



**Zeke's Island Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 2, 2010, 10 – 12 pm**

Attendance

<u>LAC Members</u>	<u>Affiliation/Interest</u>	<u>Present</u>
Mr. John Carthy	Commercial User	Yes
Mr. Richard Lawrence	Division of archives and History	No
Dr. Anthony Snider	UNCW EVS/former site maanger	No
Ms. Renee Weeks	NC Aquarium	Yes
Mr. Jeff Owens	NC State Parks	Yes

Others

Dr. Steve Everhart	DCM Wilmington District Manager
Jacque Ott	DCM, NCCR GIS Coordinator
Byron Toothman	DCM, NCCR Research Biologist
Rebecca Ellin	NCCR/NCNERR, Reserve Manager
Jason Dail	NCCR/NCNERR Stewardship and Education Specialist
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 – Jason Dail

- An overview of the past years activities and current site specific issues was provided and discussed, including: Visitor use, invasive species, proposed projects within the basin, Ft. Fisher boat ramp renovation, on-going water quality monitoring and new sign installation.

Member Roundtable and other comments

- Mr. Owens discussed that the DPR has ongoing problems with the “rock wall” that separates the basin from the Cape Fear River. Visitors continue to walk along the wall section that joins federal point to Zeke’s Island. Mr. Owens stated that DPR had to assist in several recovery events this past year because people were venturing out onto the wall and were getting stuck (because of tide) and/or hurt.
- A discussion went on for some time about the rock wall and what could be done to prevent individuals from walking out onto the rocks. Currently, the wall is under the ownership of Cultural Resources and any discussion about removing a portion, or block off access, would need to come under their approval. This topic was saved for future discussion(s).
- Rebecca Ellin (R.E.) mentioned that the NCCR has an MOU with DPR to enforce Reserve Rules at Zeke’s. Also, R.E. mentioned that all local ordinances apply to each Reserve site (within its own jurisdiction). The Attorney General’s office recently confirmed State Parks’ authority to assist with enforcement on the Reserve.
- Jason Dail mentioned that he would inquire about any local ordinance that would prohibit foot traffic along the wall and provide results during the next meeting.

Meeting Follow Up – Jason Dail

- Advised all members to provide comments to me, regarding the draft LAC SOP, no later than December 10, 2010. Will send out reminder email on December 1, 2010. A final document will become effective in 2011.