



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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.

Eleven other people, businesses or local governments won 2009 Pelican Awards from the federation for their extraordinary work to protect or preserve our coast’s natural resources. They 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.

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.

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