



**Rachel Carson Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, 08 November, 2010, 9-11 am**

LAC Members	Affiliation/Interest	Present
Ms. Heather Styron	N.C. Division of Coastal Management	Yes
Mr. Perry Barrow	Community Member	Yes
Chief Steve Lewis	Beaufort Police Department	Yes
Mr. Tommy McArthur	Community Member	No
Ms. Kelly Odom	N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries	Yes
Mr. Bob Rappaport	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Frank Tursi	N.C. Coastal Federation	No
Ms. Ann Carter	Community Member	No
Mr. John Fussell	Community Member	Yes
Dr. Dan Rittschoff	Community Member	No
Others		
Rebecca Ellin	DCM, Reserve Manager	Yes
Paula Gillikin	DCM, Rachel Carson Site Manager	Yes
Scott Kucera	DCM, Education Coordinator	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.

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 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.

Member Roundtable and other comments

- Mr. Barrow suggested increasing awareness of the Reserve through brochures and trail maps which have been used successfully in the past.
- LAC members agreed that two meetings per year are sufficient. Email communication is a good way to keep informed of issues as they arise between the biannual meetings. The next meeting will be held in March of 2011.

Rachel Carson Reserve update – Paula Gillikin

- An overview of the past year's research, education, and stewardship efforts was presented.
- Total number of participants in all education programs (i.e., summer camps, public summer field trips, K-12, general outreach, and workshops) was 1,896.
- Volunteers helped to remove approximately 4,500 pounds of marine debris from the site in 2010. Marine debris is an ongoing problem.
- The feral horse herd has fallen to 33 head. Not all mares will be contracepted in 2011 to allow for foals in 2012.
- A habitat improvement demonstration project was completed on Carrot Island and funded by the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program. The project can be viewed from the Carrot Island boardwalk.
- New research in Middle Marsh includes studies investigating the importance of clams to seagrass enhancement and importance of seagrass and marsh as fish nursery areas.
- The alternative shoreline stabilization demonstration project at Carrot Island will begin in the spring of 2011 with the installation of oyster cultch.

Meeting follow-up – Paula Gillikin

- Additional comments on the *draft* LAC Operating Procedures document are requested by LAC members by December 10th. Comments should be sent to Jason Dail.