

# Wetland Preservation

Washington, NC--The usual argument in favor of preserving swamps, marshes, pocosins, and other wetlands of eastern North Carolina is that they provide prime fish and wildlife habitat.

While Jonathan Phillips, keynote speaker for the Pamlico-Tar River Foundation (PTRF) annual meeting September 26, believes the habitat argument, he doesn't believe it tells the full story.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in The Superior Courtroom of the Beaufort County Courthouse on Second Street in Washington and is open to anyone.

Phillips will argue that emphasis on wetlands as fish and animal habitat may overlook other values of wetlands that are equally important.

"Wetland values are often assessed purely in terms of their value as wildlife habitat and seafood nursery areas, or in terms of their biological production," Phillips said.

"Swamps, marshes, pocosins, and river bottoms have a lot of other values that are too often ignored. It's been shown

that they are natural pollution filters, and are important to maintain water quality. There are a lot of intangible values associated with that, as well as real dollar savings due to lower costs for clean-up and treatment of polluted water."

Wetlands are also an essential component of the hydrologic system, Phillips said, and in many cases play a valuable role in flood control and water supply.

Phillips, who will complete work this fall on his Ph.D. from Rutgers University, has published several scientific articles and reports dealing with water resources and landforms in the coastal areas of North Carolina and New Jersey.

He assumed duties last month as the first full-time, paid executive director of the Pamlico-Tar River Foundation.

"Some of the work we've done in theoretical ecology tends to show that wetlands are naturally unstable and that once we change them, they may never return to their previous state," Phillips said. "If this is true, this means that

preserving the natural wetlands we have left in eastern N.C. is all the more critical."

PTRF President Dick Leach said the subject is timely.

"Despite the fact that we've got laws and regulations to protect wetlands, we're still losing them in the Pamlico-Tar River area, and all over the country. Our group is interested in finding ways to protect wetlands without seriously hampering economic uses of natural resources," Leach said.

The meeting, open to members and non-members, will include a brief description of recent and upcoming PTRF activities. Three open slots on the nine-member PTRF Board of Directors will be voted on by members, with floor nominations accepted.

The PTRF is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the environmental quality of the Pamlico-Tar River, its tributaries, and surrounding lands. The area of concern extends from Ocracoke to Roxboro.

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## Football Contest Winner



Carmen D. Ellis was 1st place winner of \$10 and 6 points for the second week of **The Highlights Football Contest**. Second place went to Al Perry, \$5 and 4 points, and Randy Jenkins was third, \$2 and 2 points.

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