

## Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

### Influence of Aquatic Vegetation

Describing the importance of aquatic vegetation in any ecosystem is too deep for words. A majority of aquatic vegetation can be found along shallow waters 6 feet or less, because of light limitations.

Over 200,000 acres of aquatic vegetation lay along North Carolina shorelines pumping oxygen into the water as well as providing shelter and food for an estimated 150 species of fish and invertebrates, that of which 30 different species which are important to the commercial fish industry. Flounder, red drum, and spotted sea trout to name a few of the major species that prey upon many of the nursery areas of many of these species.



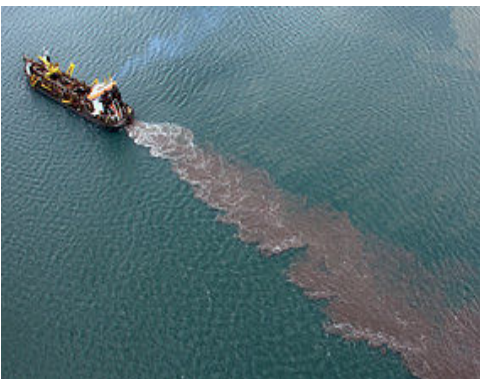
### Issue at hand

Eastern North Carolina has seen an increase of mass development in the past decade. With more homes being built results with there being more boats and pollution. A boater trolling through aquatic vegetation realizes that it's a nightmare to get in and out of. Dredging maintenance is a yearly activity that our state covers yearly, covering around 7,000 acres, to help navigate through popular ports and/or inlets. Preventing the illegal act of dredging for residential and commercial purpose is something our state manages very well.

One must apply for permit and must meet these requirements;

- Demonstrate and documents a water-dependent need exists for the evacuation of vegetation
- There must be clear evidence that man-made or natural channel existed
- Excavated material can be removed and place in an approved disposal area without impacting adjacent aquatic vegetation areas
- The original depth and width of a human-made or natural channel will not be increased

Even though aquatic vegetation covers over 200,000 acres of shoreline if everyone felt the need to demolish vegetation along property or inlets, that number of vegetation with significantly drop resulting in the loss of vital oxygen and demolition of aquatic habi-



Public health and potential damage outside of a dredge site also becomes a public health issues. Plumes created by dredging can stir toxic materials. If not managed properly these plumes could have a long lasting effect on aquatic life and potentially cause minor to severe skin damage to humans.

### Learn More

COASTAL STUDY ON DREDGING

[http://www.ncfisheries.net/habitat/chppdocs/E\\_SAV.pdf](http://www.ncfisheries.net/habitat/chppdocs/E_SAV.pdf)

WIKIPEDIA DREDGING

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dredging>

NC DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

<http://dcm2.enr.state.nc.us/Facts/habitat.htm>