



**Currituck Banks Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 13, 2011, 9–11 am
Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education**

Attendance

| <u>LAC Members</u> | <u>Affiliation/Interest</u> | <u>Present</u> |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Ms. Sally Baron | Community Member | Yes |
| Mr. Mike Hoff | USFWS | Yes |
| Officer Steve Jarvis | N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Enforcement | No |
| Sheriff Susan Johnson | Currituck County Sheriff's Department | Yes |
| Mr. Aaron McCall | The Nature Conservancy | Yes |
| Dr. Clarence Styron | N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education | Represented by Sharon Meade |
| Ms. Mary Riley | Community Member | Yes |
| Mrs. Donna Robinson | Community Member | No |
| Mr. Bill Robinson | Community Member | No |
| <u>Others</u> | | |
| Mr. Ron Renaldi | DCM, Field Representative for Currituck | Yes |
| Rebecca Ellin | DCM, Reserve Manager | Yes |
| Claudia Jones | DCM, Northern Sites Manager | Yes |

Reserve Update – Rebecca Ellin

Staffing News

- Dr. Braxton Davis is the new Director of the N.C. Division of Coastal Management as of December 1, 2011. Dr. Davis was previously the Director of Policy and Planning Division within South Carolina's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

- Dr. Bo Dame resigned from the Northern Sites Manager position in January 2011. Claudia Jones is currently serving as the temporary Northern Sites Manager while we work to fill the position permanently.
- Mr. Jason Dail moved from the Stewardship and Education Specialist position with the Reserve to a field representative position with the Division in Wilmington Regional office.
- The GIS Specialist position was impacted by the budget reductions in 2011 and Ms. Jacquie Ott is no longer working for the program.
- Mr. Scott Kucera resigned from the Education Coordinator position in July 2011. The vacant position was advertised in September.

Rules and Policies Review Process

The working draft rule language is under review within the Division. Next steps include refining the draft language internally and seeking input 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 Reserve anticipates bringing draft language to the LACs in 2012.

Local Advisory Committee Operating Procedures Document

The Reserve is finalizing the operating procedures document with an anticipated publication date of February 2012. The document contains a brief introduction to the Reserve program and outlines the purpose and roles of the committees, committee composition, member selection and responsibilities, terms of service, and meeting operations. The finalized document will be emailed to Local Advisory Committee members and posted on the Reserve website. The Reserve will hold an application period for community member and organizations membership on the committee in March 2012.

Site Update – Claudia Jones

- Currituck Banks had a summer intern, Bobby Barksdale, from Radford College in Virginia who worked on general maintenance, feral horse and pig monitoring, and invasive vegetation monitoring.
- Staff collected GPS points around stands of *Phragmites australis*, the invasive reed that grows in the marsh. This will be used to compare to a large stand that was mapped and treated with herbicide in 2004 and as baseline data for additional stands that are growing in the marsh on Reserve property.
- Staff continued to monitor the use of the Reserve by feral hogs and feral horses.
- US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is looking at possibility of eradicating feral hogs on the barrier islands of Virginia and North Carolina. Staff participated in meetings, as well as LAC members, Mike Hoff and Aaron McCall.
- There were 160 registered hunters for the Currituck Banks Reserve for the 2010-2011 season. Of these, 20 were from Currituck County, 119 from Dare, and the rest from out of the area and out of state. Hunters reported shooting 25 hogs and this is likely an underestimate as not all kills are reported.
- Reserve staff continues to work with the Currituck County Wild Horse Advisory Board on updating the Wild Horse Management Plan. The current document is scheduled to be updated in 2012. The last aerial census was conducted in the fall of 2011. There were 144 horses counted at this time.

- Staff has worked with the Currituck County Sheriff's Department regarding parking for hunters. The only place for hunters to access the Reserve is from the beach. County ordinance prohibits parking within the first half mile from the paved road. This leaves a narrow strip for parking in front of The Nature Conservancy's game lands before reaching the USFWS one mile no parking area. At the Sheriff's request, staff has provided registered hunters at the Currituck Banks Reserve a bright orange placard that can be placed on their dashboard to make them readily identifiable. Staff is working with County staff to include language in their ordinance to allow parking during the hunting season along the most northern portion of Reserve property along the beach.
- Staff continues to work with County staff on the portions of the Corolla Greenway that go through Reserve property.
 - The first phase of construction within the Reserve included a bridge across the ditch to the Reserve's parking lot and placement of new bike racks. The first phase is near completion. We hope to work with the Master Gardeners or other community group for planting along the entrance to the parking lot once the construction for Phase II of the Greenway is complete to meet conditions of the County's easement with the State for use of Reserve property. The County is responsible for development of this planting plan with input from Reserve staff.
 - We are working on a new easement agreement that would allow the County to extend a walking path across Hwy 12 and across the dunes to the beach. The path would cross from the north side of HWY 12 to the south just past the cattle guard. The path would essentially follow the southern boundary of Reserve property. The path would result in minimal disturbance to this portion of the Reserve as no grading would be allowed and sand fencing or posts with ropes would be installed to guide visitors.
- Staff participated on a Beach Driving Committee looking at congestion, education, and public safety. Recommendations were made by the Committee to the County Commissioners.
- The Reserve has two new welcome signs for Currituck Banks. One will be placed at the entrance to the parking lot and the other on the north of Hwy 12 after the cattle guard and before coming to the beach.
- Currituck Banks also has new brochures which will be distributed to interested parties.
- There was minimal damage to the Reserve from Hurricane Irene including a few downed and leaning trees.
- Thanks to Bill and Donna Robinson for doing such a great job of keeping the boardwalk cleared.

Member Roundtable and Other Comments

- Aaron McCall reported that they had an intern who was monitoring five wildlife cameras to document feral hog activity. The cameras have recorded a lot of hunting activity.
- Sheriff Johnson reported that the County has hired a consultant to evaluate the beach driving situation.

- Sharon Meade indicated that they get lots of questions about the general area. Any information that we could provide to them- hunting, general brochures -would be helpful.
- Mike Hoff reported that the US Army Corps of Engineers has removed 2000 lbs of munitions debris from the Monkey Island Unit of the Refuge. There will be a deer/hog hunt on portions of the Currituck NWR; harvest information will be reported next year. The Refuge bunkhouse will be completed soon. They are working on a Currituck NWR brochure.
- Sally Baron will be leaving the area and therefore leaving the LAC. Thanks to Sally for her many years of input and support to the Reserve.
- Mary Riley suggested using wildlife cameras on the Reserve to monitor activity. Claudia Jones reported that staff had set them up during the summer, but primarily got horses, raccoons, and deer, yet no hogs. There was a discussion about using cameras for monitoring versus enforcement. Mary also said that trash had been noticed in the Reserve presumably from hunters.
- The LAC is willing to meet twice a year.

Meeting Follow Up

Claudia Jones will contact the committee regarding spring and fall LAC meeting dates.