring the N.C. coast through education, advocacy and habitat preservation and restoration. It has almost 10,000 members.

###