

SOS HOSTS COASTAL WORKSHOP

# Environmental Groups Advised To Fight Mean And Hard

BY DOUG RUTTER

Leaders of Save Our Shellfish and other environmental groups from southeastern North Carolina were advised to fight mean and hard for their beliefs at a workshop Saturday in Varnamtown.

The groups discussed common goals and various tactics that can be used to reach those goals during the all-day workshop sponsored by the N.C. Coastal Federation, a non-profit organization of the state's environmental groups.

Lena Ritter, past president and now community educator of the federation, illustrated how the groups can get what they want, talking about her personal efforts which saved Permuda Island from development.

"I do not agree that you can't make a difference," Mrs. Ritter told the two dozen participants. "I have a 12th grade education and probably as little couth as anybody in the world."

The key to success, she said, is being persistent and not giving up or getting discouraged when things look bad. "It's a damn fight, and the people we're up against are mean."

Mrs. Ritter, who was thrown out of the state legislature two years ago for carrying a sign used to mark

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—Lena Ritter  
N.C. Coastal Federation

polluted waters into the state capitol, said the only way to win is to be just as mean as the opponent.

Neil Armingeon, project director with the Coastal Federation, said most people environmental groups find themselves up against do a lot of planning and lay a lot of groundwork before their intentions are known to the public.

"We need to turn the tables on them and start setting the agenda," Armingeon said. "We have to remember that we are the majority."

Save Our Shellfish (SOS), which hosted the workshop formed in September 1988 with the idea of saving the troubled Lockwood Folly River. In recent years, bacterial pollution has caused the frequent closure of some of the best oyster and clam waters in the river.

SOS President Annie Smigiel of

Varnamtown said the local group has nearly dissolved in recent months because most members didn't think the group was making any progress.

Other groups represented at the workshop were the Northeast New Hanover Conservancy, Pender Watch and Conservancy and Citizens For Clean Industry, a group opposing a hog production and slaughtering facility proposed along the Cape Fear River in Bladen County.

As outlined Saturday, common goals of the environmental groups include improved water quality, enforcement of existing regulations and stricter fines for environmental crimes.

Participants said state government, which is supposed to work for the people, can be one of the biggest opponents of environmental groups.

Mrs. Ritter said a great deal of

politics is involved in state government, because the people who are in charge of enforcing environmental protection rules are appointed by the governor.

"Do not be fooled that the state is working with you at any point. They will tell you what you want to hear," she said. "I have gotten very paranoid. I trust no one anymore."

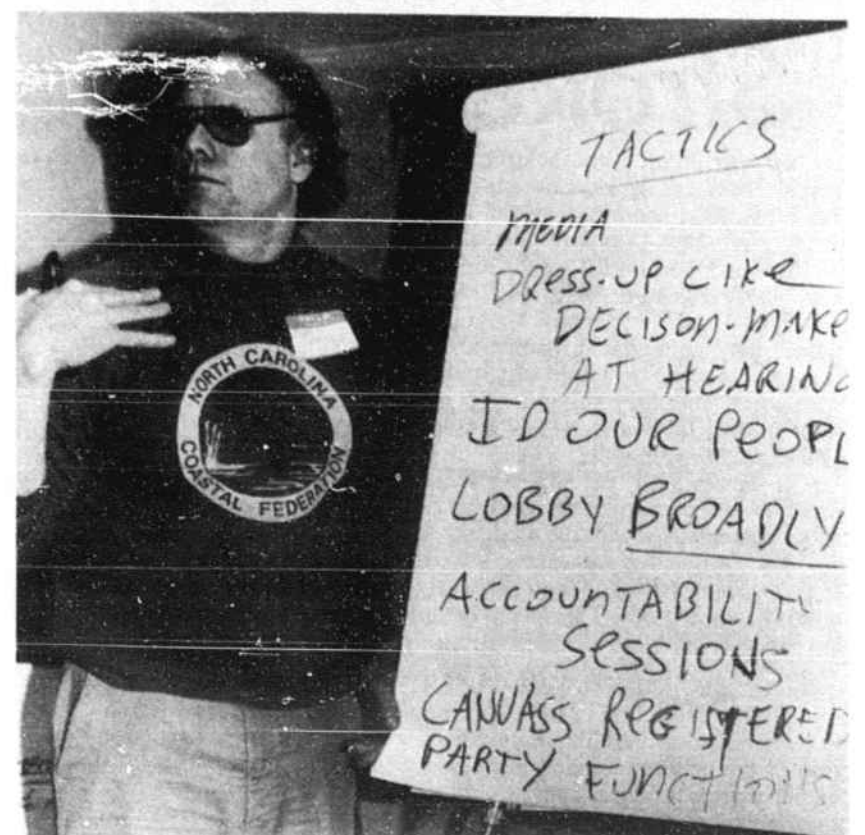
Robert Maultsby of Bolivia, an outspoken member of SOS, said government agencies need to be held accountable. "They're spending our money like it's water out of the ocean, and we're not getting one thing out of it."

Workshop participants pointed out that some government employees believe in environmental causes, but can't do anything to help without jeopardizing their jobs.

Other people and organizations seen as likely opponents of environmental groups include county commissioners and other elected officials, county employees, industry, developers, forestry industry, agriculture and golf courses.

John Wancheck of N.C. Fair Share said the key to winning an environmental issue is building a strong organization. "Building that organization is what's going to give you your strength to meet your goal over the long haul."

He said groups must present their demands to the people who ultimately make the decisions—elected officials and political appointees. Environmental groups might have to work through bureaucrats to get to the decision-makers.



JOHN WANCHECK of N.C. Fair Share outlines tactics that environmental groups can use to win their causes during a workshop Saturday in Varnamtown.

Tactics used in influencing politicians include lobbying broadly, canvassing registered voters, attending political party functions and using the news media.

Margie Ellison of the Rural Advancement Fund talked about the

importance of environmental groups forming a coalition, a network of organizations formed around a common goal or issue.

She said a mass of people is the only thing that can attack a power base and influence decision-makers. "People win issues," Mrs. Ellison said. "This is where the difference is made."

To form an effective coalition, Mrs. Ellison said different groups need to be willing to add on the is-

## Fishing Group Pushes For License To Sell

The trade group representing the commercial fishing industry in North Carolina is pushing for a new license that some Brunswick County fishermen have been requesting for years.

The N.C. Fisheries Association, which represents commercial fisher-

"Without the proper data, management measures are made much stricter than they need be."

The exact wording of the bill is still being worked out, but Schill said some of the basic provisions include an annual commercial license

the association, said the state needs a commercial license to sell due to growing pressures on fish resources and pressure on people who make a living in the commercial fishing industry.

"We have absolutely no handle on the amount of fish that is caught recreationally, but sold commercially," Schill said. "We do know that it is substantial and that it is affecting drastically those who have made their livings for generations by commercial fishing."

Local commercial fishermen have been asking state fisheries officials for years to do something to prevent recreational anglers from undercutting them by selling seafood they catch in their spare time to individuals or dealers.

Schill said the program would force the state to get data from commercial fishermen, who eventually would have to document how much income they make through the sale of seafood.

"NCFA has argued for years that the main problem associated with our fisheries is water quality and habitat degradation," Schill said.

commercial licenses would be given to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries and be used to administer and enforce the program and pay for special projects that would benefit commercial fishing.

Schill said the association is asking for no minimum income requirement during the first two years of the program. The Marine Fisheries Commission would have the authority to set minimum income requirements in the third year.

"When a minimum income requirement is implemented, the fisherman must have some sort of documentation," Schill said. "Many fishermen are not known for their record-keeping expertise, so that documentation would be lacking."

A two-year delay in the income requirement would give fishermen time to come up to speed in terms of documentation and eventually qualify for whatever income requirement is determined for 1994.

Schill said several legislators are interested in the bill, and he will be working with them on the draft before it is introduced in the House and Senate.

## This Week's Tide Table

		FEBRUARY		LOW	
Day	Date	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Thursday	28	7:34	8:02	1:14	1:43
		MARCH			
Friday	1	8:19	8:47	2:01	2:24
Saturday	2	9:01	9:29	2:48	3:05
Sunday	3	9:42	10:10	3:33	3:44
Monday	4	10:20	10:52	4:15	4:23

LOCKWOOD FOLLY—subtract 22 min. high tide, subtract 8 min. low tide.  
BALD HEAD ISLAND—subtract 10 min. high tide, subtract 7 min. low tide.  
SOUTHPORT—add 7 min. high tide, add 15 min. low tide.  
LITTLE RIVER—add 7 min. high tide, add 7 min. low tide.

## New Sportfishing Magazine Coming

A new magazine for sportfishing enthusiasts is on the horizon.

The first issue of *North Carolina Salt Water Fishing* will appear on

tag and release articles, conservation news, technical and how-to articles, product reviews, updates on the Governor's Cup Series and arti-

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