

NCCOAST.ORG | *Working Together for a Healthy Coast* | SUMMER 2024

OUR COAST



North Carolina
Coastal Federation
Working Together for a Healthy Coast

INTRODUCING OUR 2024
PELICAN AWARD WINNERS

Dear Friends and Supporters,



Each year, the Coastal Federation's summer edition of Our Coast celebrates those who work tirelessly – alone or in partnership - to protect and restore the coast of North Carolina. In the following pages, you will learn about

coastal stewards who come from very different backgrounds and experiences, but who share a common bond in their desire and willingness to go above and beyond in working to protect our shared coastal resources, for today and for future generations.

This is our 21st year presenting awards to dedicated individuals, businesses, organizations, and agencies who demonstrate the amazing impact we can have when we work together for a healthy coast. You will see how this year's award recipients have dedicated their shared talents to help advance the Coastal Federation's work. Whether it's education and engagement, volunteering, advocacy, or active restoration work, each winner has an inspiring story.

Since the Coastal Federation was founded in 1982, we have depended on amazing people like these who partner with us to advance our programs. Each brings unique perspectives and talents that make us greater than the sum of our parts and amplify our accomplishments each year.

I hope that you will join me in congratulating each of these recipients for a job well done, and in our appreciation for their generosity and hard work!

Braxton Davis



For 21 years, the North Carolina Coastal Federation has recognized the exemplary actions and achievements by people, businesses, organizations and agencies who have made significant contributions to the North Carolina coast. Without these winners, we would not be able to keep our coast healthy and beautiful.

Join us in congratulating our 2024 Pelican Award Winners recognized in this edition of Our Coast.

Barred Owl by Tom Earnhardt

This beautiful award photo of a Barred Owl on the lower Roanoke River was taken by Coastal Federation board member Tom Earnhardt, writer, co-producer and host of UNC-TV's Exploring North Carolina.

Tom notes that in Eastern North Carolina, and across the state, the barred owl is often heard, but seldom seen. Tom has captured numerous photos of them along slow-moving coastal rivers from March until early May (before the dense foliage of summer obscures them). He says he often finds them standing vigil in cypress, tupelo, or red maple near the water's edge.



North Carolina Coastal Federation
Working Together for a Healthy Coast

nccf@nccoast.org • www.nccoast.org

Headquarters: 3609 NC 24 (Ocean) Newport, NC 28570 | ph: 252-393-8185
Northeast Satellite Office: 637 Harbor Road P.O. Box 276 Wanchese, NC 27981 | ph: 252-473-1607
Southeast Satellite Office: 309 W. Salisbury St. Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480 | ph: 910-509-2838

NORTHEAST WINNERS



Outer Banks Kayak Adventures

For Dedicated Partnership in Support of Coastal Environmental Education and Engagement

Outer Banks Kayak Adventures, born from a love of nature and paddling, offers affordable and relaxing eco-tours. Owner Eli Wisden grew up in Utah, surrounded by the rugged beauty of the mountains and the

tranquility of a farm. He spent his childhood exploring the wilderness and learning about the interconnectedness of nature. Running an eco-tour business is a “dream job” and sharing the beauty of the Outer Banks with others feels like a natural calling. Eli revels in the opportunity to introduce adventure seekers to the wonders hidden beneath the water, on the surrounding land, and soaring above. Experiences he believes everyone deserves. With his passion for community initiatives and the outdoors, Outer Banks Kayak Adventures partnered with the Coastal Federation last year to host Oysters Uncovered: The Kayak Edition tours. Eli beams as he describes the experience: “Seeing the lightbulb come on when people understand the importance of oyster reefs and their impact on the environment is truly rewarding.” These tours, held on Thursdays during the spring and October, which is Oyster Month in North Carolina, provide visitors and residents with a unique opportunity to connect with the delicate balance of the Outer Banks’ unique ecosystems. Eli’s in-kind donations of kayaks, gear and guiding expertise made these tours accessible and memorable for all who participated.

Daniel Pullen

For Exceptional Efforts to Inspire Coastal Stewardship through Art and Actions

Growing up along the Outer Banks and coming from

nine generations of Cape Hatteras Lightkeepers, Daniel Pullen’s heritage has guided and inspired his work. Initially documenting life at the ocean’s edge through the lens of a camera as a surf photographer, his repertoire and subject matter have grown and evolved over the past two decades. Always approaching his work from a place of deep respect and honor, he uses his intimate knowledge of the Outer Banks, love of the natural world, panache for storytelling, keen eye, attention to detail, and ability to be in the right place at the right time to bring awareness to the realities of life on a barrier island. Through his art and activism, he has gone above and beyond to document a family’s happiest moments – marriages, births, graduations – to their lowest – just losing everything you own– and all the moments in between. He makes his art available to the Federation so that we can better illustrate our story and inspire others. From his annual efforts to document the Hatteras Island Oyster Roast, capturing our litter picks ups and oyster restoration events, and his advocacy describing the impact of shoreline erosion along the Outer Banks, he is a trusted and respected artist, using his gift to document and celebrate the uniqueness and beauty of the coast. Daniel has won countless awards for his work including being recognized by Time Magazine in its Top 100 Photos of 2020, and he was awarded the North Carolina Press Association’s Photographer of the Year in 2021.



CENTRAL WINNERS



Coastal Environmental Partnership

For Outstanding Collaboration in Support of Oyster Shell Recycling

The public solid waste authority Coastal Environmental Partnership, or CEP, has demonstrated exceptional dedication since 2021 through its oyster shell recycling program in collaboration with the Federation. By collecting recycled oyster shells from Pamlico, Craven, and Carteret counties, CEP has not only addressed waste management challenges but also contributed significantly to the Federation’s restoration efforts. CEP goes above and beyond by generously donating their time and energy for the transportation of donated oyster shells. This process not only mitigates waste but also revitalizes crucial oyster habitats, contributing significantly to improving water quality and shoreline stability along our coast. Through community engagement and educational outreach, CEP fosters environmental stewardship by raising awareness about the importance of oyster reefs and their role in coastal ecosystems, and the importance of their preservation for future generations. We truly value our partnership with CEP and commend their efforts to go the extra mile in their commitment to oyster shell recycling.

CENTRAL WINNERS (CONT.)



Matt Windsor
For Supporting, Promoting, and Advancing the Use of Living Shorelines

Now superintendent of Goose Creek State Park, Matt Windsor has worked at seven parks, including Hammocks Beach, during his nearly 30-year career with the N.C. Division of Parks and

Recreation. Windsor's genuine interest and concern for our natural resources led him to go above and beyond his park duties to make our environment a better place by helping preserve and restore our productive salt marsh and oyster habitats. Most recently, Matt revamped our partnership with Hammocks Beach State Park to continue our salt marsh and oyster restoration efforts there through the expansion of living shorelines on the park's mainland, Bear and Jones islands. Matt was proactively and directly involved with the education, funding, planning, permitting, research and monitoring effort to construct 6,578 additional feet of living shorelines at the park. A major goal of the Federation is to make living shorelines the norm for shoreline stabilization instead of hardened structures like bulkheads. The living shorelines Windsor helped put in place are working to reduce shoreline erosion, provide habitat, and are helping to improve the water quality of our coast. We are truly thankful for our long-term and valued partnership with Matt that will continue into the future.



Claude Crews
For Leadership and Dedication to Coastal Protection, Recreation, and Cultural Resources

Hammocks Beach State Park in Swansboro offers visitors a chance to explore pristine beaches,

maritime forest, salt marsh, and a diverse array of wildlife. The park's success as one of the state's greatest natural areas is due in large part to the leadership of Claude Crews. Hammocks Beach was established as a state park for African Americans in 1961. Before this, there was limited access for Black residents and visitors to enjoy public beaches in North Carolina. The park integrated in 1964, with the passage of the Civil Rights Act, and Crews became its first superintendent in 1969. By leading park management and development, he contributed to a broader awareness of the significance of preserving natural habitats and cultural heritage for all communities. Crews served as a leader both at the park and within the community. He left Hammocks Beach State Park in 1981 after being superintendent for 16 years, and was then promoted to superintendent at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park. Today, Hammocks Beach State Park stands as a testament to his dedication and vision. Crews currently resides in Hubert and keeps his pulse on the park through his involvement with the Friends of the Hammocks and Bear Island. His efforts continue to resonate, emphasizing the value of habitat and ecosystem protection and conservation as well as the importance of providing spaces for diversity, inclusion, and representation in our shared natural resources and public spaces.

SOUTHEAST WINNERS



Carolina Beach State Park
For Dedicated Partnership to Protect and Restore Coastal Habitat and Water Quality

Carolina Beach State Park staff have worked with the Federation since 2014 to protect water quality, reduce marine debris, build and design living shorelines, and restore wetland, salt marsh, and oyster habitat in the lower Cape Fear River. As part of this collaboration, a 200-foot living shoreline was installed in 2015 by hundreds of volunteers. The park and Federation worked with the Division of Marine Fisheries in 2017 to create the 5-acre artificial recreational fishing and oyster reef (AR-491) just off the shoreline. In the following years, park staff, the Federation, state agencies, Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, Army Corps of Engineers, and engineers combined efforts to implement a large-scale restoration project funded by the Kerr-McGee Navassa NRDA Restoration Plan. Park and other state agency staff have worked tirelessly to reduce and control invasive Phragmites on 10 acres of the park. This enabled the excavation of a 2,600-foot-long slough to restore the hydrology and wetland function of the area, and allowed for more than 100,000 wetland plants to be installed. The park is currently working with the Federation to install over 1,500 feet of living shoreline and restore an additional 4 acres of oyster reef habitat in 2025. The park has also supported

marine debris removal efforts in the lower Cape Fear River through cleanups and supporting crews for large-scale debris removal.



N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Law Enforcement Officers in Districts 1,2, & 4

For Exemplary Efforts to Remove Abandoned and Derelict Vessels from Coastal Waters

As the wind, rain and storm surge subsided from Hurricane Florence in September 2018, law

enforcement officers from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission transitioned from rescue and recovery operations to assessing damage and boats displaced by the storm. With the largest on-the-water resources of all state agencies, the Commission provided vital staff hours and resources to locate, assess potential pollution hazards, report, and investigate hundreds of vessels from Brunswick County north through Carteret County, and eventually coastwide following more storms. This effort along with support and authorization from the N.C. General Assembly led to the Commission launching its Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Program while simultaneously working with the Department of Environmental Quality and Coastal Federation to conduct the largest coordinated removal of ADVs in the state’s history. At the forefront of this effort, the law enforcement officers along the coast in Districts 1, 2, and 4 dedicated an estimated three months of their time investigating, contacting owners, and enforcing the rules of the ADV program. These officers went above and beyond their normal duties to enable the removal of over 350 ADVs by the Commission, its partners, and local governments.

DREAMS Center for Arts Education

For Excellence in Community Education and Engagement

DREAMS Center for Arts Education in downtown Wilmington has provided arts programming at no charge since 1997 to youth and their families. The dedicated staff hold to their mission to “create a culture of confidence for youth and teens through equitable access to arts education supported by the values of respect, family, and community.” While its primary focus is on visual, performing and digital arts, the DREAMS Center for Art Education has embraced stewardship of the environment, transforming its grounds into an oasis for outdoor learning experiences. When DREAMS grew out of their first facility they relocated and renovated a vacant 1939-built former City of Wilmington bus maintenance garage. In May 2012, the Historic Wilmington Foundation honored DREAMS with the Adaptive Reuse Award. DREAMS worked with the Cape Fear Surfrider Foundation and Rainstorm Solutions in 2017 to install a cistern to capture rain runoff from their building’s rooftop. Before that, they worked with N.C. State Cooperative Extension at N.C. State to install retrofits at their parking lot to reduce polluted stormwater runoff from flowing to Burnt Mill Creek. These techniques include a large bioretention cell with native plants and permeable parking stalls. Most recently, DREAMS collaborated with the Cooperative Extension, North Carolina Sea Grant, and the Coastal Federation to create an outdoor educational garden that not only adds beauty to the landscape but teaches students and their families about the value of native plants through hands-on learning. The Federation is honored to host environmental education programming with DREAMS youth and is in awe of every student we work with at the Center.



COASTWIDE WINNERS



The Inlet Inn - Coins for Conservation

For Outstanding Community Leadership and Collaboration

When Jay Tervo and Barbara McKenzie became owners of the Inlet Inn in Beaufort, they felt a strong commitment not only to preserve the Inn as an iconic part of the Beaufort waterfront but also to support environmental conservation and wildlife protection. As business owners, Barbara and Jay felt it was their responsibility to ensure that our coastal environment continued to flourish while helping visitors enjoy our spectacular coast. Together, Barbara and Jay came up with the idea to launch Coins For Conservation. Through the online resource, businesses pledge to donate a portion of their proceeds to support the work of local nonprofits that work

so hard to protect the things that visitors come here to enjoy. Current eco-partners include the Atlantic Beach Sea Turtle Project, Coastal Carolina Riverwatch, Friends of Rachel Carson Reserve, and the Coastal Federation. The Inlet Inn was the first business on board, leading the way for other businesses to join them in giving back to protect our coast. In addition to coming up with the idea, launching the program, and serving as a role model for other businesses, Barbara and Jay continue to work tirelessly to recruit local partners, host events and encourage other businesses to give back. Jay Tervo and Barbara McKenzie are committed to going above and beyond for our coast because “conserving and protecting our natural habitats, wildlife, and food resources is EVERYONE’S BUSINESS”.

COASTWIDE WINNERS (CONT.)

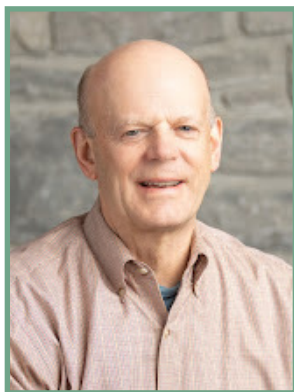


Ryan Bethea

For Exemplary Actions to Inspire Stewardship of Coastal Resources

Ryan Bethea has been raising delicious salty oysters since 2015 in Westmouth Bay on the northside of Harkers Island. He became intrigued with the oyster industry after reading about the up-and-coming oyster farming business in a magazine. At the time, he was an eighth-grade teacher bartending on the side when he decided to make a career change – gravitating to something new, especially on the coast he so loves. A graduate of N.C. Central University, Ryan earned a certificate in oyster genetics and aquaculture from the William & Mary Virginia Institute of Marine Science to help kick-start his new venture. Sure, many oyster growers are focused on the many tasks at hand - growing, harvesting, and selling oysters. Still, Ryan has used every step of his newfound career to inspire others to share his love and respect for the coast, ensuring a new generation of environmental stewards and coastal career professionals. As one of the most recognized faces of North Carolina oyster farming, Ryan volunteers much of his time teaching others about the environmental and economic benefits of oysters and the coastal habitats they depend on to thrive. Ryan hosts tours as a member of the North Carolina Oyster Trail. He also engages people from all walks of life and age groups, teaching youth at Boys and Girls Clubs and college students from his alumni, at North Carolina Central University. If you have not yet had the pleasure of engaging with Ryan, you can learn more about him and his dedicated career in Our State Magazine, PBS, NPR, Southern Living, and WRAL just to name a few.

DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARDS



Bill Holman

For a Distinguished Career Dedicated to Public Service and Environmental Conservation

In an age when artificial intelligence can mount lobbying campaigns without human touch, it's easy to forget the gumshoe days of environmentalism. When Bill Holman first roamed the halls of power in Raleigh in the early 1980s as an environmental lobbyist, he relied on the goodwill built with his smile and handshake. Here at the Coastal Federation, memories of those times were revived by discovering a postcard he sent for 17 cents on Jan. 23, 1986, alerting us to legislative actions on regulating stormwater runoff. Throughout his career, Bill has been a steadfast ally, supporter, and friend of the coast. In April 1982, he attended the first kickoff meeting where the Federation was born. Decades of collaboration have resulted in many tangible coastal safeguards, including ongoing work to create a new 150-acre protected shoreline buffer along the North River in Carteret County. Bill Holman's career in protecting North Carolina's environment is unparalleled. His LinkedIn profile states that he has "worked as an environmental advocate, environmental regulator, environmental funder, and environmental researcher." However, this brief description belies a profound and influential career dedicated to North Carolina's coast and environment.

Fresh out of college, he became a top-five ranked lobbyist in North Carolina while serving as the state's first environmental lobbyist for groups like the Sierra Club and the Conservation Council of N.C. Bill emphasized the importance of residents and environmental groups in amplifying his effectiveness. His legislative success and earned respect led to his appointment by Governor Jim Hunt in 1998 as Assistant Secretary, and subsequently Secretary, of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the state's highest environmental position. Later, as Executive Director of the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Bill oversaw the allocation of millions of dollars for environmental improvement projects, including many that supported the Coastal Federation. Bill became the director in 2007 of the Duke University Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions' state policy program. Five years later, he joined The Conservation Fund as the state director, directing the Fund's real estate program in North Carolina until 2023. Currently a senior adviser to the Conservation Fund in North Carolina, Bill's passion, commitment, and impact on North Carolina's environment will endure, leaving a legacy for generations to come.



Derb S. Carter, Jr.

For a Distinguished Career Dedicated to Environmental Protection and Justice

When Derb Carter began his career in 1980 navigating the complex community values in North Carolina, the state's predominantly rural and conservative population resisted restrictive environmental laws, yet deeply valued their natural areas for living, working and recreation. Growing up in Fayetteville, Derb witnessed these seemingly contradictory values firsthand, inspiring him to seek policies benefiting North Carolinians' everyday interests. He created two years later the "No Wetlands, No Seafood" bumper sticker to advocate for wetland protection, a message widely circulated by the Coastal Federation that resonated with the fishing community. Derb's strategic prowess in legal and political arenas led to significant environmental safeguards. He worked with the Federation in 1982 to incorporate it as a nonprofit and secure its first operational grant. Recognizing the need for grassroots support, he worked closely with the Federation to empower fishermen, farmers, hunters, birders, scientists, and environmentalists to oppose a proposal to strip mine 120,000 acres of peat wetlands. This collective effort halted the project and secured permanent protection for the wetlands as two national wildlife refuges.

Derb's notable legal actions include major federal lawsuits on behalf of the Coastal Federation to enforce wetland rules and a petition convincing the Environmental Management Commission to designate 10 percent of coastal waters as Outstanding Resource Waters. He also played a crucial role in saving Bird Island from development and opposing PCS Phosphate's mine expansion, threatening significant wetland destruction. His efforts helped Dare County residents and the Federation successfully oppose Mobil Oil's plans to drill off the coast three decades ago. Derb has been recognized for his work as a leading wetland lawyer, including the National Wetlands Award from the Environmental Law Institute and the Order of the Longleaf Pine Award from Gov. Roy Cooper in November 2023. Derb has been with the Southern Environmental Law Center since 1989, serving as the director of its North Carolina office and now as a senior adviser. His enduring work ensures that future generations will have access to vital natural resources, inspiring them to become stewards of the environment.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Todd Miller

For a Lifetime of Outstanding Leadership and Dedication to Coastal Protection and Restoration

It is hard to imagine how different the coast might look today if not for the vision, leadership and relationship-building talents of Todd Miller, founder of the North Carolina Coastal Federation. While growing up in Carteret County, Todd spent his days immersed in the marshes and shores of Bogue Sound. This is where he developed his love for the coast and the people who make it such a special place. Knowing at the time that the health of this unique region or our state was in danger, Todd decided to return after graduating from UNC to take on the seemingly insurmountable challenge of protecting and restoring the coast for future generations. Everyone agrees, Todd has a very special talent equipping him best to take on such a task, and he himself has often emphasized that it is not a job for one person alone. Instead, he has successfully and humbly brought together people who may not have ever crossed paths otherwise to advance a collective and comprehensive coastal agenda. From a corporate retiree to a first-generation farmer or fisherman, for decades Todd has made a compelling case for the future of our coast to anyone who would listen, showcasing the environmental, economic and social values at stake with no action and creating an army of unlikely coastal stewards along the way. He has dedicated his lifetime to educating people about coastal environmental issues and the necessary actions needed for protection and restoration.

For Todd, it is not a job but a passion. He thrives on enlightening people to become engaged in giving something back to the coast they cherish. Some get their hands dirty doing environmental restoration, others lobby for more effective laws and rules, and still others are happy to help educate and recruit other people to become more engaged in protecting the coast. He has earned the trust and respect of diverse communities, its residents and visitors, as well as forged partnerships with businesses, academia and decision makers from the local to the federal level to advance the common goal of a healthy coast. Todd has been recognized countless times, including being named distinguished alumnus by UNC in 2013 and honored with a 2015 "Hero of the Seas" award by the Peter Benchley Ocean Awards. While Todd has transitioned in his position with the Federation, his leadership serves as a solid foundation. He will forever be a recognized champion for the coast of North Carolina.



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Summer Membership Drive!

nccoast.org/summerdrive

Join the Coastal Federation as a new member this summer for a chance to win a weekend for two in Beaufort, N.C., including two nights at the Beaufort Hotel, breakfast at 34 North, a \$50 gift card to Kitty Hawk Kites in Beaufort, and a \$25 gift card to Backstreet Pub.

Current members can also enter the raffle by referring a friend!

Enter by Sept. 28.

You can also participate by mail: 3609 N.C. 24 (Ocean), Newport, NC 28570

Raffle details including rules, drawing dates, and chances of winning available online at nccoast.org/summerdrive.



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If you're age 70½ or older, you can direct charitable distributions directly from your individual retirement account (IRA) to support the charity of your choice. Those donations can count toward your required minimum distribution, while reducing your tax liability.

To make an IRA gift to the Federation, simply provide our full name and address to your financial institution:

North Carolina Coastal Federation, Inc.
3609 Highway 24, Newport, NC 28570

These gifts are easy to make and now is a great time to cross this off your list!

Questions? Contact Sarah King at 252-393-8185

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