



**Masonboro Island Reserve  
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 4, 2012, 6 pm**

**Attendance**

<b><u>LAC Members</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation/Interest</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>
Ms. Jessica Blake	N.C. Coastal Land Trust	No
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	No
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	No
Dr. Anthony Snider	UNCW EVS	No
<b><u>Others Present</u></b>		
Hope Sutton	DCM/NCCR, Stewardship Coordinator and 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	
Richard Johnson	Member of the public	
Ed Godwin	Member of the public	
Sean Ahlum	Member of the public	
Elizabeth King	Member of the public	
Kurt Tressler	Member of the public	

## **Reserve Program Update**

- The Reserve has submitted for an Americorps position through a DENR project application. If granted, it would provide a full time position to support education, outreach and volunteer coordination for one year. The position would begin in September or October.
- Ten applications for seven open LAC seats were received. Applicant lists were sent forward to the Secretary of DENR's office for final appointments to be made. New members will receive a confirmation letter, hopefully prior to the fall meeting.
- Preliminary research and discussion has occurred regarding updating the Reserve's dredge spoil disposal policy. Currently, the policy allows for private disposal projects within the Army Corps easement to be considered on a project by project basis. Some questions have surfaced about how allowing this activity is supported by or in conflict with other Reserve mandates, including those contained in its Nature Preserves Dedication letter. Additional evaluation is underway.

## **Site Update and Old Business**

### *Routine activities*

Summer use patterns have begun with increasing use expected in the coming weeks, as usual.

### *Seasonal preparations*

All temporary summer staff and interns have begun work, with sea turtle monitoring having begun on May 16. Community volunteers and daily patrols began June 1. Oyster catcher monitoring has been underway in the approximately 1.5 mile stretch between Big Bay and Byron's Creek. Planning and the contract with the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department for July Fourth law enforcement operation are complete. The contract provides flexibility for contract deputies to be utilized on the weekends prior to and following the July Fourth holiday, which will occur on Wednesday.

### *Outreach*

The public outreach offerings during the spring months had low but engaged attendance. "Meet Me at Masonboro" outreach sessions on site will be conducted during the summer months.

### *Red fox management*

Research and planning for a possible removal project is underway. A potential funding source has been identified and an application will be submitted. This funding would be available to support work during the 2012-2013 winter season.

### **Member Roundtable** (with Reserve staff response in italics)

- Mr. Raney provided information regarding visitation during on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend. He requested information regarding the level of predation for shorebird nests located to date. *The pattern has followed that of the last two seasons. Nests have typically been identified with one or two eggs present. Upon return monitoring, usually within four days, nests frequently no longer hold eggs. Multiple factors may be involved; however, resources have not allowed more intensive monitoring to occur to conclusively determine the cause of nest failure.*

### **Public Comments** (with Reserve staff response in italics)

- Mr. Ahlum questioned whether the Audubon Society has the legal authority to close portions of Masonboro Island. *The Audubon Society has no management authority for the Masonboro Island Reserve but does act as a partner in conservation activities. Any bird protection areas would be installed in conjunction with the Reserve.* Mr. Ahlum also asked if any Army Corps projects are planned for the coming months. *Repairs to the oceanward portions of the jetty will be conducted and a small area of shoaling in the Intracoastal Waterway will be dredged during the winter. Neither project is anticipated to have impact on the Reserve.*
- Mr. Johnson commented on Fourth of July operations, suggesting attention to the problem of visitors being left behind at the end of the day and stating that most of the July Fourth partygoers are environmentally aware and are unfairly considered a problem. Planning for the Masonboro.org efforts on the Fourth are underway.
- Mr. Newkirk commented that the illegal transport that occurs on the Fourth is a large part of the problem. He also asked whether closure of the Reserve on the Fourth had been considered. *Closure was considered as a management option but increasing law enforcement has been the key strategy pursued to date.*
- Mr. Andrew expressed concern regarding Audubon participation in shorebird monitoring as had been discussed at the March meeting.
- Ms. Harcke updated the group regarding the Friends of the Reserve fundraiser to support stewardship activities. Planning is underway but the date has not been set.

### **Meeting Follow Up**

- Final meeting for 2012 will be held on November 5.