

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lisa Andree

Plastic Ocean Project

910-431-8852

[lisa@plasticoceanproject.org](mailto:lisa@plasticoceanproject.org)

### **Belhaven Chosen As The Kick Off Site for *Operation 356***

BELHAVEN, NC-April 11, 2023-NC-based environmental nonprofit, Plastic Ocean Project, aka “POP,” has chosen historic Belhaven as the launch site for its traveling eco-education awareness campaign, *Operation 356*. POP’s mission is: “dedicated to the protection of human and environmental health by mitigating the plastic pollution crisis.”

*Operation 356* officially kicks off with the *For the Ocean Gala* on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Spoon River Artworks and Market. The gala is also part of Belhaven’s two-day Earth Day Spring Fling.

The gala will feature a cocktail hour, sit-down dinner, silent auction and screening of the short documentary film, “356.” Bonnie Monteleone, director of both POP and the film, will answer questions and share stories about her research and discoveries. Over a three-year span, while on several research expeditions, Monteleone covered 10,000 nautical miles through four of the five global oceanic gyres. In 2012, this work led to the creation of Plastic Ocean Project and Monteleone’s commitment to finding solutions for plastic pollution.

*Operation 356* was inspired by the nonprofit’s short documentary film, “356” that’s already been accepted into eight film festivals. It focuses on the endangered North Atlantic Right whale, why its survival is key to ours and why addressing this situation sooner rather than later is of vital importance. Monteleone explains, “The facts are clear: the health of our oceans and all of the life in them, directly impacts the health of the entire planet.”

In November of 2020, POP’s researchers and production crew embarked on a film expedition off the NC coast near Beaufort. Their goal was to get footage of migrating whales and a newborn North Atlantic Right whale that NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) had dubbed “number 356.” What transpired that day is recounted in POP’s short film “356” which will be featured at the *For the Ocean Gala* on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>.

For more information about POP please visit: [www.plasticoceanproject.org](http://www.plasticoceanproject.org)

Operation 356 and *For the Ocean Gala* details and tickets here:

<https://www.plasticoceanproject.org/356.html>

Link for information for Belhaven’s Earth Day Spring Fling here:

<https://www.visitbelhavennc.com/events-1> or call the Belhaven Chamber of Commerce: 252-943-3770

