

## **Cape Fear Coastkeeper Discusses New Stormwater Rule**

When it comes to the environment, most fingers point to stormwater runoff as the worst problem.

“We can control the runoff. It’s been proven,” said Mike Giles, the Cape Fear Coastkeeper for the NC Coastal Federation at the PenderWatch & Conservancy May meeting.

Giles spoke positively about the new Coastal Stormwater Rule in an overview of major issues that will be considered by the NC legislature this upcoming short session. The purpose of the new law passed at the Environmental Management Commission this past winter, he said, is to test for myriad substances now going into public trust waters. Those include not just fecal coliform, but also hormones, chemicals, and metals.

Regarding implementation of the new stormwater regulations, Giles explained “it is going to create more desirable development while protecting the interest of those already living here. People want to live in areas that are environmentally protected.”

The situation as it exists stems from poorly planned growth and a failed rule, he said.

Phase II implementation has already begun in Brunswick and New Hanover Counties.

Stormwater runoff must be controlled in order to maintain the quality and health of our coastal waters, Giles explained. Shell fishing, commercial and recreational fishing along our coast and other coastal resources such as tourism and quality of life, are at stake.

The proposed Senate Bill 599 would make an exception for private beaches, but increase erosion at public beaches, said Giles, concluding the overview. The bill would allow a “pilot” project for the construction of a jetty at Rich’s Inlet. Hardened structures have been banned by state law, he said, because they impact other beaches.

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