



**Masonboro Island Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 1, 2010, 6 – 8 pm**

Attendance

<u>LAC Members</u>	<u>Affiliation/Interest</u>	<u>Present</u>
Ms. Jessica Blake	NC Coastal Land Trust	Yes
Mr. Richard Cecelski	Commercial User	No
Dr. Steve Everhart	DCM	Yes
Mr. Walker Golder	Audubon	Yes
Lt. Matt Payne	New Hanover County Sherriff's Department	Yes
Mr. William Raney	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Rich Carpenter	NC Marine Fisheries	Yes
Dr. Anthony Snider	UNCW EVS/former site manager	No
Dr. Amanda Southwood Williard	Research/UNCW BIO	Yes
Mr. Ted Wilgis	Education/NCCF	Yes
Mr. Ronny Williams	Community Member	No/resigned

Others

Sean Ahlum	Surfrider
Byron Toothman	NCCR/NCNERR, Research Biologist
Heather Wells	NCCR/NCNERR, Research Biologist
Jacque Ott	NCCR/NCNERR, GIS Specialist
Jason Dail	NCCR/NCNERR, Stewardship & Education Specialist
Rebecca Ellin	NCCR/NCNERR, Reserve Manager
Hope Sutton	NCCR/NCNERR, Stewardship Coordinator and Southern Sites Manager

Reserve Update – Rebecca Ellin

New Staff

The Reserve has two new staff. Jason Dail joined the program in July 2010 and is a Stewardship and Education Specialist based out of Wilmington. Jason transferred from the regulatory program within the Division and will be managing the Zeke's Island and Bald Head Woods sites and working with the education staff to develop and implement educational programming for the southern sites.

Scott Kucera joined the program in October 2010 as Education Coordinator working from our Beaufort office. Scott has a strong background in public education development, implementation, and administration through his work experiences at the N.C. Maritime Museum, Exploris Museum, and Museum of Coastal Carolina and Ingram Planetarium. Scott will oversee all education programming for the Reserve and focus on developing a general public education program to help this audience better understand the Reserve program and how to use the sites, coastal and estuarine concepts, and high priority coastal management issues.

Budget Update

The Reserve receives funding from both the State of N.C. and the federal government for operation of the program and a budget update was provided for the upcoming fiscal year. The State is anticipating a budget shortfall of approximately \$3 billion and state agencies have prepared 5, 10, and 15% reduction scenarios for the upcoming 2011-2013 budget planning process to help address this shortfall. Federal appropriations for operation of the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve portion of the program are uncertain at this time; two scenarios that are possible are level-funding and an approximate \$30,000 reduction.

Please note that budget material is included as an addendum to the topics covered during meeting.

N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve 2005-2009 Federal Evaluation

The N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve was recently evaluated by the federal government to ensure that the State is operating the Reserve in compliance with federal regulations, cooperative agreements, and its federally-approved management plan. The evaluation team visited N.C in December 2009 and published its findings in July 2010. The findings conclude that the State is adhering to the programmatic requirements for operation of the Reserve. The accomplishments and program suggestions were reviewed and are summarized in Appendix 1 of the document which is available at www.nccoastalreserve.net under Publications.

Rules and Policies Review Process

The Reserve will be undertaking a Rules and Policies Review Process in 2011 to provide recommendations for updating current rule and policy language for management of the Reserve sites. The Reserve rules (N.C. Administrative Code T15A 07O) have remained relatively unchanged since their adoption in 1986 and contain ambiguous terminology and do not

address new challenges at the sites. Additionally, other guidance documents for management of the sites are not consistent and are also out of date (i.e., state dedication letters, management plans). The objective of the Rules and Policies Review Process is to update the rules and policies to provide clear and consistent guidance for the public on use of the sites, an effective management tool for staff, and ensure enforceability by the appropriate agencies when needed. The process will include definition of the vague terms currently found in the Reserve rules, examination of a variety of management topics (e.g., fires, fireworks, organized events), development of new or revised rule and policy language where needed, and input on the draft language from the following entities: the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Local Advisory Committees (LACs), the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission, and a series of public meetings. The management topics will be sent to the LACs prior to their review to ensure that the Reserve is examining the appropriate topics. The proposed alcohol prohibition that was considered in 2009 is on hold and will be reconsidered as part of this process. The Reserve anticipates bringing draft language to the LACs in late 2011.

Draft LAC Procedures Document – Rebecca Ellin

The Reserve is required to maintain a LAC for each Reserve site according to the N.C. Administrative Code. The Code stipulates that the committees shall be appointed by the Secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and shall include researchers, educators, managers, and citizens that use or are affected by the Reserve. Additional guidance does not currently exist for management of the committees. To make these committees as effective as possible and transparent in their appointment and operations, the Reserve drafted procedures by which the committees will operate. The procedures were reviewed and comments discussed. Committee members may provide comments on the draft document through December 10, 2010. Comments will be considered and the document finalized for an effective date of 2011.

Site Update – Hope Sutton

- An overview of the past years activities and current site specific issues was provided.
- July Fourth was smoother than the last few years. New Hanover County Sheriff's Department deputies were on site throughout the weekend. Coordination among agencies has increased. Most trash cleaned up by community volunteers during and immediately after the peak of the weekend. Other holiday weekends and weekends with good weather are seeing large crowds but general behavior is good and impacts are not extensive.
- A methodology for tracking visitor numbers is under development. Quantification of impacts will also begin to be looked addressed.
- Education and outreach efforts continue with an updated brochure soon to be printed and informational signage coming this year. Presentations and attendance at public events continue. All staff are involved in these efforts. Audiences include University classes, civic groups, and the general public.
- Species of concern monitoring this season included diamondback terrapins, American oystercatchers, and seaturtles.

- Invasives work includes treatment of beach vitex. Ongoing monitoring and selective retreatment will be needed.
- Red fox continue to be a problem for turtle and shorebird nesting. Currently researching management approaches and looking for potential research partners.
- The Army Corps conducted sand placement in January in a one-mile area approximately 2 miles south of Masonboro Inlet. Minimal impact occurred and all heavy equipment was confined to the beach strand. Another project will be conducted this winter to secure the anchor end of the north jetty.

Member Roundtable and other comments

- Lt. Payne confirmed the successful operation during the Fourth of July holiday and reported that inclusion of an EMT will be continued with future operations.
- Dr. Everhart discussed the recent meeting between Reserve and DCM regulatory staff, commenting that there are further opportunities for collaboration and integration.
- Ms. Blake acknowledged and appreciated the productive year the Reserve had.
- Mr. Wilgis commented on previous restoration collaboration and questioned opportunities for volunteer involvement in similar projects.
- Mr. Carpenter praised advances with management of challenging high visitation situation and discussed mitigation of human impacts to sensitive areas such as bird nesting areas.
- Dr. Southwood Williard reported on the efforts of the sea turtle monitoring team and volunteers. Predation protection efforts continue on partially predated nests.

Meeting Follow Up

- Contact information for Jason Dail was sent via email to all LAC members along with a reminder that additional comments on the Draft LAC Procedures should be sent to Jason by December 10th.