N.C. Oyster Blueprint: A Vision for 2020

By Erin Fleckenstein
North Carolina Coastal Federation

North Carolina Coastal Federation
35 years working together for a healthy coast

Our Mission

The North Carolina Coastal Federation empowers coastal residents and visitors from all walks of life to protect and restore the water quality and critically important natural habitats of the North Carolina coast.

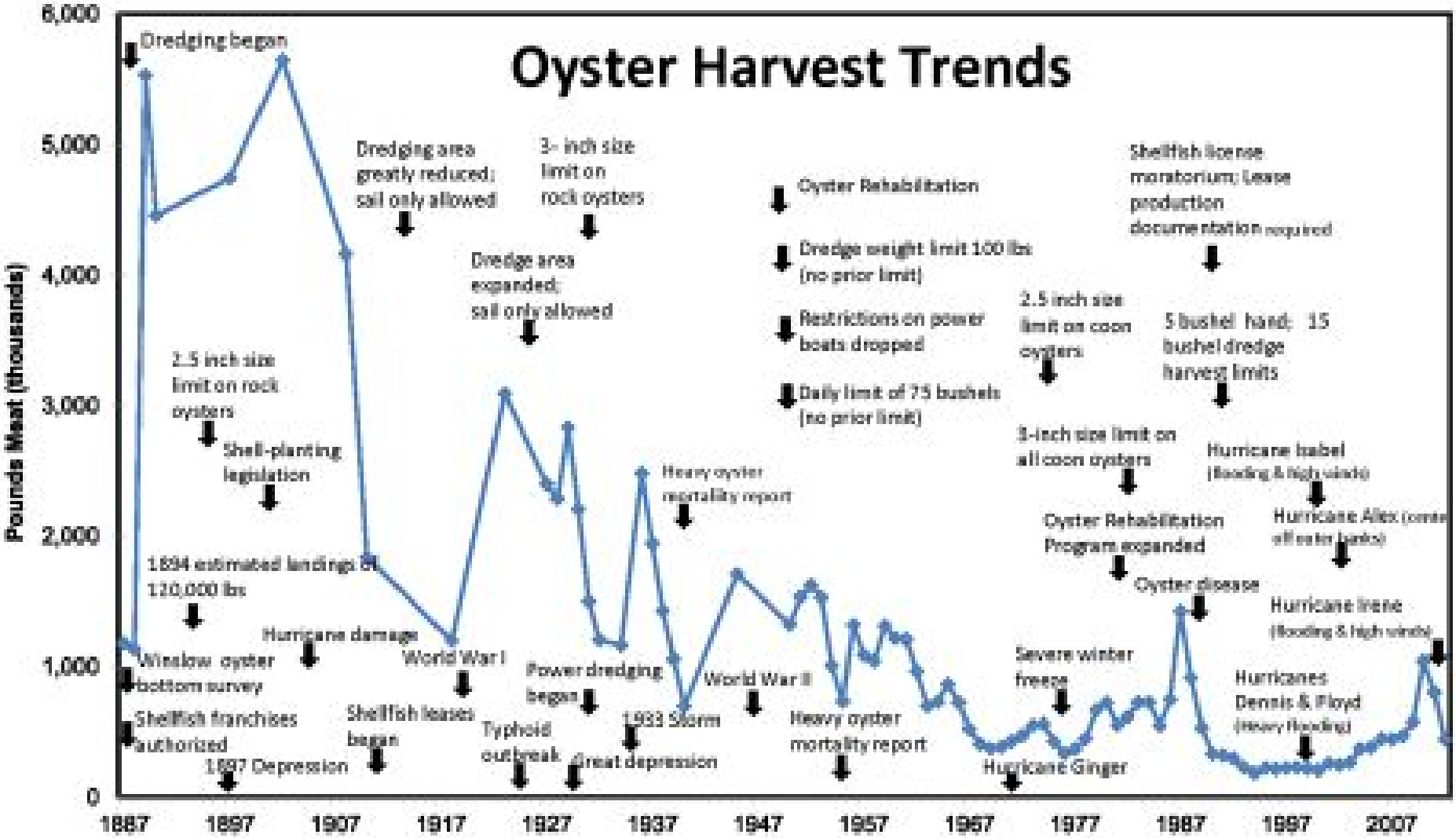
- Environmental Advocacy
- Environmental Education
- Habitat Restoration/ Preservation

Value and Importance of Oysters

- Water Quality
- Stabilize Shorelines
- Provide Habitat
- Coastal Culture, Heritage and Economy

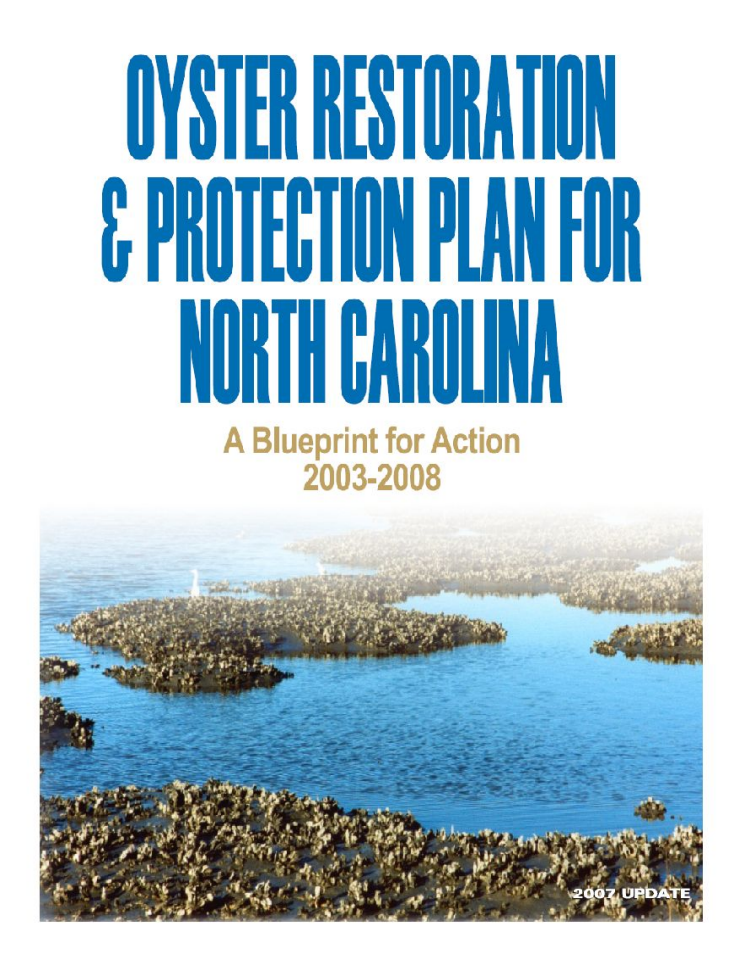
Threats to Oysters in North Carolina

- Overharvest without returning enough substrate to the water
- Habitat loss
- Natural disasters
- Low recruitment
- Shellfish diseases and predators
- Water quality degradation


Oyster Harvest Trends
Pounds Meat (thousands)
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
1887
1897
1907
1917
1927
1937
1947
1957
1967
1977
1987
1997
2007
Dredging began
Winslow oyster bottom survey
Shellfish franchises authorized
1897 Depression
2.5 inch size limit on rock oysters
Shell-planting legislation
1894 estimated landings 120,000 lbs
Hurricane damage
Dredging area greatly reduced; sail only allowed
Shellfish leases began
World War I
Typhoid outbreak
Dredge area expanded; sail only allowed
3- inch size limit on rock oysters
Power dredging began
Great depression
1933 Storm
Heavy oyster mortality report
World War II
Heavy oyster mortality report
Oyster Rehabilitation
Dredge weight limit 100 lbs (no prior limit)
Restrictions on power boats dropped
Daily limit of 75 bushels (no prior limit)
Hurricane Ginger
Severe winter freeze
2.5 inch size limit on coon oysters
3-inch size limit on all coon oysters
Oyster Rehabilitation Program expanded
Oyster disease
Shellfish license moratorium; Lease production documentation required
5 bushel hand; 15 bushel dredge harvest limits
Hurricane Isabel (flooding & high winds)
Hurricane Alex
Hurricane Irene (flooding & high winds)
Hurricanes Dennis & Floyd (Heavy flooding)

N.C. Oyster Restoration and Protection Plan: A Blueprint for Action

First Two Editions

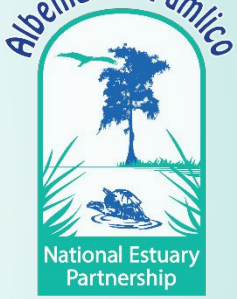


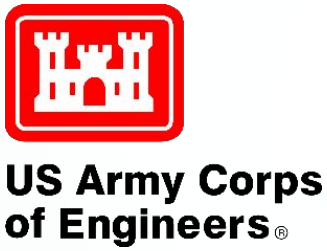
Oyster Restoration and Protection Plan for North Carolina: A Blueprint For Action - Second Edition
2008 – 2012

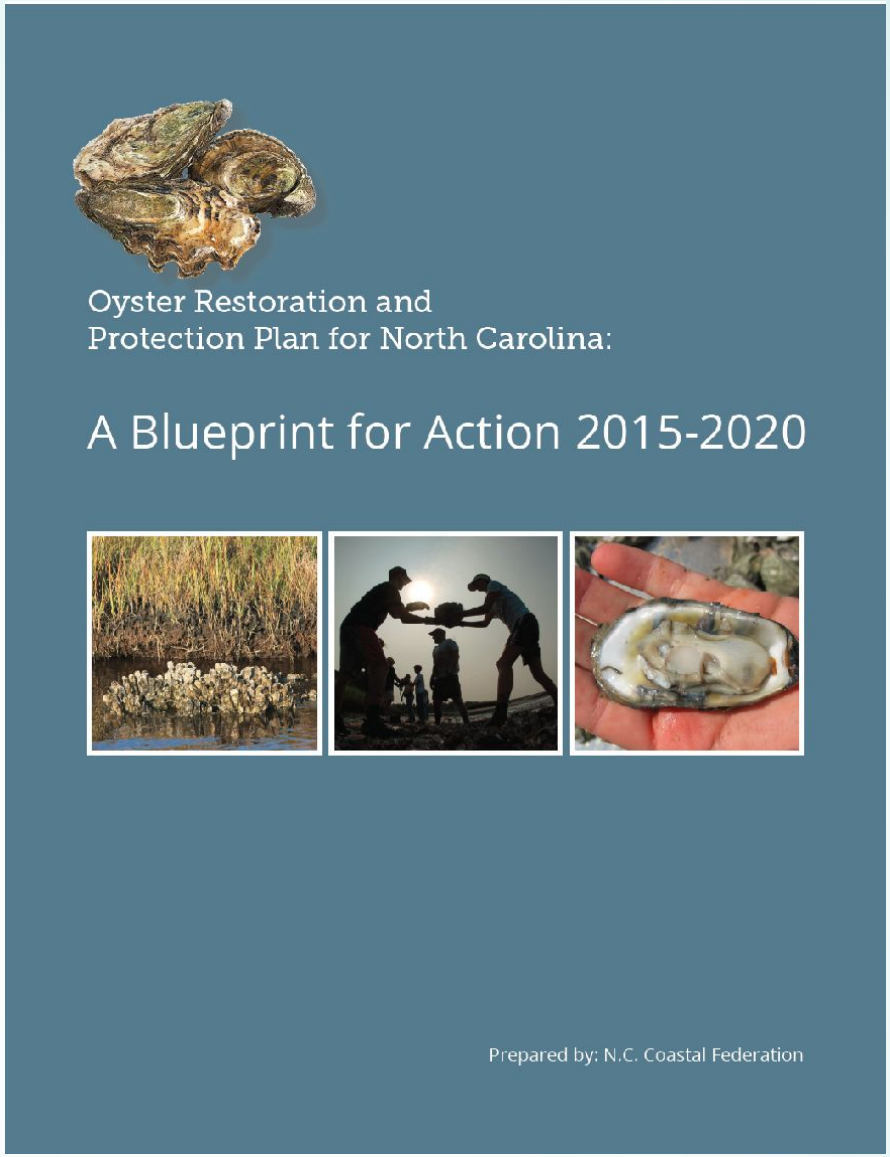
Major Accomplishments 2003-2013

- Government, private agencies and other shellfish stakeholders coordinated habitat, water quality and fisheries management activities.
- Funding for oyster related programs increase by a factor of ten from 2003-2013.
- Nearly 200 acres of oyster habitat were enhanced and restored, annual oyster harvests increased during this time, and a greater number of watershed restoration projects along the coast were implemented.

Partnerships and Collaborations are Key to Success







Third Edition

Seven Goals of the *Blueprint*

Link Restoration of Oysters and Water Quality to an Economic Development Strategy

Establish 500 acres of Oyster Sanctuaries

Plant Cultch to Provide for Ample Sustainable Wild Oyster Harvest

Build the Mariculture Oyster Industry to Meet or Exceed Wild Harvest Limits

Sustainably Manage Oyster Harvest on Public Bottom

Protect and Improve Water Quality in Priority Shellfish Growing Areas

Document Oyster Population Status and Trends Resulting from Successful Implementation of the Blueprint

Establish 500 Acres of Oyster Sanctuary

FiftyMillion
Oyster Initiative

Goal:

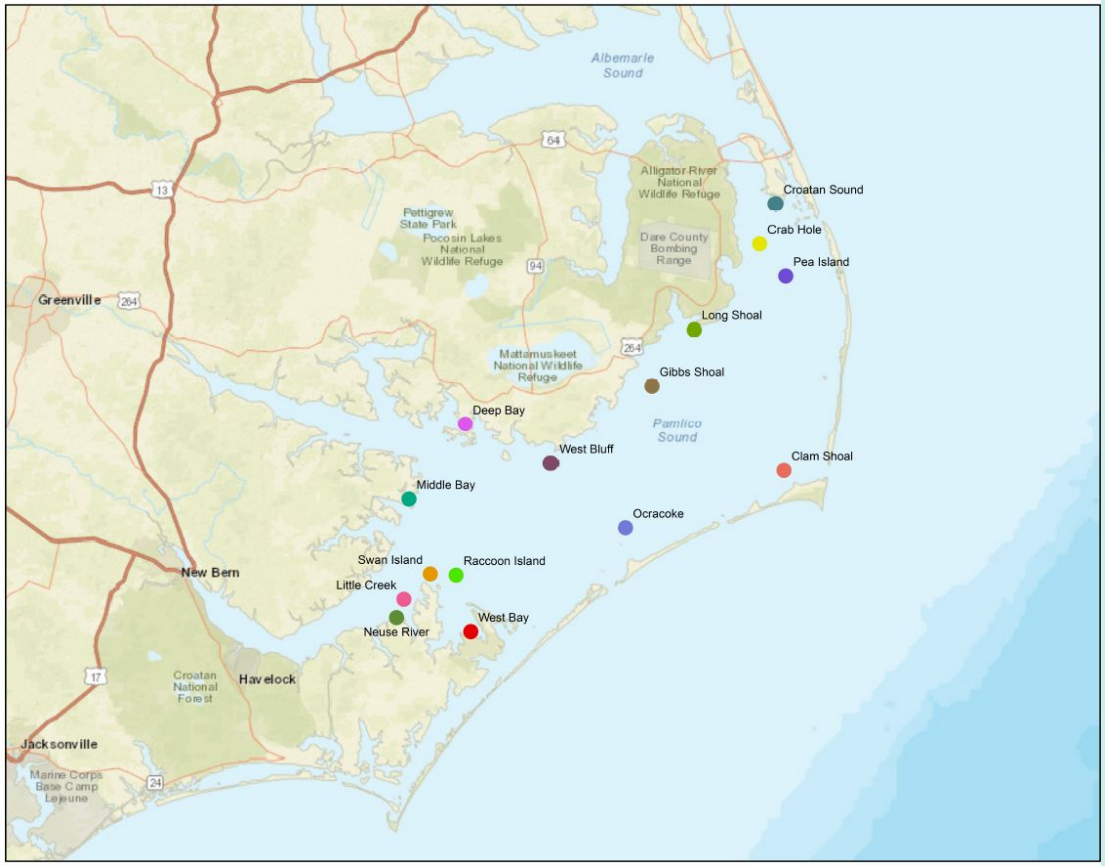
By 2020 add 50 acres of Oyster Sanctuary to the Senator Jean Preston Sanctuary Network

Currently:

15 Oyster Sanctuaries in N.C.

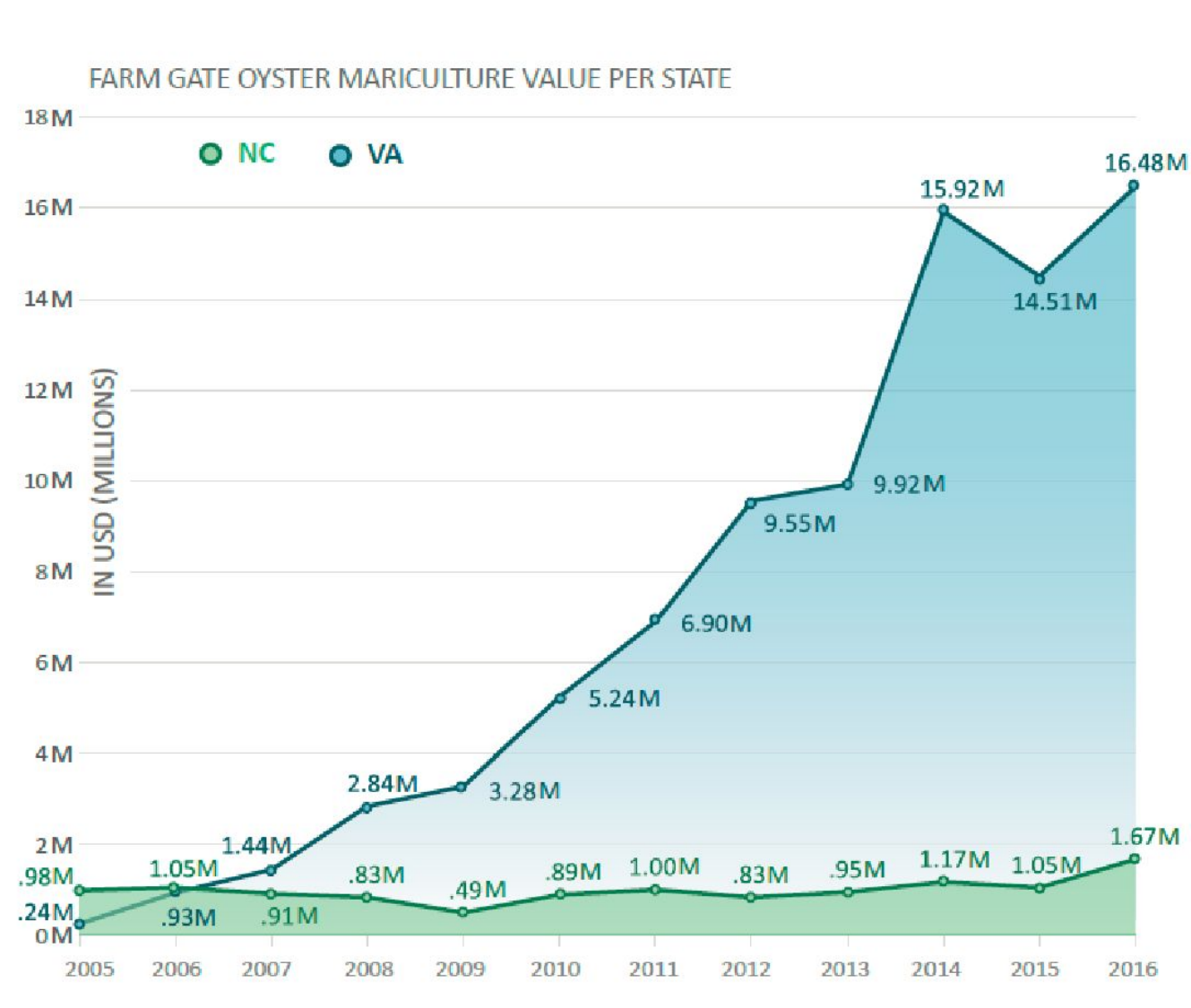
Over 180 acres of Oyster Reef

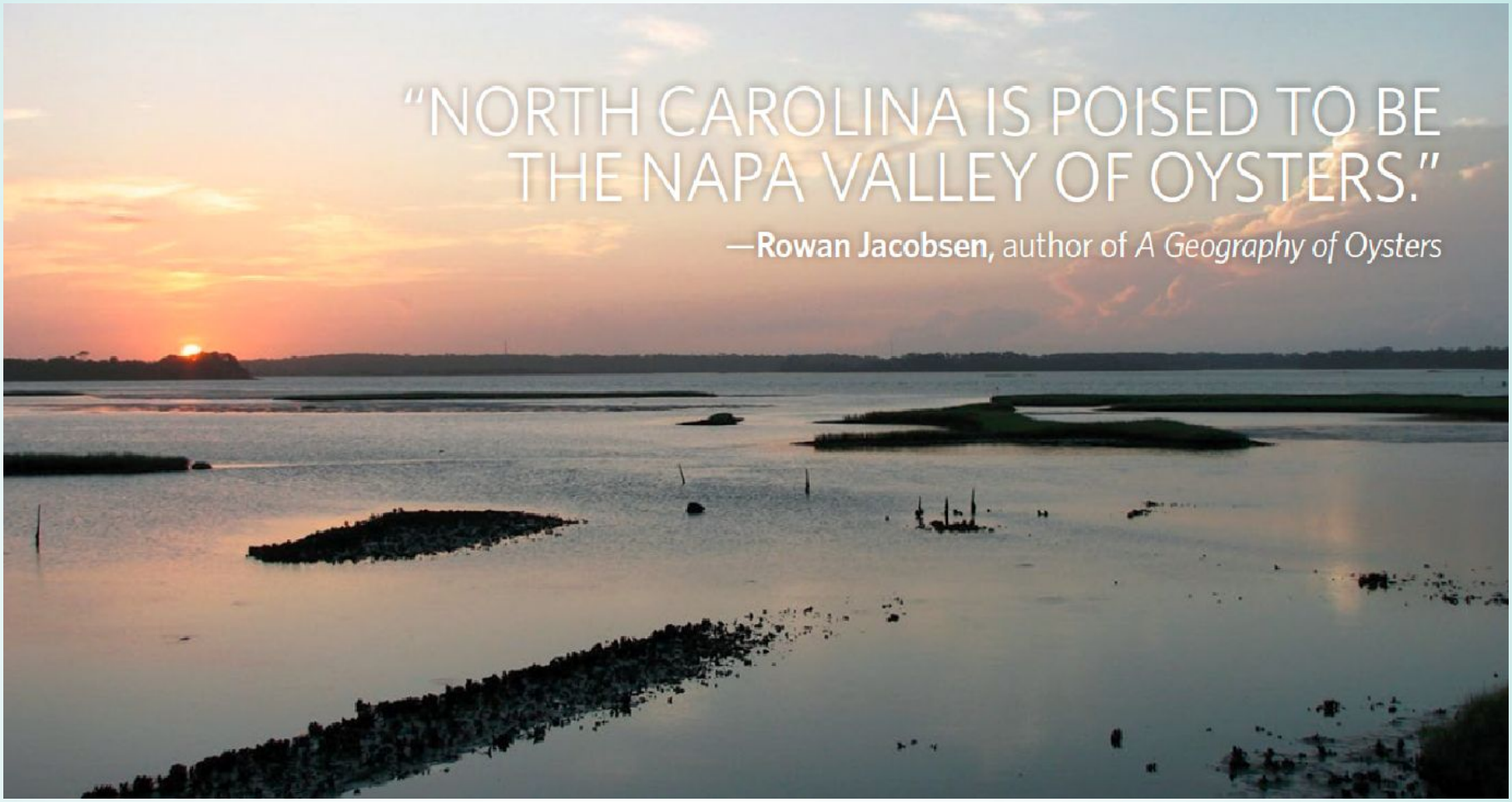
1 Million Oysters per Acre



SWAN ISLAND SANCTUARY

Build the Mariculture Industry



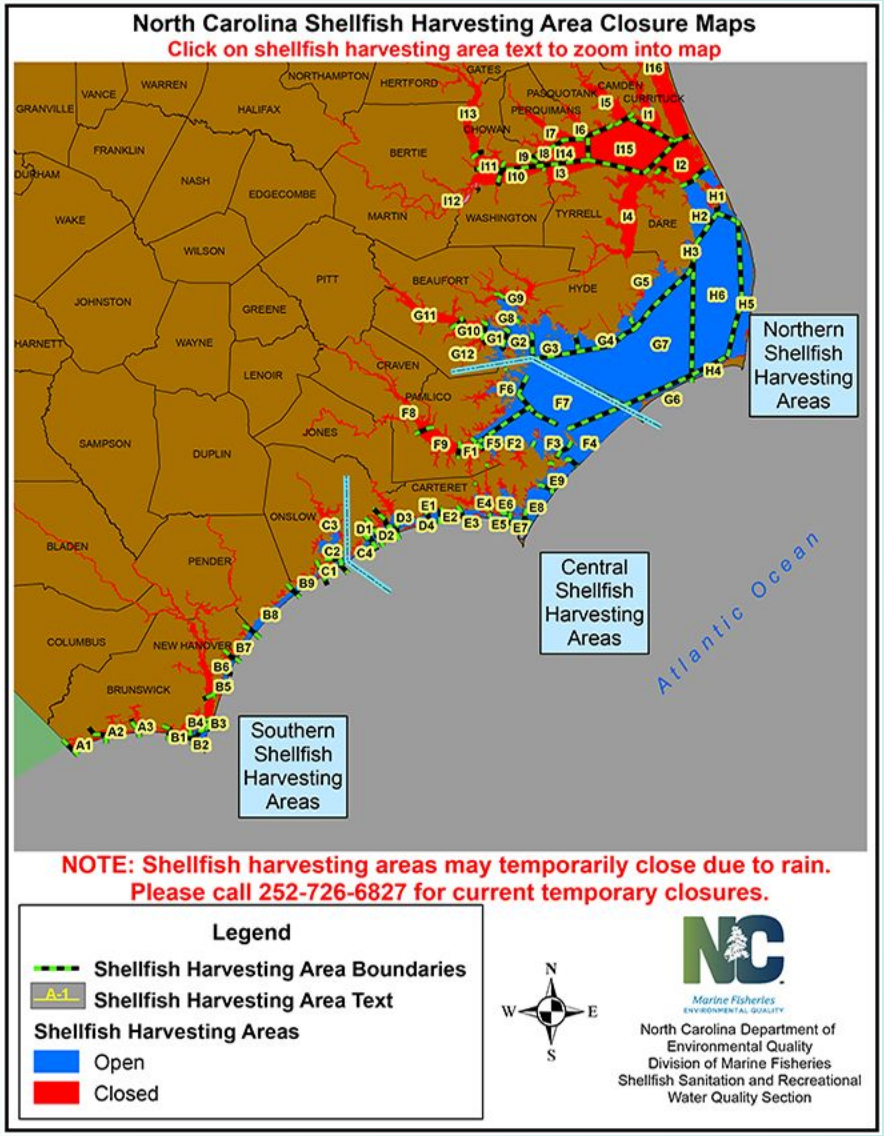

"NORTH CAROLINA IS POISED TO BE
THE NAPA VALLEY OF OYSTERS."
—Rowan Jacobsen, author of A Geography of Oysters

Mariculture Plan Development

Section 13.13 of Session Law 2017-57 (page 199- http://www.ncleg.net/sessions/2017/Budget/2017/S257-CSMLxfr-10-v5.pdf) designates the North Carolina Policy Collaboratory at UNC-Chapel Hill to use a stakeholder process to prepare a Shellfish Mariculture Plan for the State by December 2018.

Protect and Improve Water Quality

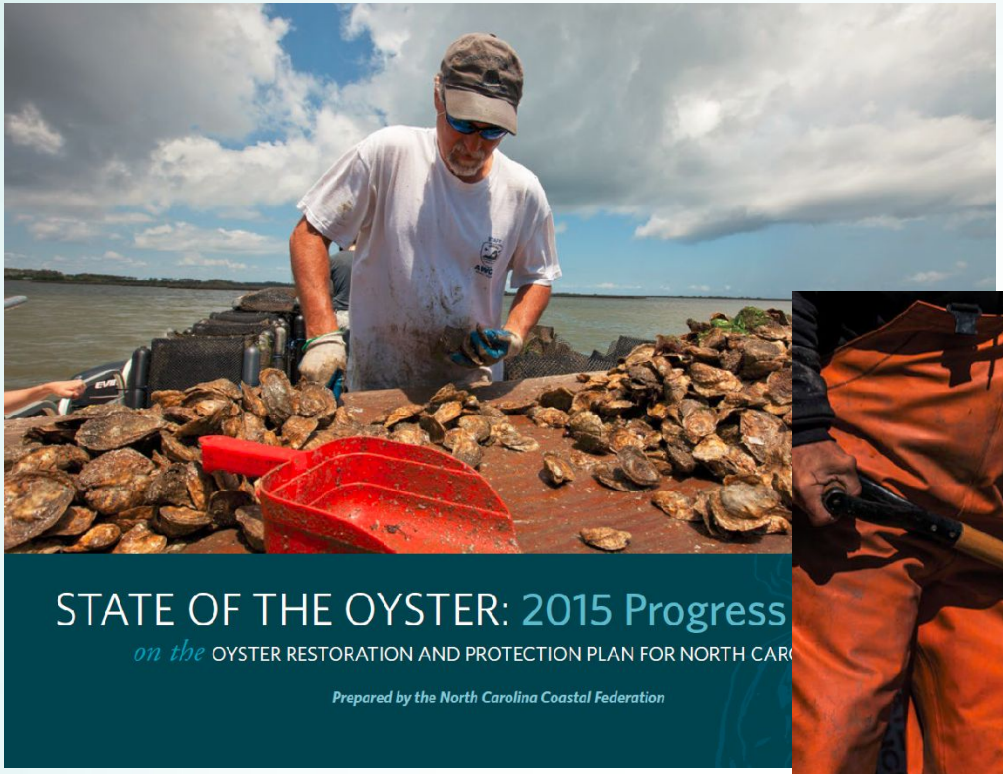
- 757,605.78 acres (34%) of N.C. shellfish waters are closed due to poor water quality or lack of monitoring capability.
- An additional 2,000 acres were closed in early 2017 after analysis of monitoring efforts from 2011-2016.

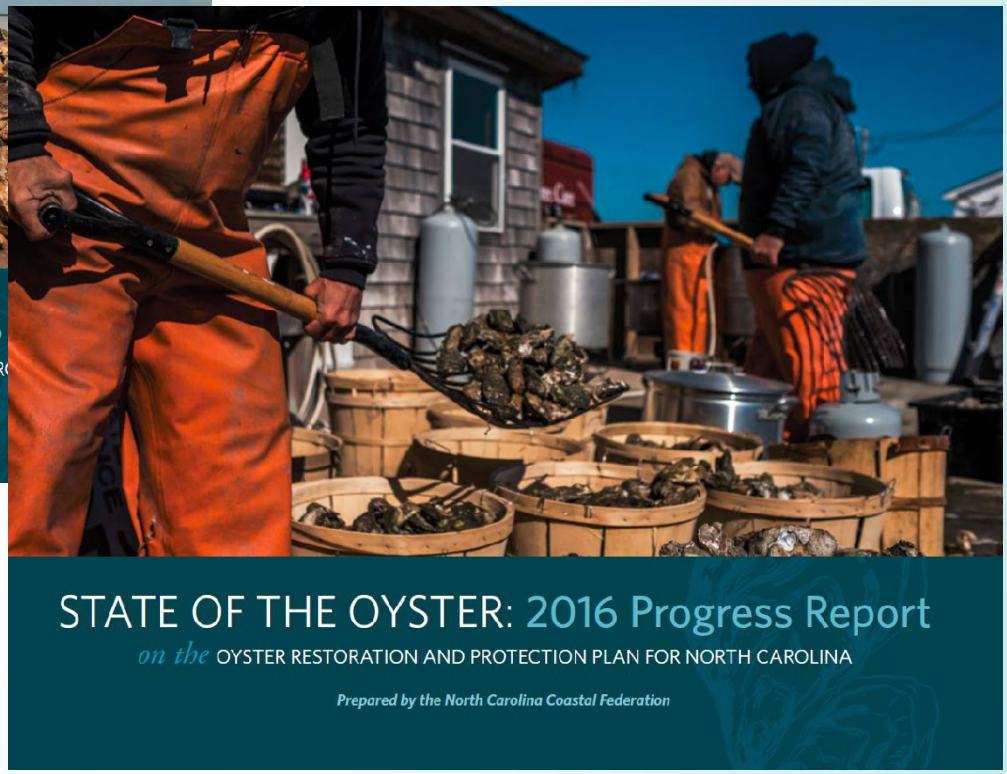


Protect and Improve Water Quality

- Work is underway to develop and implement watershed restoration plans for coastal waters.
- Five plans have been completed for coastal watersheds with several more in various stages of development.

Annual State of the Oyster Report





To Learn More Visit:

NORTH CAROLINA OYSTER BLUEPRINT

An Action Plan for Restoration and Protection

WHO WE ARE | ABOUT OYSTERS | THE BLUEPRINT | NEWS & RESOURCES | PROGRESS | EVENTS

Since 2003, a diverse group of stakeholders involved in growing, harvesting, studying, educating, managing and eating oysters have voluntarily and productively worked together to protect and restore North Carolina's oyster habitats and fisheries. This website links their efforts to present a holistic approach to advancing the vision of North Carolina becoming "the Napa Valley of Oysters."

News

- Update- Swan Island Oyster Sanctuary
- $1.088 million NOAA grant received for NC oyster restoration
- NEW Events- Don't Miss Out
- Upcycling Coal Ash in Oyster Reefs
- 2016 Commercial Landings Show Increased Production from Oyster Leases

Subscribe for Updates

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NCoysters.org

ON THE HALF SHELL NEWSLETTERS

ON THE
HALFSHELL
BLUEPRINT news and updates

On the Half Shell– our quarterly newsletter- is filled with news and updates on all things oyster. View current and archived newsletters below.

2017

2016

Oyster Steering Committee Members and Partners

- Tom Looney
- Adam Tyler
- Will Best
- Dave Cerino
- Dave Eggleston
- Braxton Davis
- Anne Deaton
- Jay Styron
- John Fear
- Ken Riley
- Mary Penny Kelly
- Jimmy Johnson
- Lexia Weaver
- Michelle Clower
- Brandon Puckett
- Rob Lamme
- Seth Theuerkauf
- Michael Graven
- Lauren Kolodij
- Christine Voss
- Shannon Jenkins
- Steve Murphey
- Niels Lindquist
- Carol Price
- Ronnie Smith
- Todd Miller
- Troy Alphin
- Bill Crowell
- Chuck Weirich
- Martin Posey
- Bill Cary
- Brad Ives
- Brian Boutin
- Pete Peterson
- Jane Harrison
- Steve Wall
- Jeff Warren
- Ami Wilbur
- Garry Wright
- Jason Peters
- Ana Zivanovic-Nenadovic
- Jonathan Howell

North Carolina
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35 years
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