



HOLLOWAY Funeral Home allows oysters to achieve vertical relief, where the oysters grow on top of one another.

The initial goal is to restore functional oyster reefs in the coastal bays. A functional oyster reef occurs when the inter-tidal reefs show vertical relief of a variety of oysters in size and age that will filter and improve water quality, provide habitat for other species and assist in the overall food chain in the coastal bays, said Truitt.

The Nature Conservancy maintains about 32 acres of existing and restored reefs. Several members on the deployment team mentioned how it feels good knowing they are giving something back to nature through this project.

"I thought everything went great," Truitt said, calling it an "enthusiastic bunch of kids. All around it was a good experience for them and a benefit to the environment."

The team consisted of Perkinson along with high school friends Carter Hanson, Martin Palmer, brother Gabe Perkinson, father Paul Perkinson, Allied Concrete president Gus Lorber, Michael Wertheim and John Davis.

Additionally, volunteers Bob Jones and Ken Waltman assisted in the deployment of the reef balls. On the barge carrying the oyster reef balls were team members Marcus Killmon from the conservancy, Patrick Conroy, Josh Richards and Rachael Baker from the Long Term Ecological Research Lab located at the Anheuser-Busch Coastal Research Center in Oyster and Conservancy Oyster Restoration Technician Adam DiNuovo.

Virginia's Eastern Shore oyster population has become very troubled over the years. From the 1930's through the 1950's the annual oyster harvest on the seaside totaled half a million bushels.

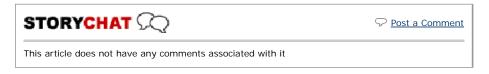
From the 1950's until today, disease outbreaks and continual overharvesting have had detrimental effects on the oyster population. In the 1993-1994 harvest season, the seaside Eastern Shore public oyster harvest totaled about 1,500 bushels and the private oyster harvest over 4,500 bushels.

In the 2004-2005 season, public harvest was less then 500 bushels and private harvest was about 600 to 700 bushels.

This restoration effort was part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration -- The Nature Conservancy Community Restoration Program.

The object of the program is to get local community members and industries to support restoration projects. Allied Concrete served as an industry partner while Tandem Friends School and local volunteers served as community partners for this particular project.

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