



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2010

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Surfers, Jockey's Ridge Among Pelican Award Winners

OCEAN – Surfers opposed to offshore drilling and park rangers dedicated to the land they protect are among the northeast coast winners of the N.C. Coastal Federation's 2009 Pelican Awards.

All 12 award winners, who represent all regions of the coast, will be honored at a ceremony on Saturday, May 15, at the federation's main office in Ocean in Carteret County.

The Pelican Award winners from the northeast are:

The Outer Banks Surfriders Foundation, community action: Since the late 1980s the Outer Banks have been known for their opposition to offshore drilling. The local Surfriders, led by Matt Walker and Jon Wasniewski, urged local town and county boards to renew long-standing resolutions against drilling. They published ads showing the real cost of oil and gas drilling to the environment—and citing figures that prove drilling will not substantially lower prices at the pump.

Their efforts proved to be prophetic. Many people assumed that offshore drilling wasn't likely to be an issue this year, but the political landscape changed in March when President Obama announced plans to open up the Atlantic coast to drilling. By reminding us of the potential risks and miniscule gains, the Surfriders have provided a valuable public service.

Mac Gibbs, Hyde County Center, N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, local government

In 2006 when the federation staff approached Hyde County farmers looking for projects that would help protect water quality, the county's traditionally conservative residents were hesitant to join forces with an environmental group. Gibbs took us under his wing and introduced us to a farmer who was interested in holding back some of his drainage water so it could be used for irrigation. One thing led to another, which led to an ambitious plan to restore the hydrology on 42,500 acres in the Mattamuskeet Drainage District in northeast Hyde. The project is now in its initial stages and will open

opportunities for oyster reef restoration in Pamlico Sound. Gibbs has also helped us identify other potential restoration projects.

Staff of Jockey's Ridge State Park, conservation partnership: Moving 2,000 bushels of oyster shells would be a chore any day. But getting all that shell into net bags, moving it over the dunes to the shore of Roanoke Sound and stacking it into a 425-foot-long sill took an unusual amount of coordination, not to mention elbow grease. The staff of Jockey's Ridge, especially Justin Barnes and Ann Wunderly, dedicated countless hours to helping get the job done. They also helped students and adult volunteers plant marsh grasses behind the sill to stabilize the shoreline and sponsored a Friends of Jockey's Ridge Valentine's Day oyster roast and shell-bagging event. And late last year they agreed to do it all again. Another sill is being built this spring.

Midge Ogletree, volunteer: No one did more for the federation's Northeast Region in 2009 than Ogletree. As a member of Columbia's governing town board, she has opened eyes to the problems of stormwater and the promise of development techniques to reduce it. She helped the federation contact teachers in Columbia schools for rain garden programs. She's distributed newsletters and volunteered at events throughout the region and just generally raised awareness and support for the federation and our work.

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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