



**Masonboro Island Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 5, 2012, 6 pm**

Attendance

<u>LAC Members</u>	<u>Affiliation/Interest</u>	<u>Present</u>
Ms. Jessica Blake	N.C. Coastal Land Trust	Yes
Mr. Richard Cecelski	Commercial User	No
Lieutenant Matt Payne	New Hanover County Sheriff's Department	No
Mr. Ted Wilgis	Non-profit/Education/NC Coastal Federation	No
Ms. Amanda Southwood-Williard	UNCW Biology Department	Yes
vacant	Division of Marine Fisheries	No
Ms. Debbie Wilson	Division of Coastal Management	No
Mr. William Raney	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Walker Golder	Non-profit/Audubon	Yes
Dr. Anthony Snider	UNCW EVS	Yes
<u>Others Present</u>		
Hope Sutton	DCM/NCCR, Stewardship Coordinator & Southern Sites Manager	
Joanne Harcke	Friends of the Reserve	
Neal Andrew	Member of the public	
Haywood Newkirk	Member of the public	
Dwight Jessup	Member of the public	
Miles Higgins	Member of the public	
Ed Godwin	Member of the public	
Nancy Buckingham	Member of the public	
Pat Rittenmeyer	Member of the public	
Ken Rittenmeyer	Member of the public	

Reserve Program Update

- No staffing changes have occurred since the November meeting.
- No action has been taken regarding updating the rules of use for the Reserve.
- The federal FY12 budget has been set. The NERRS is level funded for operations. The FY13 budget is expected to be more challenging.
- The LAC Operating Procedures document is now in effect. The application period for open seats on Local Advisory Committees for all sites is underway. Announcement of open seats was made through conventional press releases, the Coastal Reserve website, Facebook and through direct contacts. The deadline is March 31st. Applications will be reviewed by Reserve staff, candidate names will be submitted to the Secretary's office. The date appointments will be made is not known.

Site Update and Old Business

Routine activities

Standard site monitoring and research program activities continued with no major issues. Winter is the low visitation period of the year, so it has been fairly quiet.

Seasonal preparations

Temporary summer staff has been hired, including one half time species monitoring coordinator and three paid interns. A portion of the coordinator's salary and one of the interns will be paid for with funding donated by Friends of the Reserve (FOR). Planning, purchasing and preparations for spring/summer species of concern monitoring activities are underway.

Spring outreach

A number of public outreach offerings are scheduled for the spring months. The first Masonboro Café was offered February 20. These informal gatherings, hosted by FOR, will also be offered March 19, April 16 and May 21. Camping workshops will be offered March 15 and 17. A bird talk will be offered on March 29. A turtle talk will be offered on April 12.

Visitor count project

The contract with UNCW researchers to develop a methodology and statistical analysis tool for determining annual visitation to the Coastal Reserve is nearly in place, with work beginning on this project in the near future. Data collection will begin this summer at the Masonboro site.

Signage project

Informational signage and bulletin cases have been received. Installation is expected to occur in April, depending on permit requirement and approval.

Public relations campaign

Reserve staff had discussions with DCM and DENR public information staff. Public relations specific to the Masonboro site will be developed to be consistent with broader public relations goals and efforts. Social media will be utilized by interns during the summer season to communicate with the public about Reserve activities.

Red fox management

No management activity will be undertaken this winter but may be possible next winter during November-December 2012 and January 2013. During the coming nesting season, the focus will be on protection of nests and documentation of red fox predation to support evaluation of removal effectiveness.

Member Roundtable

- Mr. Raney offered suggestions for increasing attendance at café meetings. He also requested additional information regarding the proposed red fox management effort. Further planning is needed to finalize the details of the effort and determine whether USDA's APHIS branch or a local wildlife removal expert will be contracted.
- Mr. Golder requested information regarding shorebird monitoring. He suggested that Audubon volunteers may be available to assist with monitoring and commented on the importance of understanding the impacts of predators as part of a management operation.

Public Comments

- Mr. Higgins suggested utilizing volunteers for specific projects.
- Mr. Newkirk suggested tapping into existing organizations to recruit volunteers.
- Ms. Rittenmeyer observed that managing organization and scheduling of volunteers without a dedicated staff person to attend to these tasks appears to be the challenge, rather than finding willing volunteers.
- Mr. Rittenmeyer pointed out the need to stagger LAC member terms so that all members would not be rotating off the committee at the same time.
- Mr. Godwin questioned why the proposed fox management activity would take place during the winter. Removal operations would be conducted during the period of the year when females will not have young and when the possibility of visitor interactions is greatly decreased.

Meeting Follow Up

- The next meetings of the LAC will be held on June 4 and November 5.