

CLEAN UP YOUR ACT!

Steps You Can Take To Care For The Coast

Wondering what you can do to help preserve and protect the fragile coastal environment?

UNC Sea Grant, a federal and state program that promotes wise use of our coastal and marine resources through research, extension and education, offers these tips:

In Your Home...

1) Recycle everything you can: newspapers, cans, glass, aluminum foil and pans, motor oil, scrap metal and plastics. Contact your local solid waste agency to find out what can be recycled in your area.

2) Save your kitchen scrap, except meat, for the compost pile, and avoid use of garbage disposal because it can add to many solids to an already overloaded home or municipal sewer system.

3) Use reusable containers for storing food instead of plastic wraps and foil.

4) Turn off the water when it's not actually in use—while brushing your teeth, shaving, washing dishes and cleaning foods. A gallon of water can run out of your faucet in less than 60 seconds.

5) Fix leaks. A dripping faucet can waste 20 gallons of water per day; a leaky toilet, 200 gallons per day. To test your toilet for a leak, add a few drops of food coloring to the tank water. Color will show up in the bowl if there is a leak.

6) Install a water-conserving showerhead. They are inexpensive and reduce flow by at least 25 percent.

7) Place a plastic jug filled with water in the toilet tank to reduce the amount of water flushed.

8) Wash only full loads in washing machines and dishwashers.

9) Be sure faucets are completely off to eliminate dripping.

10) Buy a suds-saver washing machine when you need to buy a new machine.

11) Check for leaks outside. Faucets, hoses hose connectors and sprinklers can leak.

12) Don't put hazardous household substances such as paint thinner, paint, furniture polish and pes-

Holden Beach Activist Takes Stand For Coast

BY DOUG RUTTER

Don't ask Crawford Hart his opinion on preserving wetlands or controlling coastal development unless you're prepared to listen.

Holden Beach's resident activist has strong feelings about the need to protect the environment and has no problem telling you all about it.

"You've got to consider the environment belongs to every person and every living thing on this Earth," he says. "That includes the wildlife, and if the wildlife is gone we're in bad shape. It's all part of the system."

Hart grew up reading National Geographic magazine and has lived near the coast much of his life. The UNC-Chapel Hill graduate lived in Connecticut for 32 years before moving to Holden Beach in 1989.

He says he's always had a thing for clean water and air and admits that watching what happened to beaches like Cape Cod, Mass., has fueled his pro-environment stance.

"People seemed to want to get to the coast a lot faster up there than they did down here," Hart said. "It's a wonder the Massachusetts coast doesn't sink into the water."

Hart said trips to Europe have also had a lasting effect, particularly on the way he views litter. Once he saw people putting cigarette butts in their pockets instead of dropping them on the ground, there was no turning back.

"For some reason Americans just have a habit of throwing things wherever," said Hart, who lived off and on in litter-laden New York City. "I think when I saw how clean things can be I brought it back with me."

Hart belongs to several environmental groups including the Audubon Society and N.C. Coastal Federation and said he mails as many as 50 letters a month relaying his concerns to elected officials.

Some people tell him he's just spinning his



HART

wheels, but Hart says he's gotten results. The key is being persistent and writing to the right people.

"I think protecting the wetlands is a must. I don't think anything should be built on them or over them," he said. "There isn't enough of the wetlands left that we can risk disturbing them."

Holden Beach's land use plan allows docks and gazebos over wetlands. Hart says that's no good because they block out sunlight which is vital to the wetlands.

When it comes to development of the beach, Hart says he has no problem with growth as long as it's responsible.

"I'd like to see it stay this way and not get out of hand," he said. That means no high-rise buildings or homes with more bedrooms than the septic tanks can handle.

As for a sewer system on the island, Hart is very much opposed. He says septic systems can do the job just as well and don't pose a major environmental risk in the event of a serious hurricane.

In the long run, Hart says preserving wetlands and keeping density low on Holden Beach and other beaches will only help real estate developers.

"We can attract a much nicer class of tourists if we protect the pristine factors of the island and keep it a quiet, family beach," he said. "We can't let it become another Myrtle Beach."

Hart sees no middle of the road on this issue. He says a beach community must either stand firm against high-density development or yield to it.

"I don't think there's an in-between. You've either got one or the other," he said. "The minute you start giving a little, there's always going to be the guy who gets greedy."

Hart said it's happened over and over again up and down the East Coast, and Holden Beach and Sunset Beach are two of the few "family beaches" remaining between Maine and Miami.

"I think the best salvation we've got as far as protection of the environment is education and I think they're doing a good job in some of the schools," he said.

17) Know the location of all components of your septic system, and keep heavy vehicles away from the system.

18) Don't plant trees or shrubs near drain lines. Roots can clog them.

19) Distribute your laundry chores throughout the week to avoid overloading the system on any given day.

20) Don't use toilets as trash cans.

21) Have your septic tank inspected each year and pumped out every three to five years to remove solids.

22) Do not build swimming pools near your septic system.

23) If you're installing a septic system and encounter soils unsuitable for waste treatment, such as sand or clay, consider an alternative septic treatment such as low-pressure pipe and mound waste systems.

In Your Yard...

24) Landscape with groundcover, trees and shrubs to minimize runoff. Plants help to prevent erosion, moderate summer heat and filter rainwater from downspouts and driveways.

25) When landscaping, choose permeable surfaces such as wooden decks, porous pavement, bricks or stones rather than solidly paved surfaces to allow for better absorption of water into the soil.

26) Divert rain from paved surfaces onto grass to permit gradual absorption.

27) Choose appropriate plants, shrubs, trees and grasses for the soil in your area. Many new beachfront homeowners try to landscape their yards with the same plants they used at their former inland locations, and later find out that they won't survive in the harsh ocean environment.

28) Test your soil to determine proper applications of fertilizers and lime for your lawn and shrubs. Consider using organic fertilizers such as manure to boost plant growth and condition your soil.

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ticides down your drain or in your trash. These products can pollute groundwater supplies, surface water or the air. Save these items for special collection days sponsored by local governments.

13) Choose household cleaners carefully by reading the label. Use the least toxic product available and buy only what you need. Products labeled with "caution" are

considered the least toxic. Those with "warning" are moderately toxic, and highly toxic chemicals are marked with the skull and crossbones.

14) Clean with non-toxic substances such as baking soda, salt, vinegar, ammonia and elbow grease instead of bathroom and kitchen cleaners.

15) Use sink baskets to prevent

clogs, and plungers to fix them.

Septic Systems...

16) If your home is serviced by a septic system, be sure the system is in proper working order. Malfunctioning septic systems can pose health, pollution and contamination problems, particularly if they are located near estuaries and inland waterways.

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