



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Release: Immediate
Date: March 25, 2011

Contact: Jim Hawhee
Phone: (919) 733-0121

Albemarle-Pamlico estuary named one of “America’s Great Waters”

RALEIGH – The Albemarle-Pamlico estuary, which covers parts of North Carolina and Virginia, has been selected as one of “America’s Great Waters” by the National Wildlife Federation’s Great Waters Coalition.

Bodies of water earn the “America’s Great Waters” designation because of their size, uniqueness, productivity and cultural importance. The Albemarle-Pamlico estuary earned its designation because it is the second largest estuary in the nation, supports abundant marine life and fisheries and enhances the region’s tourism industry.

The Albemarle-Pamlico estuary covers more than 70 counties in northeastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia where freshwater and saltwater meet. The North Carolina Coastal Federation and the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program sought the “Great Waters” designation.

“The Albemarle-Pamlico estuary is one of the most beautiful and economically beneficial natural resources in North Carolina,” said Dee Freeman, secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the umbrella agency for the estuary program. “We can thank the Coastal Federation, the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program and many other organizations for this recognition.”

The National Wildlife Federation also named the estuary as one of “America’s Great Waters” because of efforts to properly manage and protect the region’s resources. The Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program and its partners have adopted comprehensive management plans and created public and private partnerships that protect the estuary. Effective watershed management bolsters agriculture, forestry, fishing, shipping and tourism.

The Albemarle-Pamlico estuary joins other notable national waters that have earned the “America’s Great Waters” distinction, including the Great Lakes, the Puget Sound, Chesapeake Bay and the Everglades.

“The Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary is a national treasure,” said Todd Miller, executive director of the North Carolina Coastal Federation, the state’s only nonprofit organization focused on protecting and restoring the North Carolina coast. “We’re glad to see it getting the recognition it deserves, and we’re proud to be working with our partners to protect and restore it.”

For more information, see www.apnep.org or contact community specialist Jim Hawhee at (919) 733-0121 or jim.hawhee@ncdenr.gov. To learn more about the N.C. Coastal Federation’s work in the estuary, visit www.nccoast.org or contact coastal scientist Erin Fleckenstein at (252) 473-1607 or erinf@nccoast.org.

###