



**Buxton Woods Reserve  
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, 03 November 2010, 3 – 5 pm**

<u>LAC Members</u>	<u>Affiliation/Interest</u>	<u>Present</u>
Ms. Carol Anderson	Community Member	No
Commissioner Allen Burrus	Dare County	No
Ranger David Carter	Cape Hatteras National Seashore	Yes
Officer Steve Jarvis	N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Enforcement	No
Mr. Russ Kiddy	Community Member	Yes
Ms. Marcia Lyons	Community Member	Yes
Mr. John McCord	UNC Coastal Studies Institute	No
Ms. Pat Moore	Community Member	Yes
Lieutenant Doug Oberbeck	Dare County Sheriff's Office	Yes
Ranger Rob Shackelford	N.C. Division of Forest Resources	No
<u>Others</u>		
Ms. Leslie Pierce	Resident of Hatteras Island	Yes
Mr. Bryan Perry	Buxton Fire Department/Hunting Community	Yes
Mr. Clyde Stowe	Buxton Fire Department	Yes
Mr. Frank Jennings	DCM, District Manager	Yes
Rebecca Ellin	DCM, Reserve Manager	Yes
Bo Dame	DCM, Northern Sites Manager	Yes

**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.

#### 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 070) 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. The committee felt that meeting annually was sufficient and that additional meetings should be added as needed.

### **Site Update – Bo Dame**

- An overview of the past years activities and current site specific issues was provided.
- Research activities: Researchers from Elon University are evaluating a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Restoration project within the Reserve.
- Education/Outreach activities: Staff delivered presentations on submerged aquatic vegetation, maritime forest, and Outer Banks processes to Dare Master Gardeners, College of the Albemarle, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Chowan University, North Carolina State University; staffed a booth at the USFWS Wildfest; and conducted a Herpetology Workshop with the Wildlife Resources Commission's Center for Wildlife Education.
- Stewardship activities:
  - A boundary survey was completed for a portion of the Reserve: East Side = 8,500'; West Side = 14,000'. The boundary was cleared to 3' wide and boundary signs were installed.
  - New signage will be installed in the coming year including a Welcome Sign, Site Information Sign, Message Board, and "Hunter-Hiker" warning signs.
  - Staff is working with DOT to address road maintenance within the Reserve, particularly replacing a failed culvert, filling holes and grading, and minimal brushing.
  - Fire remains a concern at the site. Staff met with fire management partners to discuss options. Development of a draft fire management plan is the next step.
  - Hunting statistics and jawbone study results were presented.
  - Amphibian and reptile monitoring was conducted by students from Cape Hatteras High School, Chowan University, and N.C. State University.
  - There is still evidence of ATV activity at the site including on Spencer Lane and Old Doctors Road.
  - Staff received increased requests regarding horseback riding within the Reserve during the year. Horseback riding is currently only allowed on Piney Ridge Trail. There are concerns about opening up additional portions of the Reserve to horseback riding because of impacts to the sensitive habitats and potentially providing increased access for ATVs.

- The Carolina Estuarine Reserve Foundation (CERF) donated a utility trailer to increase stewardship capacity.

#### **Member Roundtable and other comments**

- Mr. Oberbeck asked about discussions with Dare County concerning a target shooting range.
  - Dr. Dame responded that this issue was discussed at the Hunter Workshop held on September 9, 2010, and as mentioned at that event he would be willing to support an effort to explore use of lands adjacent to the Reserve for that purpose but target shooting is not allowed in the Reserve.
- Ms. Moore asked if the Reserve would be interested in participating in the annual Wings Over Water event.
  - Dr. Dame advised that the Reserve could potentially participate in future years, and suggested some type of nature walk activity.

#### **Meeting Follow Up – Bo Dame**

- On November 8, 2010 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 10<sup>th</sup>.