



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **CAPE FEAR RC&D COORDINATOR RECEIVES YWCA AWARD**

Wilmington, NC – More than 450 people gathered to honor 42 dynamic women and young leaders at the 24th Annual YWCA Cape Fear Women of Achievement Awards at UNC-Wilmington's Burney Center on May 22, 2008. All of the women and young leaders nominated have worked to bridge gaps in communities and schools, broken barriers and opened the door for other women and teens.

Marilyn Meares, Cape Fear Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator, was recognized with the award in the environmental category for her work as the catalyst in ensuring the completion of complex natural resource and community development projects in five counties. Marilyn has brought together environmental professionals and community volunteer resources to implement lasting conservation and environmental projects that exhibit the science of design and environmental integrity. She understands the intricacies of water quality, surface water management, wetlands restoration and wildlife habitat maintenance.

Marilyn initiated the process of preserving the northern portion of Eagles Island for wildlife habitat and recreational and educational uses and developed it with New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District. She is working with citizens of Maple Hill and Pender County to find permanent solutions to the area's septic system failure and has submitted a request for grant funding of \$1.4 million dollars to match NC Rural Center funds.

Marilyn has also assisted the Spaulding Monroe Alumni Association in Bladenboro to submit grants which resulted in an architectural study and reuse design for turning the old school building into a community culture center and to hire a permanent director for the center. She is chair of the Columbus County Landfill Gas Advisory Committee as well as many other community committees.

The YWCA is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world. Across the globe, YWCA has more than 25 million members in 122 countries, including 2 million members in 300 local associations in the United States. More important than the numbers, is our mission to eliminate racism and empower women. We provide safe places for women and girls, build strong women leaders, and advocate for women's rights and civil rights in Congress.

Cape Fear Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) is one of more than 300 councils in all 50 states and US territories made up of volunteers serving their communities. Cape Fear RC&D assists Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover and Pender counties with projects that help improve environmental, social, and economic conditions throughout their communities. For more information, visit <http://www.capefearrcd.org>.

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