

ANN H. HUDSON, interviewed by Glenn Blackburn on January 19, 2009. Ann is Irv Hooper's daughter. She helped found Carteret County Crossroads and was the organization's first President in 1979.

Ann said that in the late 1970s the Carteret County Board of Commissioners had an environmental advisory group that made recommendations to the Board, but this group was disbanded by the Commissioners because of a sharp disagreement over an environmental issue. The core of this advisory group then decided to organize Carteret County Crossroads. Dr. John Costlow, head of the Duke Marine Lab, was very influential in Carteret County at that time, and he strongly encouraged formation of the Crossroads organization. Ann was very interested in environmental issues, and with Costlow's encouragement she became the first President of Crossroads. Crossroads had about 300 members at this point. She said that the organization was very good at getting different types of people, including many fishers, involved in local environmental disputes.

Ann pointed out that one of the reasons there was so much interest in environmental questions in Carteret County was that there were in the county a lot of marine laboratories and institutes with a lot of environmental scientists. These scientists encouraged citizens to be concerned about environmental problems. Another reason was that Morehead City was a state seaport, and that brought up a lot of issues. One issue was a proposal for an ammonia facility on Radio Island. A lot of people were afraid of the environmental consequences of ammonia being carried in and out on trains, and they fought the proposal for the ammonia facility.

Todd Miller was around the area a lot at the time that Carteret County Crossroads was getting started. Ann said that Todd was clearly interested in coastal environmental work in the late 1970s. She thought that Todd had a really good idea, when he proposed setting up the Federation as an umbrella organization that would support other local environmental organizations by providing scientific and technical information to them. John Runkle and Derb Carter were two crucial figures who helped Todd get the Federation started. Both of them already had some state-wide standing and therefore had the contacts and knowledge necessary to help get a new organization up and running. Runkle was also very supportive of Carteret County Crossroads.

In the mid-1980s, Ann worked with the Federation for some months as an Education Specialist. Her primary focus was working with university professors in the Research Triangle area in an attempt to get them to be more interested and involved in coastal environmental issues. The purpose was to make some initial contacts with these professors in the hope that the contacts would lead to something bigger in the long run.

Ann stressed that she has always thought of the Coastal Federation as an environmental organization, its basic purpose being to protect the coast. However, she pointed out, doing good environmental work requires organizing citizens, so there is a clear citizen-activism component to the Federation's work.

In Ann's view, the major successes of the Federation when she knew it in the 1980s included the fight against peat mining in Hyde and Tyrrell Counties and the battle over Stump Sound and Permuda Island. Another major success at that time was the ability of the Federation to bring the issue of hog farms and hog wastes to the attention of the public.

Ann said that what has always amazed her about Todd Miller is the amount of money he has been able to raise from foundations and citizens. His vision of what the coast should be is very impressive to many people. Todd is very good at working behind the scenes. He does not flaunt his own abilities, but pushes his vision of the coast to the forefront. She noted that she was always more of a vocal advocate, while Todd is more of an organizer.

Speaking of the Coastal Federation as it is today, she said that it has become a state-wide presence that defines and stresses its own goals. As a result, it has moved away from the original idea of the Federation as an umbrella organization that helps other local coastal organizations.

As for the future, she hopes that the Federation will stress the importance of keeping coastal waters clean so as to foster the shellfishing industry. Emphasizing that clean water is essential for both fishers and swimmers might get the public's attention.

Finally, she said that she doesn't remember people talking about any connection between their religious beliefs and their environmental concerns. But, she pointed out that a lot of people in the Federation are religious. For many people, love of the earth points back to God. The feeling of a connection between religious belief and the environment is there for many people.