



DAY AT THE DOCKS EXHIBITORS Brandon Oliver (left) and Johnny Pieno explain the hatchery and oyster reef projects underway at Cape Hatteras Secondary School of Coastal Studies. (MHG-M photo)

Hatteras students introduce community to school's hatchery and oyster reef projects

By MARY HELEN GOODLOE-MURPHY

Under the exhibit tent at Day at the Docks, Cape Hatteras Secondary seventh graders Brandon Oliver and Johnny Pieno enthusiastically talked about the school's hatchery and oyster reef projects.

"If this thing works, we're going to benefit all of us," said one.

"That's our mission, how to make it work," said the other.

The research projects are experiments in building oyster reefs and growing fish in large tanks on the second floor of the middle grades wing at the Buxton campus.

In one experiment, the project is assessing the merits of limestone marl and oyster shell as habitat for new oysters, reported

the exhibitors.

The young researchers hypothesized that a high salinity level in the Pamlico Sound bordering the school campus caused the failure of another oyster experiment.

All new fish are swimming in the hatchery tanks and the students are starting to learn about plankton, reported the researchers.

The project is led by faculty members Tracy Shisler, Christin Brown and Amber Bradshaw. Since its inception, UNC's Coastal Studies Institute has been involved in the project. The institute's education programs coordinator John McCord and associate David Sybert are helping the students again this year.

The hands-on science project can use a little help. The hatch-

ery program is looking for these items, which do not have to be new: towels any size, waders, wetsuits, portable clothing racks, Roughneck 35-gallon trash barrels with wheels, fish tanks, aerators, mask/snorkel, cast nets and fishing gloves.