



Annual BEAT Membership Meeting via Zoom April 29, 2021

Welcome

BEAT President Pete Key welcomed attendees the meeting held via Zoom at 7 pm on April 29, 2021. He described the event as “BEAT’s long awaited, first public peek from the COVID pandemic, and noted “our team is ready and excited to get out in public again, as we all get vaccinated, but we have not been resting idle while we have been stuck inside.”

Review of BEAT Board Activities

Pete reviewed BEAT’s recent activities to support of friends of the environment around the community and the state:

1. A partnership with the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) concerning offshore oil and gas activities under proposed changes to the Coastal Zone Management Act,
2. Support of other organizations like the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, the Riverkeepers network, Surfrider Foundation and others to fight the effort to silence individual states’ abilities to challenge offshore drilling plans,
3. A series of letters to
 - a) The Department of Coastal Management concerning imminent harm caused by intensive coastal seismic testing,
 - b) The EPA expressing BEAT’s strong objection to removing loggerhead turtles from threatened status, and

- c) The National Marine Fisheries regarding a proposed rule to amend Lobster and Crab trapping processes that would endanger already urgently critical right whale populations,
- 4. A meeting Beth Hansen, Chair of the Environmental Action Team of the League of Women Voters Lower Cape Fear to solidify a partnership across the Cape Fear into New Hanover County,
- 5. A meeting with Brayton Willis, Project Chair, Brunswick County NAACP, to begin a relationship supporting the Gullah Geechee Heritage Greenway/Blueway that will honor the northernmost Gullah Geechee population beginning in Navassa, NC:
 - a) This project should further assist that community in its effort to recover from decades of pollution, including a Superfund and numerous brown sites, and
 - b) BEAT also showed support by submitting a letter with the proposal to the National Park Service,
- 6. A formal statement to the NCDEQ outlining BEAT's opposition to the proposed plan to allow Dominion Energy to capture hog waste basin gases and burn it for electrical utility production:
 - a) BEAT argued that this plan does not go far enough in the effort to remove waste lagoons from flood prone areas, and
 - b) The overrun flows into our drinking water aquifers and damages the ecology, and, finally,
- 7. BEAT's partnership with the SELC, which led to the closure in March 2021 of the Capitol Power Industries power plant near Southport that was causing air pollution by burning tires and treated lumber:
 - a) The closure was a huge win for people in the Southport community
 - b) They lacked power to control the facility right outside their town limits.

Pete summarized the review by noting that BEAT had not been idle and is looking forward to partnering with other groups to multiply, empower and activate our membership bases to keep our government partners informed so they can do the right thing for the people of Brunswick County.

Pete noted that in 2021 BEAT will focus on meaningful legislation that will finally put PFAS (forever chemicals) under the purview of the NCDEQ and the EPA. He emphasized that the senseless poisoning of our water resources by "chemical industry terrorist organizations like DuPont and Chemours" must end. He said "common sense tells us that if any of us had perpetrated the same activities as these industrial giants, we would be buried under the jail for life."

Introduction of Guest Speaker

Pete introduced Emily Donovan, co-founder of Clean Cape Fear. He said BEAT was excited and honored to be hosting such an important member of the BC community and noted that her work has helped elevate NC's PFAS contamination crisis to the national stage. Pete noted that Emily's success in increasing community awareness of PFAS contamination contributed to NC's litigation against DuPont/Chemours and to several PFAS-related bills filed during the current NC legislative session and reviewed some of her many recent accomplishments:

- Testifying before Congress twice regarding PFAS contamination,
- Creating a lobby day effort in Washington, DC for local community members
- Participating in Washington Post Live panel discussion with actor Mark Ruffalo and lawyer Rob Bilott,
- Helping organize and co-host screenings of *Dark Waters*, in Wilmington and Raleigh. These events helped pressure NC's Attorney General litigation against DuPont/Chemours for natural resource damages and NC's General Assembly filing a historic amount of PFAS bills during the 2021-2022 legislative session,
- Securing reverse osmosis filling stations for 49 public schools in New Hanover and Brunswick counties,
- Serving on the leadership team for the National PFAS Contamination Coalition and various community advisory boards and coalitions to address PFAS contamination,
- Participating as a panel speaker at the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine and serving as a member of their Community Liaison team that provides regular guidance and input surrounding the development of these national town hall events,
- Serving on the planning board for the 2022 National PFAS Conference to be held in Wilmington, NC next summer, and
- Visiting Washington, DC and Raleigh, NC frequently to pressure lawmakers and regulators for quicker responses to our growing PFAS public health crisis.

Presentation by Emily Donovan

Action Alert: An Update on PFAS in our Drinking Water

Emily's hour-long presentation including the question and answer session is available at the following link, using passcode 5ANB+Dk

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/4jdXeLUE4k3kbIrb1EMlpQLVnT_HuZ9v5gl-L3fq7CnNKTRdVRsGaDt521zmbW-x.fxzXV6sRwm4a0beu

Awards

2020-21 Friend of the Environment Award

Pete presented the 2020-21 Friend of the Environment award to Emily Donovan. He expressed BEAT's deep gratitude and appreciation Emily for her tireless work fighting for clean water in southeastern NC. Emily. He noted the community owes Emily a debt of gratitude that cannot be repaid.

2020-21 Distinguished Service Award

Pete presented the second award to Dr. Dwight Frederick Willis, "the person whose service to the community has been above and beyond". Pete noted that in so many areas of our community, including AARP, the Democratic Party, Habitat for Humanity and other community efforts Dwight has fought tirelessly for equity in our community and had earned this award many times over.

Announcements

Before adjourning the meeting, Pete discussed the following upcoming events:

1. Membership Meeting May 27th at 7 pm via Zoom
2. Elections to be held on May 27th
 - a) Treasurer (currently vacant)
 - b) Secretary (will be open)
 - c) 2021-2022 Board of Directors
 - i. Pete noted that the entire boards tenure expired this year; however, due to COVID-19, the Board adopted measures to extend that tenure until elections could be held
 - ii. Voting will be via electronic polling
3. Information on how to join BEAT is available on the website, www.bcbeat.org
4. An invitation to participants to be added to the BEAT mailing list for updates on community environmental health issues.

Pete concluded the meeting by expressing his hope that it informed and energized attendees to become more active, especially in the area of encouraging our government and municipal partners in making the right choices for our community.

Pete adjourned the meeting at about 8:40 pm.