2010 Annual Report
As 2010 began, we had just started our campaign to protect and preserve the Outer Banks. It wasn’t so long ago. But back then, no one had suggested opening up our shores to drilling, and the BP oil rig had not yet exploded in Gulf waters.

Late March, when President Barack Obama opened the doors to drilling off our shores, we responded with 25,000 petition signatures urging him to reconsider. And, after the Deepwater Horizon rig leaked 200 million gallons of crude oil into the Gulf, our federation took an active role in “Hands Across the Sand,” the largest demonstration against offshore drilling the world has ever seen.

Our canvassers pounded the pavement from Asheville to Wilmington all summer to spread the word about the need to protect our coasts. Policy Advocate Margaret Hartzell and our allies worked with legislative champions to pass a bill making it harder for oil companies to drill in federal waters. And, we distributed free “Don’t Drill Off OBX” stickers to thousands of supporters nationwide.

Despite all this progress, we still have a long way to go. The administration’s plans to open up 200 million acres of the Atlantic ocean—including areas off Cape Hatteras, one of the oil industry’s prime targets—are still very much in play.

2010 was a year of challenges and accomplishments, and of course, much work remains to be done. We continue to urge President Obama to scrap plans to allow drilling off our coastline. We continue to urge our members of Congress to pass strong, comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation, moving us away from oil and toward energy efficiency, renewable energy and other oil-saving solutions—for good. Success will not be easy, but with your support, we will continue to move forward in 2011.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ouzts
Director

Global Warming

Attempt to undermine pollution limits thwarted

The U.S. Senate narrowly defeated a measure in June that would have tied the hands of the Environmental Protection Agency when it comes to limiting global warming pollution from new cars and old smokestack industries. Sen. Kay Hagan delivered a critical “no” vote, capping months of hard work by Environment North Carolina staff and supporters.

We were disappointed, however, that the Senate failed to vote on a broader bill to cap carbon pollution, promote clean energy and slow climate change.

Following a summer of record-breaking heat, we researched and released a report that documented the extreme weather that is all but certain to become more common in the future if we fail to act soon. Next, we’re asking President Barack Obama to make meaningful inroads to limit global warming pollution.
Save the Outer Banks

New state law erected barriers to drilling
BP, Exxon and other oil companies face more obstacles to drilling off the shores of the Outer Banks, thanks in part to our work in 2010. New Environment North Carolina-backed legislation, signed by Gov. Bev Perdue in August, will make it harder for oil companies to drill here. The new law requires oil companies to provide concrete proof they could prevent or contain an oil spill before it reaches North Carolina’s shores. If an accident were to occur, the law holds the company fully liable for any and all damages.

For more than 25 years, oil and gas drilling was prohibited off the Outer Banks. Yet as we go to print, the Obama administration has not yet closed the door to companies that want to drill off our beloved coast, which attracts 7 million visitors from across the country every year.

“Don’t Drill Off OBX”
The BP disaster, of course, provided an extra impetus to our advocacy and organizing, giving North Carolinians a vivid picture of what might happen here if millions of gallons of oil spilled off Cape Hatteras—from closed fisheries to harmed wildlife to empty hotels.

In neighborhoods and online, at least 25,000 people nationwide signed our petition to President Obama, urging him to reinstate the moratorium on drilling off our shores. At least 2,000 people have gone to our website to request our free “Don’t Drill Off OBX” stickers, so they can add our message to their car bumpers and windows.

Joining hands across the sand
What began on a cold February Saturday in Florida as a statewide offshore drilling protest grew enormously by June 26, when several hundred thousand people across the world traveled to their local beaches and joined hands in protest of dirty, hazardous drilling.

In June, more than 1,000 North Carolinians traveled to their local beaches to join us in “Hands Across the Sand,” where we said “Yes” to a clean energy future and “No” to dirty outdated oil.

“Hands Across the Sand was a great way to put that visual across to people—and to show some solidarity for the beach, too,” said Environment North Carolina Policy Advocate Margaret Hartzell. “President Obama should need no further wake-up call to permanently ban new drilling off our shores.”
Grow solar North Carolina

Reports: How to create 30,000 jobs while cutting smog

Our state could see fewer smog-alert days, more than 25,000 new jobs, and a 10 million ton reduction in greenhouse gas pollution by achieving an ambitious, but attainable goal for solar power.

Our researchers reached these conclusions in two reports, “Growing Solar in North Carolina” and “Working With the Sun.” We found that if the state can draw 14 percent of our electricity from solar sources by 2030, we would slash carbon pollution, conserve 5 billion gallons of water per year that would otherwise be consumed by power plants, and avoid 17 million pounds of smog-forming emissions.

A new solar tax credit

North Carolina has tremendous potential to increase solar power production, with more than 200 sunny days a year and plenty of technological know-how. To help tap this potential, starting next summer, local manufacturers of solar panels and other clean energy equipment will get a state tax credit, thanks to an Environment North Carolina-supported bill signed into law by Gov. Bev Perdue this summer.

In 2008 and 2009, solar power in our state skyrocketed, growing six fold each year. Environment North Carolina advocates increasing the state's solar energy requirement to continue growth in this sector, along with a similar requirement for offshore wind projects.

These investments in solar energy are already benefiting North Carolina’s economy. Green electricity businesses in North Carolina—including solar, wind, biomass and energy efficiency—employed more than 10,000 workers as of 2009, generating more than $3.5 billion in revenue annually. For example, Charlotte-based Sencera manufactures thin film transistors and integrated circuits for solar panels. The company is now building a thin-film solar panel manufacturing plant, which is slated to employ 65 workers by the summer of 2010.

28,000 jobs by 2030

Expanding North Carolina’s solar industry will further grow the state’s green energy economy. Building enough solar panels to generate 14 percent of North Carolina’s electricity would create between 28,000 and 42,000 jobs in North Carolina by 2030, depending on how many solar panels are manufactured in-state.

With nearly as much annual sunshine as Florida, North Carolina’s solar potential is vast. “Move over, Sunshine State,” said Elizabeth Ouzts, Environment North Carolina state director. “With 200 days of sunlight each year, the forecast for solar energy in North Carolina is bright.”
Preservation

A larger Chimney Rock Park, a cleaner Falls Lake

From Grandfather Mountain State Park to Jockey’s Ridge on the Outer Banks, North Carolina’s state parks drew the most visitors ever recorded in 2009, and are on pace to do the same in 2010. That’s why it was good news when, in February, Gov. Bev Perdue and other state officials voted to expand Chimney Rock State Park and the Bear Paw State Natural Area, both moves backed by Environment North Carolina.

North Carolina is renowned for its natural beauty. Unfortunately, rapid development over the past several decades has threatened many of our most treasured open spaces. Recognizing this threat, the General Assembly established the Million Acre Initiative to protect 1 million acres of land between Jan. 1, 1999 and Dec. 31, 2009. While many important and beautiful places were protected in the process, it is now clear that North Carolina has fallen short of this goal.

Halting progress toward million-acre goal

Across the state, Environment North Carolina has called on the Legislature to rededicate funds and efforts to achieving our goal of protecting and preserving 1 million acres of open space.

Our 2010 research documented how North Carolina’s Million Acre Initiative has recently helped protect such landmarks as Grandfather Mountain and Chimney Rock, as well as 64,000 acres of game land across the state. In total, just over 643,000 acres of land had been preserved by the end of 2008; however, that is still less than two-thirds the amount originally pledged by the state.

“We need to do more to protect and preserve the Blue Ridge and other special places, but this is a step in the right direction,” said Environment North Carolina’s Elizabeth Ouzts. “We’re urging state leaders to set a new date for achieving the million-acre goal.”

A new plan to clean up Falls Lake

Meanwhile, state officials have released a new plan to clean up the pollution that bedevils Falls Lake, a drinking water source for 400,000 Wake County residents, which is good news—but only half of the story. The bad news is that, as of press time, polluters are still lobbying to weaken it.

Environment North Carolina’s Ouzts urged state officials to finalize the Falls Lake plan this summer without weakening pollution limits. Due to polluted runoff from development and farms, algae growth on the lake is rampant, making the water more costly to treat and leaving it with a foul odor. “We need strong action to protect all of Falls Lake,” said Ouzts.
Environment North Carolina Supporters

Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center
The Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center is a 501(c)(3) organization, and conducts research and public education on emerging environmental issues. Contributions to the Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center are tax-deductible. To find out more, contact Elizabeth Ouzts at (919) 833-0015.

The Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center would like to thank the following foundations for supporting our work in Fiscal Year 2010:

- Park Foundation, Inc.
- Julian Price Family Foundation
- Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
- Educational Foundation of America
- Energy Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Fred & Alice Stanback Fund of the Foundation for the Carolinas

Financial Information
Charts reflect combined financial information for the environmental work conducted by Environment North Carolina, the Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center and Environment North Carolina’s citizen outreach programs.

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Building 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. Your gift will assure that we can continue to protect North Carolina’s air, water and open spaces for future generations. For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or e-mail PlannedGiving@EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org.