

Dare County Schools

<http://www.darecountyschoolsonline.com/moxie/schools/CHSSCS-BOC-1509.shtml>

CHSSCS Students Advocate for Oyster Reefs, Clean Sounds

at January 5 Commissioners meeting

Five Cape Hatteras Secondary School of Coastal Studies eighth grade middle school students participating in an oyster hatchery project presented at the January 5 Dare County Board of Commissioners meeting. Under the guidance of science teacher Tracy Shisler, eighth grade science teacher and AIG Coordinator Amber Bradshaw, and UNC Coastal Studies Institute Education Programs Coordinator John McCord, middle school students have embraced this project that has the potential to help clean the waters of the Pamlico Sound and increase the consumable oyster population at the same time.

Using PowerPoint, Kailee Pieno described how the project has evolved, with a demonstration for the commissioners of how oyster shells can be bagged for use in the construction of reefs by Jacob Dixon, Evan Haas and Ethan Kostich. With footage provided by McCord, Ashley Hodges followed Kailee to explain the progress and show the success of the project.



Their first attempt was to raise oyster spat from larvae was unsuccessful in result, but valuable as a learning experience. With the help of McCord they regrouped to devise a plan to build a research oyster reef behind the school. They filled bags with shells and placed before the 2007-08 school year ended.

What they found on their return to begin the current school year was exciting and encouraging - their research reef is successfully attracting oyster spat, and is providing a popular habitat to fish and other aquatic life. These eighth graders have seen for themselves how relatively easy it is to set up such a reef, and now they are on a mission to share their knowledge with other communities as they envision reefs up and down the Pamlico Sound improving the water quality and impacting the local economy.



The passion the students have for the local waters became clear as their presentation progressed. The five have been active in the project since its inception when they were in 6th grade, which Shisler says shows a great commitment on their part.

Their commitment is shared by McCord.

"Working with the teachers and students of Cape Hatteras Secondary School has been a pleasure, their dedication and enthusiasm is a model for student involvement in stewardship projects," said McCord. "We are excited to continue the project and expand it in the upcoming year."

As the commissioners complimented the students, Commissioner Allen Burrus went a step further than lauding the project; he encouraged those in the viewing audience with access to oyster shells - restaurant, folks having oyster roasts, to call to have their shells picked up for use in such projects.

"I hope that the adults in our county will want to participate in their efforts," said Shisler. "I was thrilled that Allen Burrus asked everyone to think about recycling their oyster shells. It really is time for everyone to work together as a team and help the Pamlico Sound."

"The truth is that the students are truly concerned about being good stewards of their world and want to do what they can to encourage others to realize that everyone must participate in the effort to improve the environment."



Seated from left, Cape Hatteras Secondary School of Coastal Studies science teacher Tracy Shisler and UNC-CH Coastal Studies Institute Education Programs Coordinator John McCord watch as CHSSCS eighth grade students Jacob Dixon, Evan Haas, and Ethan Kostich stand with props to demonstrate how to make an oyster bag, as they made for the research reef behind the school. The project is supported by McCord and UNC-CH CSI.