



# Summer Report

## A big step forward for our state parks

### Voter-approved bond provides funds for parks

In March, we celebrated a big victory for our state parks. The Connect NC bond, passed by North Carolina voters, will provide much-needed funding for state parks and recreation areas across the state.

Connect NC is a \$2 billion dollar bond that will fund infrastructure for the University of North Carolina and community college systems and includes \$75 million for improvements at every state park across North Carolina.

In the Triangle, this means a new visitor center for Eno River State Park and improved camping facilities at Jordan Lake. In western North Carolina, New River State Park will be expanded. And across the state, land will be acquired to help complete the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

### You're speaking up for our parks

The success of the Connect NC bond is the result of strong advocacy from our members around the state.

Highlighting the value of our parks during the 100th anniversary of our first state park, Mount Mitchell, you've sent emails, made phone calls and connected with Gov. Pat McCrory on social media.

It's made a difference: Funding for parks was increased in the last budget, for the first time in years. Gov. McCrory advocated for including funding for parks in the bond, and your financial support allowed us to knock on thousands of doors across North Carolina and encourage citizens to support their favorite parks.



Charles Miles via Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

▲ The view from the top of Mount Mitchell State Park, which turns 100 this year—along with the U.S. National Park Service.

### The job isn't done yet

While we should celebrate this step forward, we must remember there is still work to do. The bond provides a much-needed influx of cash for long-overdue projects, but doesn't solve the long-term problem with parks funding.

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is still subject to attacks every legislative session. That's why it's so critical to continue our work to restore the dedicated revenue stream that was eliminated in 2013.



Staff

### take action



Take action online to urge our elected leaders to fund our parks for the long term:

[www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org](http://www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org)

◀ Environment North Carolina canvassers spoke with thousands of members across the state about protecting our parks.



Staff

## You make the difference

There are so many great things about living in North Carolina: the food, the people, the music and more. But one thing that most of us agree on is that our access to the outdoors is unparalleled.

If you like the mountains, you can visit Mount Mitchell or head out to Pisgah National Forest. If you love the ocean, you can visit the Outer Banks or Wrightsville Beach. If you prefer freshwater, you can canoe the Neuse or fish Lake James.

When I'm outside, hiking in the Eno or visiting my parents down on Holden Beach, I tend to think about the people who ensure these places remain as they are for future generations.

You've played a key role, so for that I thank you, and hope you enjoy another beautiful North Carolina summer.

Thanks for all you do,

Dave Rogers  
Director

Environment/ham/StockPhoto

## Toward a greener future

Environment North Carolina and Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future.

For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 x312 or send an email to:  
[PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org).

## Recent action

### Repowering our schools with clean, local solar

As part of the Repower Our Schools coalition, Environment North Carolina is working with schools districts to get 100 percent clean energy for their buildings.

Schools make ideal locations for solar projects in North Carolina. They have large, typically flat rooftops, and they use most of their power during the day, when panels are generating the highest amount of electricity.

Repower Our Schools released two reports this spring, showing how the Charlotte and Durham school districts could meet 100 percent of their energy needs with clean energy, while saving money on their power bills. Solar systems also provide great educational opportunities for students interested in science and technology.

For more information about how these districts can go solar, and to learn about all the great organizations involved, go to [www.repowerourschools.com](http://www.repowerourschools.com).

### How your support is saving the bees

Beekeepers report losing an average of 30 percent of all bee colonies each year—twice the loss considered economically tolerable. Yet, big agrochemical companies are pushing the use of dangerous pesticides that are killing off the very bees that pollinate 71 of the 100 crops that provide 90 percent of the world's food.

With your help, Environment North Carolina and Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center are fighting back. Last year, our national team, along with a coalition of beekeepers, farmers and others, delivered more than 4 million petitions calling on the Obama administration to protect bees and our food supply.

We've also joined a coalition of beekeepers, environmental groups and more than 100 businesses calling on the Environmental Protection Agency to ban neonicotinoids, the pesticides that are largely responsible. And we're planning to continue building support to demand action to save the bees.





digitdreamgraftx/Shutterstock

# North Carolina coast wins!

The Obama administration announced in March that it had reversed course on its plan for oil and gas drilling off the southern Atlantic coast. Under the new plan, there will be no possibility of drilling off the coasts of North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and South Carolina until 2022!

We couldn't have done it without your support. "It was a huge grassroots movement that we think had a real impact on the president's decision," said Liz Kazal, field director for Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center.

## Our coast is too important

North Carolina has some of the greatest beaches in the world. People come from all across the globe to swim, fish, watch sea turtles hatch, or just lay around enjoying the sun and sand our coast provides.

In addition to providing critical habitat for wildlife, our beaches support a thriving tourism industry. In 2014 alone, tourism brought in \$2.4 billion in revenue for the 10 coastal counties.

Drilling has been banned in the Atlantic for more than 30 years—and for good reason. A BP-like oil spill could be devastating to our coastal communities. And drilling in the Gulf Stream could spread oil up and down the coast—possibly as far as Europe.

## Coastal communities spoke out

The administration's original decision to open up the waters to drilling, announced last year, was met with widespread community opposition.

Elected officials, business leaders and residents from Duck to Sunset Beach delivered a loud message to the Obama administration that drilling here simply doesn't make sense.

More than 1,100 North Carolinians attended public hearings and more than 15,000 weighed in against offshore drilling through emails and phone calls. Thou-

sands of residents put "Don't Drill N.C." signs in their yard and "Protect Our Coast" window decals on their cars.

## Your resistance was heard

To win this victory, Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center had to make our stance clear to the Obama administration.

You might've commented on the plan with an email. Maybe you signed one of our postcards. Perhaps you called the White House. With your sustained support, we were able to keep up the pressure and convince President Obama to do the right thing when it comes to our coast.

"We applaud the president for protecting our beaches and coastal way of life from drilling and spilling," said Dave Rogers, Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center director. "But to avoid the worst impacts of global warming, we must keep the vast majority of oil, coal and gas beneath the sea and in the ground. That's why we urge the president to take all new drilling off the table."



Credit: Randy Sturgill

## Explore more online

► *Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center staff discuss local opposition to offshore drilling with Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Director Abigail Hopper (middle).*

*Read more about Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center at:  
[www.EnvironmentNorthCarolinaCenter.org](http://www.EnvironmentNorthCarolinaCenter.org)*

# 32

coastal cities and counties in North Carolina passed a resolution against offshore drilling or seismic blasting.



More than

# 180

local coastal businesses came out against drilling, including the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, the Morehead City Chamber of Commerce and the New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority.

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# Environment North Carolina

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## Environment North Carolina

### Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and green spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment North Carolina. We focus exclusively on protecting North Carolina's air, water and green spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

## Summer Report

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## Leading the way on global warming after Paris

World leaders agreed last December to reduce carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement, and President Obama's Clean Power Plan, which was won due to widespread public support from people like you, gave our country the leverage needed to win this historic deal.

In February, however, the Supreme Court delivered a major blow to climate action, announcing it will put the Clean Power Plan on hold while it hears lawsuits from polluters and their allies who want to kill the plan. This decision is a huge loss for our kids' future and for all Americans who care about the health of our planet.

That said, with your help, Environment North Carolina is now working to build public support to show our leaders that the Clean Power Plan is essential to reduce our global warming emissions, protect kids growing up today, and show the rest of the world that we are serious about tackling this growing threat.



### Support our efforts

*Support our efforts to fight global warming. Donate online at:*

[www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org](http://www.EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org)

◀ Margie Alt, executive director for Environment America, and Anna Aurilio, Environment America's D.C. office director, conduct a Google Hangout interview in Paris.