



**Rachel Carson Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 09 March, 2011, 9-11 am**

LAC Members	Affiliation/Interest	Present
Ms. Heather Styron	N.C. Division of Coastal Management	No
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. Frank Tursi	N.C. Coastal Federation	No
Ms. Ann Carter	Community Member	No
Mr. John Fussell	Community Member	Yes
Dr. Dan Rittschoff	Duke Univ. Marine Lab	Yes
Others in Attendance		
Rebecca Ellin	DCM, Reserve Manager	
Paula Gillikin	DCM, Rachel Carson Site Manager	
Caitlin Hamer	DCM, Educator	
Rett Newton	Public	
Robin Newton	Public	
Boyce Cheek	Public	

Reserve Update – Rebecca Ellin

Staffing News

- Dr. Braxton Davis is the new Director of the N.C. Division of Coastal Management as of December 1, 2011. Dr. Davis was previously the Director of Policy and Planning Division within South Carolina’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

- Dr. Bo Dame resigned from the Northern Sites Manager position in January 2011. Claudia Jones is currently serving as the temporary Northern Sites Manager while we work to fill the position permanently.
- Mr. Jason Dail moved from the Stewardship and Education Specialist position with the Reserve to a field representative position with the Division in Wilmington Regional office.
- The GIS Specialist position was impacted by the budget reductions in 2011 and Ms. Jacquie Ott is no longer working for the program.
Mr. Scott Kucera resigned from the Education Coordinator position in July 2011. The vacant position was advertised in September.

Rules and Policies Review Process

The working draft rule language is under review within the Division. Next steps include refining the draft language internally and seeking input 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 Reserve anticipates bringing draft language to the LACs in 2012.

Local Advisory Committee Operating Procedures Document

The Reserve is finalizing the operating procedures document with an anticipated publication date of February 2012. The document contains a brief introduction to the Reserve program and outlines the purpose and roles of the committees, committee composition, member selection and responsibilities, terms of service, and meeting operations. The finalized document will be emailed to Local Advisory Committee members and posted on the Reserve website. The Reserve will hold an application period for community member and organizations membership on the committee in March 2012.

Rachel Carson Reserve Update and Old Business – Paula Gillikin

Research at the site

Most of the research activities being carried out at the Rachel Carson site are currently being focused in Middle Marshes. Studies include: habitat use by recreational fish (UNC-IMS), impact of macroalgae on oyster reefs (UNC-IMS), habitat value of marsh and seagrass (Reserve and UNC-IMS), feasibility of using ghost crab pots to grow oysters (UNC-IMS and local fisherman), impact of marsh sills on coastal fish habitat (UNC-IMS), and an alternative shoreline stabilization demonstration project (Reserve and NOAA).

Feral horse management

The current population of consists of 32 horses with 17 females and 15 males, including one foal (born December 2010). The horse activity budget research study is ongoing. Initial results show that the horses are spending less time grazing than they were when herd density was higher. This may be an indication that the herd size is more appropriate and vegetation resources are more plentiful. Selective birth control darting will occur in February of 2012. The goal for the birth control program is for a few foals to be born in the next few years.

Stewardship activities

In March, an osprey nesting and roosting platform was installed by volunteers at the southeast tip of Carrot Island. The platform was made from reclaimed wood debris that washed ashore. It was installed to offset the loss (due to erosion) of a dead roosting tree that ospreys have used for years for resting

and foraging reconnaissance. Volunteers contributed approximately 550 hours to on-site education, site management, and horse research and monitoring. Approximately 2700 pounds of marine debris was removed by volunteers and staff since January 2011, including a 1000-pound derelict vessel.

Hurricane Irene

There was minimal damage at the site from Hurricane Irene. Some erosion, which was expected, occurred at both the east and west ends of the site and on sandy beaches. Vegetated areas fared well. Oyster cultch that was installed at the east end of Carrot Island as part of an alternative shoreline stabilization project, was covered with sediments that eroded off of the dredge spoil bluff. Three sailboats washed up on the reserve that drug anchor during the storm. All three of the vessels were removed by the owners.

Carrot Island boardwalk

Ownership and complete management of the Carrot Island boardwalk was transferred from the Town of Beaufort to the Division of Coastal Management in October via a resolution by the Town Council.

Education

Local education efforts (not including the Reserve's Coastal Training Program statistics) have reached over 2,000 customers so far during the 2011 calendar year. Education activities include presentations, field trips to the site, workshops, and summer camps.

New Business – Paula Gillikin

Proposed ordinance to protect the feral horses and public safety

The reserve has been experiencing increasing problems with visitors approaching the horses and in some cases chasing and/or herding them. These behaviors are inappropriate and endanger the welfare of the horses and public safety. The reserve has drafted a State rule to address this, but the rule will not be in place for some time. To address this management concern in a timely manner, the Reserve would like to pursue a local ordinance to protect the horses and visitor safety through the Town of Beaufort. The ordinance would make it unlawful for any person to molest, torment, injure, wound, poison, or kill a feral horse on the Rachel Carson Reserve. It would also make it illegal for a person to feed, ride, pet or approach a feral horse on the reserve. Visitors would not be allowed to lure attract or entice a feral horse or approach a horse within 50 feet. The ordinance would require that any person injuring a feral horse notify the Division of Coastal Management staff or local law enforcement agency. Finally, the ordinance would prohibit removal of any horse or portion of a horse, except deemed necessary by the Division of Coastal Management. The proposed ordinance was discussed by committee members and there was overall support for moving it forward.

Member Roundtable and Other Comments

- LAC members support an approach of a broad and continuous education effort, including a general public relations campaign, brochures, web presence, face-to-face visitor education and signage (particularly at main access points), to address the problem of visitors approaching horses and other visitor use concerns. Technology, such as QR codes, iPhone applications, and geo-linking, should be employed in education efforts.

- Some LAC members recognize dogs off leash as the main concern regarding protection of the horses. The Reserve should educate the public about leashing their dogs and also work with Beaufort Police to give out tickets when possible.
- Regarding the section of the proposed horse ordinance that disallows removal of horse parts (from carcasses) from the site, Dr. Rittschoff suggested using carcasses as educational tools where the public can learn about management, anatomy, etc.
- Incentives should be used when possible when trying to get the public to follow visitor use requirements.
- Dr. Rittschoff suggested that volunteer efforts be focused on educating the public about the importance of the site and about appropriate visitor use. He also suggested using Duke Marine Lab students to help create education products.
- Educational materials about the site should include maps and language to let visitors know they are within Town limits. Some members pointed out that this could encourage visitors to go outside of the Town limits to engage in activities are not regulated by the Town or Reserve rules.
- LAC members would like to continue meeting twice per year at 9am, once in the spring and once in the fall.

Public Comments

- Rett Newton commented that the Rachel Carson Reserve volunteers can be energized to help generate a public education campaign about the site and appropriate visitor use. The Reserve is encouraged to come up with a plan, including milestones, to carry out education efforts that were discussed in the LAC meeting. This plan could be presented to the LAC at the March 2012 meeting. Make sure that local leaders, including politicians, are informed about management challenges so they may help to advance solutions. The general public should be involved and informed, as well.
- Boyce Cheek suggested posting Rachel Carson Reserve educational signage at regional access points such as the boat ramp at Radio Island North and also at the beach access near Olde Towne Yacht Club.

Meeting follow up

Paula Gillikin will keep the committee informed regarding developments with the horse ordinance and other issues as they arise. She will also follow up to schedule a March 2012 meeting date.