
The North Carolina coast and its barrier islands are some of the state’s most treasured and celebrated natural resources. Their stunning beauty and biological diversity draw millions of visitors to the state who infuse local economies with billions of dollars and help make North Carolina the nation’s sixth most visited state. In their book *The Battle for North Carolina’s Coast: Evolutionary History, Present Crisis, and Vision for the Future*, Stanley Riggs and his co-authors contend that these coastal areas are in jeopardy and that there needs to be a shift in how coastal development and preservation take place to ensure their continued health and value.

All the authors are faculty in the Department of Geological Sciences at East Carolina University. Riggs is Distinguished Research Professor and Harriot College Distinguished Professor; Dorothea V. Ames is research instructor; Stephen J. Culver is Harriot College Distinguished Professor and chair; and David J. Mallinson is associate professor. Their expert credentials are unimpeachable, and their scholarship, experience with coastal issues, and passion for the subject is reflected in this work.

The book gives readers a broad understanding of the geomorphologic history of the coast and of the issues associated with development, sea level rise, and weather effects. The authors point out that North Carolina’s barrier islands are in a state of constant change, their topography affected by storms, climate change, and other coastal processes. They also discuss the nature of development in these areas and how it interplays with coastal change. They contend that the current intensity of this development cannot be sustained and that current engineering practices not only cannot stem the changes brought on by natural processes, but can actually exacerbate the problems associated with them. They argue that a fundamental shift in how we think about and interact with the coastal areas is essential in order to foster the continued health and utility of our coastal areas. The authors provide specific examples of how to maintain the area’s tourist economy while making informed and effective decisions on how to govern development. All of this is expressed in a manner that though technical, is still accessible to the casual reader.

The text is accompanied by a myriad of images, maps, and graphs that help to illustrate the sometimes complex issues that are discussed. Also included are detailed footnotes, a rich bibliography, and a deep index that ultimately increase the utility of the work. Riggs and his colleagues have produced a superior study that should remain timely and valuable for years to come. It should be read by anyone who has an interest in the interplay between man and nature and the necessity of being good stewards for the areas in which we live and play.

This work is suitable for advanced readers and is recommended for both public and academic libraries.

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