



**Currituck Banks Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 30, 2012, 9:30 am
Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education**

Attendance

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

Reserve-wide Update- Rebecca Ellin

Staffing News

- Lori Davis was hired as the Education Coordinator effective February 16, 2012. Lori served as the Reserve's Education Specialist for the past ten years through a contract with University of North Carolina Wilmington. In her new role, she manages all K-12

student and teacher and general public programming. Lori has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Methodist College.

- Paula Gillikin was hired as the Central Sites Manager effective February 20, 2012. Paula served as the Reserve's Rachel Carson Site Manager in a temporary capacity since 2007. She will continue to steward the Rachel Carson site in her new role and is also responsible for our Permuda Island Reserve. Paula has a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Environmental Science from the University of North Carolina Wilmington and a Master of Science from Tufts University in Animals and Public Policy.
- Whitney Jenkins was hired as the Coastal Training Program Coordinator effective August 31, 2012. Whitney served as the Reserve's Coastal Training Program Coordinator for the past ten years through a contract with University of North Carolina Wilmington. She will continue her coastal training duties and coordinate communications for the program. Whitney has a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from the University of Florida and a Masters degree from Duke University in Coastal Environmental Management
- Interviews were conducted for the permanent Northern Sites Manager position in October 2012.

Budget Update

The Reserve receives funding from both the State of N.C. and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for operation of the program and a budget update was provided for the current and upcoming fiscal years. The Reserve's total budget for FY12-13 is \$911,287 (\$265,000 from State appropriations and \$646,287 from NOAA, 91% of the NOAA funds support operation of the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve); this excludes any external grant funds. The Division is participating in a number of budget exercises to prepare for the upcoming biennium (FYs 13-14 and 14-15) and gubernatorial transition. Federal appropriations for next fiscal year for operation of the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve portion of the program are uncertain at this time; possible scenarios include level-funding and reductions of various amounts.

Local Advisory Committees

The Reserve program updated the membership of existing and created three new Local Advisory Committees to inform management of the ten Reserve sites. The Local Advisory Committees function as advisory groups, providing feedback and recommendations to staff on site management, research, and education activities, and reviewing policies and implementation strategies. The committees operate per the adopted Operating Procedures document (February 2012); the procedures document, committee membership, and minutes are available on the Reserve's website.

Program Highlights

See attached for 2012 Reserve Program Highlights.

Site Update – Claudia Jones

- Reserve staff continued to work with Currituck County on the portions of the Corolla Greenway that go through Reserve property. There is a second easement in place now between the County and the State that will allow the completion of the final section of a walking path to the beach. This walking-only path cuts across Reserve property just past the cattle guard. Sand fencing will be used to guide people across the property. There will be a gate to let people through and keep horses out. The County will be responsible for maintenance. The County expects to finish this final section by the end of the year.
- The County has completed most of the conditions of the first easement involving the Reserve parking lot. Completed projects include cutting back limbs around the parking lot and putting down a native wildflower seed mix.
- Reserve staff is continuing to gather information on resurfacing the parking lot at Currituck Banks. Staff is looking at specifications and pricing for various types of pervious materials. Any construction would only occur in the winter season –not until 2013-2014 at the earliest.
- The Reserve had a combination Currituck Banks and Kitty Hawk Woods hunter workshop in Kitty Hawk on August 29, 2012. Thirteen hunters attended. The number of registered hunters for both sites combined is 92 thus far. Approximately a dozen of these are for Currituck Banks only.
- The Currituck County Sheriff's Department has asked that the Reserve continue to give registered hunters an orange placard to put in their windshield for parking on the beach during hunting season. This worked well last year and we will continue to do it.
- The three Northern Sites (Currituck Banks, Kitty Hawk Woods, and Buxton Woods) had two interns this past summer. They worked on installation of signs, general trail and parking lot maintenance, trash pick-up and monitoring of horse and feral pig use of the Reserve.
- The interns also helped with the installation of three vegetation transects in the marsh. The transects are lines from the forest/shrub edge to the water with permanent plots that will be visited over time to document potential vegetation changes in species composition and abundance due to climate change/sea level rise, etc.
- The Reserve's Research Coordinator, John Fear, along with other Reserve staff, installed two pieces of equipment in the Currituck Banks marsh that can record small changes in sediment/marsh elevation levels, known as SETs (Surface Elevation Tables) This work is part of a larger effort on federal reserve sites in North Carolina and nation-wide.
- A graduate student is studying nitrogen cycling in the marsh.
- Reserve staff continues to work with the Wild Horse Advisory Board on updating the management plan. A draft has been completed. The next meeting of Board is in January of 2013.

Member Roundtable and Other Comments

- The Robinsons reported that Bryan and Reenie Daggett have been helping them keep the boardwalk clean. Thanks to you all!
- Donna expressed concern about some of the invasive species used in landscaping and wondered how to prevent their continued use and possible introduction into the Reserve. Claudia suggested contacting the County to make sure that there are not any invasive plants on their

planting lists and to contact the Master Gardeners in the area to see what educational efforts they may be involved in.

Follow Up

The next LAC meeting will be spring of 2013.

N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve



... *Protecting over 42,200 acres of coastal habitat for research, education, and stewardship*

Highlights 2012

- Installed two low-flow tide gates and nine flashboard risers at the Buckridge Coastal Reserve. The pre-existing canal system within the Reserve was draining freshwater wetlands and introducing saltier water to the interior of the Reserve. This project, funded by the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, preserves the outstanding resource waters of the Alligator River, restores the natural hydrology of the Reserve, and helps the ecosystem better cope with rising sea levels.
- Completed the Reserve's collaborative project "Sustainable estuarine shoreline stabilization: research, education, and public policy in North Carolina" with NOAA and University partners and funded by the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET). Research results indicate that natural marshes provide higher levels of ecosystem services than marshes associated with bulkheads. Results also indicate that small, narrow fringing marshes in front of bulkheads are still capable of providing important ecosystem services compared to bulkhead sites with no marsh, which provided almost no ecosystem services. An alternative shoreline stabilization demonstration project was installed as part of this project on the east end of the Rachel Carson Reserve featuring a living shoreline constructed with natural materials including oyster cultch and *Spartina alterniflora*. Outreach activities effectively reached target stakeholders and are ongoing.
- Established three sentinel sites at the Rachel Carson, Masonboro Island, and Zeke's Island components of the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve to measure change in coastal habitats related to sea level rise and inundation.
- Reached over 2,300 students, teachers, local government officials, coastal decision makers, and other members of the coastal community through workshops, reserve site field trips, summer camps, and other educational activities conducted by the staff of the N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve. Participants learned about the importance of estuaries, environmental stewardship, estuarine shoreline stabilization alternatives, sustainable communities and low impact development, and research conducted at reserve sites.
- Utilized community and student volunteers in a variety of stewardship activities across the ten Reserve sites, from clean-ups to species monitoring, resulting in over 1,200 hours of service to the program.
- Updated the membership of existing and created three new Local Advisory Committees to inform management of the ten Reserve sites. The Local Advisory Committees function as advisory groups, providing feedback and recommendations to staff on site management, research, and education activities, and reviewing policies and implementation strategies. The committees operate per the adopted Operating Procedures document (February 2012); the procedures document, committee membership, and minutes are available on the Reserve's website.

www.nccoastalreserve.net

The N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve is a program of the N.C. Division of Coastal Management. The N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve is managed through a federal-state partnership between NOAA and the Division.