The Outer Banks

Annual Report
A look back at our work together in fiscal year 2016
Our members make the difference

None of our work would be possible if it were not for the passion, energy and support of concerned citizens across North Carolina. Together, we’re doing big things.

At several points over the last year, I was reminded how rewarding and fulfilling this work can be, thanks to the passion and drive of our members and supporters like you, the hard work of our staff, and the collaboration between our partner groups. Together, we’re doing big things.

You helped Environment North Carolina show our leaders that the Clean Power Plan is essential to reducing emissions and protecting children growing up today.

You helped spread the word and build support across the country with Environment North Carolina for saving bees and our food supply, and with Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center for leaving dirty energy behind in favor of moving to 100 percent renewable sources that are good for the environment and good for business.

You took part in defending our right to clean water after the tragedy in Flint, Mich., and alerted the nation about the many threats to our drinking water across the country. And you helped Environment North Carolina protect America’s beloved special places by speaking up for our most important conservation programs and advocating for more national monuments to protect places like the Grand Canyon.

As you read through this report, remember that while our staff might be in the room when a big environmental victory is won, none of our work would be possible if it were not for the passion, energy and support of millions of concerned citizens. And as critical as this people power was to our victories last year, I can guarantee that this year—with a new president, new Congress, and more challenges to overcome—the same will be true.

Thank you for all you’ve done to make this past year successful, and here’s to many more to come.

Sincerely,

Liz Kazal  
Environment North Carolina Field Director

Margie Alt  
Environment America Executive Director
No Bees, No Food

Last year, millions of activists stood up to protect bees and our food supply. In June, we participated in the Keep the Hives Alive Tour, an effort to educate citizens about colony collapse disorder. The tour culminated with a rally at the Environmental Protection agency, where Environment North Carolina and our partners relayed the message from more than 4.5 million petitions from across the United States: Stop the use of bee-killing pesticides.

Our best pollinators are dying off

In recent years, bees have been disappearing at an unsustainable rate. In fact, beekeepers reported losing more than 40 percent of their hives last year. While this is certainly bad news for the bees, the real danger lies in our inability to match the pollinating power of these creatures—bees help pollinate a majority of the world’s food, and more than $15 billion a year in U.S. crops.

It’s simple: No bees, no food. No almonds, fewer strawberries and apples, less coffee… the list goes on. Environment North Carolina’s top priority is getting neonicotinoids (neonics)—a type of insecticide that’s chemically related to nicotine and has been linked to colony collapse—off the market.

We’re taking action, but EPA needs to lead

The good news is that thanks in part to our members’ activism, several states have taken action on neonics, including Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota and Oregon, with others looking to act soon. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has committed to phasing out the use of neonics on the public lands they manage, and Home Depot and BJ’s Wholesale Club have taken steps to limit the sale of plants treated with neonics, label the plants, or both. And the EPA has put a temporary moratorium on approving any new uses of the neonics.

We want to make sure the EPA ultimately takes these bee-killing pesticides off the market altogether, and with your help we can achieve our goal.
Members like you took to North Carolina’s beaches to spread awareness and help convince President Obama to stop drilling off our coast.

Your support helps us protect vulnerable wildlife in North Carolina from oil spills due to unnecessary offshore oil drilling.
North Carolina’s Coast, Our State Treasure

Last year, we celebrated a huge victory for our coast. In March, the Obama administration announced it would cancel plans to drill off the South Atlantic coast, which includes North Carolina. We fought hard over the last year, mobilizing thousands of small businesses and local elected officials, along with members and supporters across the country to convince the president that our coast is too precious to risk.

You helped stop offshore drilling

With your help, we were able to spearhead the drive to protect North Carolina’s beaches from the threat of offshore drilling. We hosted dozens of film screenings across the state to educate North Carolinians about the threat drilling poses, and we ultimately helped pass 30 resolutions against offshore drilling up and down the coast, alongside our coalition partners.

Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center staff, volunteers and our national federation mobilized more than 250 coastal businesses from New York to Georgia to send the message that clean beaches mean healthy businesses for our coastal communities. With support from these businesses, and dozens of other green groups, we delivered more than 2 million petitions to President Obama in February, which eventually led to the Obama administration’s abandonment of its plans to open the southern Atlantic to offshore oil and gas drilling for the first time in decades. A huge victory for our North Carolinian coastal communities!

Seismic testing: protecting marine life

While we are breathing a sigh of relief at the president’s decision to halt drilling plans, the fight to protect our coast isn’t quite over yet. Oil and gas companies are pushing to test for reserves off our coast. Currently, these companies are applying to use seismic testing, a harmful form of oil and gas exploration that threatens marine life, off the coast.

This summer, our staff and interns held several community events to educate beachgoers on the threats that marine mammals, like right whales and loggerhead sea turtles, face from seismic blasting. As many as 138,000 Atlantic whales and dolphins are projected to be injured or killed by the use of seismic airguns, according to U.S. Government research and we need to call on the president to put an end to this. We want the Obama administration to deny any seismic testing permits to ensure that our marine mammals are protected.
Protect Our Parks

On the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service last year, President Obama created the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument to protect more than 87,000 acres in Maine. Yet sensitive landscapes surrounding many of our national parks still remain unprotected and face threats from mining, drilling and logging companies. It’s happening just six miles from the Grand Canyon, and perhaps even near your favorite outdoor places right here in North Carolina.
Preserving the parks we all love and standing up for future generations

Last year, Environment North Carolina continued our campaign to preserve our special places. As our parks celebrated their 100th birthday, we now need our lawmakers to give them the funding they deserve so they remain protected through the next centennial.

We continued our door-to-door effort to educate North Carolinians about the threats to our parks, and how they can help ensure our parks are protected for generations to come. We’ve been shining a spotlight in the media, mobilizing local elected officials and small businesses to show support for protecting our parks. As we’ve seen, the real key to winning this fight starts with you.

You worked hard to win big for parks
Starting in 2007, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund has seen massive cuts and in 2013, the dedicated revenue stream for the Trust was eliminated entirely. While in the long term we hope to regain full funding for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, we did see some progress in getting our parks some much needed help in the form of the Connect NC bond, which provides $75 million in funding for our parks. Environment North Carolina staff and volunteers knocked on thousands of doors and made hundreds of calls to educate voters and encourage them to vote yes on the Connect NC bond last year.

Citizens call for increased funding
Environment North Carolina interns hosted hikes and events throughout the year to celebrate the centennial of our parks. Over the summer, our citizen outreach staff talked to more than 250,000 people from all over North Carolina. More than 10,000 of those people took the time to send an email to Gov. McCory, asking him to fully fund our state park.

From Mount Mitchell to Jockey’s Ridge, our state parks are part of what makes North Carolina such a great place to live, so we want to make sure lawmakers give our parks the funding they deserve. Thanks to your support and encouragement, we can fight to preserve these precious areas for years to come.
Solar power is growing fast across the country. In fact, this year we saw the one-millionth solar panel go online. Thanks to pro-solar policies, North Carolina is a national leader in solar energy. In 2016, Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center presented hard-hitting information and shined an unflattering light on solar’s opponents.

**Pro-solar policies got us here**

With roughly four panels for every five people in the state, solar energy continues to rise in North Carolina. Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center’s annual report, “Lighting the Way”, found that the top 10 solar states account for 88 percent of the nation’s total installed solar electricity capacity. Yet while strong policies have helped to grow solar energy in the U.S., some utilities and fossil fuel companies are now working to limit the growth of distributed solar energy. For example, North Carolina’s General Assembly allowed one of the best solar tax credits in the nation to expire at the end of 2015.

The U.S. can continue to experience dramatic growth in solar energy by following the actions of leading states—resulting in cleaner air, more local jobs and reduced emissions of pollutants. Avoiding missteps will put America on track to a future in which our economy is powered by 100 percent clean, renewable energy.

**Mobilizing community support**

Last year, we focused on a dozen communities across the state, from Brevard to Rockingham, to mobilize local support for solar. Our staff and interns recruited more than 50 small businesses around the state to send the message to our lawmakers that we want more state policies to spur solar’s growth. We also held days of action in cities across the state to show the strong support that solar has in North Carolina.
Environment North Carolina
19 W. Hargett St., Ste. 214
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 833-0015

Address Service Requested