

St James Oyster Project

20-Years Celebrating & Growing!

The Town of St James “Living Shoreline Project” celebrates its’ 20th anniversary in 2025, now with over 850’ of bagged oyster shells and even more plantings of Spartina Alterniflora marsh grasses placed along our ICW waterline. Also, included at each event is a cleanup of trash, etc. in properties along our Waterway. St James is a designated a “UNCW Research Sanctuary”!

This anniversary is a celebration of the funding by each Mayor and Town Council in these 20-years to support this “Ecological Service” which is in close partnership with the UNCW Benthic Ecology Lab’s graduate and undergraduate students led by Troy D. Alphin, Senior Research Associate and The NC Coastal Federation. It is also in appreciation of our volunteer St James Multigenerational Citizen Scientists! Students from grades 7-12 attending schools in our area also attend with their teachers to learn and contribute. Many church youth groups also bring their youth with church leaders. All are served lunch and delicious Troon cookies for their help in protecting our shoreline as well as property values, while also providing a habitat for marine life!

More than 125-community Multigenerational Citizen Scientists volunteers plus outsiders work at each event. This effort contributes thousands of volunteer hours each year, supported by UNCW’s students and faculty as well as the St. James community leadership.

Mayor Shelley Leshner (Thank you, Shelley, and RIP), in 2005 approved funding the first project that I submitted after attending a NC Coastal Federation seminar on the value of oysters. The project began in July 2005 with NCCF support which continues each year with UNCW!

Of special significance is our Mayor Jean Toner and Town Council’s support to establish “The Living Shoreline Student Support Endowment Fund at UNCW” with our town’s annual contributions. It has since received additional donations from our residents showing more full support of this project. UNCW students in the future will receive grants from this fund’s earnings to support their “Community Service” efforts on this project at St James.

Our St James Conservancy, coordinates and runs this “Living Shoreline Project” for our Mayor, Town Council, and Staff. We are now at over 180-members including Bald Head Island Conservancy Leaders, with many other initiatives as shown on our website:

<http://www.stjamesconservancy.org/>

We look forward to celebrating this Town of St James initiative’s milestone with multiple build dates in 2025!
“The Royal Order of the Honorary St James Oyster”

Thank you, to our Mayors, Town Councils, and Staffs!

J. Taylor Ryan, Founder and President

St James Conservancy

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