

II. ADMINISTRATION PLAN

A. Administrative Plan Overview

The goal of the North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve (NCNERR) administration is to improve the operations, infrastructure, and stature of the NCNERR to better support and enable the education, research, and stewardship programs. The administration of the NCNERR supports and enables the implementation of the education, research, and stewardship programs to fulfill its mission. The administration team includes the Reserve Manager, the Education, Coastal Training Program, Research, and Stewardship Coordinators, and the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist. Administration is defined for the purposes of this management plan as working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Division of Coastal Management (DCM) and partner agencies to fulfill the NCNERR mission and meet agency mandates, assessing and addressing infrastructure needs, appropriately staffing the Reserve and providing staff with the skills and resources necessary to perform their jobs. Reserve administration also provides long-term direction and vision for the program. These duties form the administration plan and include the staffing plan.

B. Administrative Framework

The administration of the NCNERR is achieved through a collaborative process involving the following agencies and organizations: NOAA, DCM, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, component Local Advisory Committees, the Carolina Estuarine Reserve Foundation, and partners.

1. NOAA

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) operates as a federal-state partnership. State partners manage the individual Reserves and NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management provides direction, funding, and review for the System and individual Reserves through the Estuarine Reserves Division and the National Policy and Evaluation Division. The Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research (CCFHR), part of NOAA's National Ocean Service's National Centers for Coast and Ocean Science, shares the administration building on Pivers Island in Beaufort with NCNERR.

a. Estuarine Reserves Division

Direction is provided by the Estuarine Reserves Division (ERD) through the NERRS Strategic Plan and regular interaction with Reserve managers and sector coordinators. Daily coordination between the federal and state partners is provided by ERD program specialists. The program specialist communicates directly and regularly with Reserve staff building a level of trust between the partners and familiarizing the federal and state personnel with Reserve management procedures and policies.

Section 315 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) provides non-competitive operations funding and competitive construction and acquisition funding for the System. ERD administers these funding programs and program specialists review operations work

plans and performance reports to ensure compliance with program policies and special award conditions. ERD also provides technical assistance and oversight of system-wide programs such as the System-wide Monitoring Program, Graduate Research Fellowship, and the Coastal Training Program.

b. National Policy and Evaluation Division

The National Policy and Evaluation Division conducts performance evaluations on the operation and management of individual Reserves pursuant to sections 312 and 315 of the CZMA. The purpose of NOAA review is to ensure that a state partner is complying with NERRS goals, approved funding awards and work plans, and Reserve management plans. Deficiency findings must be addressed in operation awards and management plan updates in an appropriate and timely manner to avoid withdrawal of National Estuarine Research Reserve designation.

c. Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research

The CCFHR is part of NOAA's National Ocean Service's National Centers for Coast and Ocean Science. Located on Pivers Island in Beaufort, CCFHR and NCNERR share the administration building on the CCFHR campus. The administration building was constructed in 2007 and it houses the NCNERR headquarters and provides quick access to the Rachel Carson component. The building includes office space for 11 Reserve staff, a teaching laboratory, and an auditorium. The NCNERR and CCFHR are currently updating their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and it will be added when the agreement is complete (Appendix J).

Co-locating the Reserve with CCFHR also provides mutual benefit to the parties in fulfilling NOAA's mission within the Ecosystem goal to foster "*healthy and productive coastal and marine ecosystems that benefit society*" and "*a well informed public that acts as stewards of coastal and marine ecosystems.*" This partnership also supports the DCM's mission to "*protect, conserve, and manage North Carolina's coastal resources through an integrated program of planning, permitting, education, and research*" and the Reserve's mission to "*promote informed management and stewardship of North Carolina's estuarine and coastal habitats through research, education, and example.*"

The Reserve will provide a science to management relationship between the CCFHR and the coastal decision-maker community and a science to education connection between the CCFHR and K-12 and community audiences. The Reserve and the CCFHR will enhance their respective research capabilities through collaborative partnerships addressing relevant, coastal habitat and management related questions consistent with their respective management plans.

The Research and Education Coordinators recently partnered with researchers from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington (UNCW), University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) and CCFHR in a Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET) grant titled, "Sustainable Estuarine Shoreline Stabilization: Research, Education and Public Policy in North Carolina". In addition, the

temporary Rachel Carson site manager collaborated with CCFHR scientists on a marine debris study conducted on the Rachel Carson component. Productive and beneficial collaborations such as these will continue to be pursued in the future.

2. North Carolina Division of Coastal Management

The state partner in the NCNERR federal-state partnership is the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources' DCM. The DCM carries out the state's Coastal Area Management Act, the Dredge and Fill Law and the Federal CZMA of 1972 in the 20 coastal North Carolina counties, using rules and policies of the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission. The organizational chart for DCM is presented in Figure 11. The division is organized into three sections: Policy and Planning, Permitting and Enforcement, and the North Carolina Coastal Reserve (NCCR). The NCNERR is included within the North Carolina Coastal Reserve.

The DCM is an appropriate state partner for the NCNERR because:

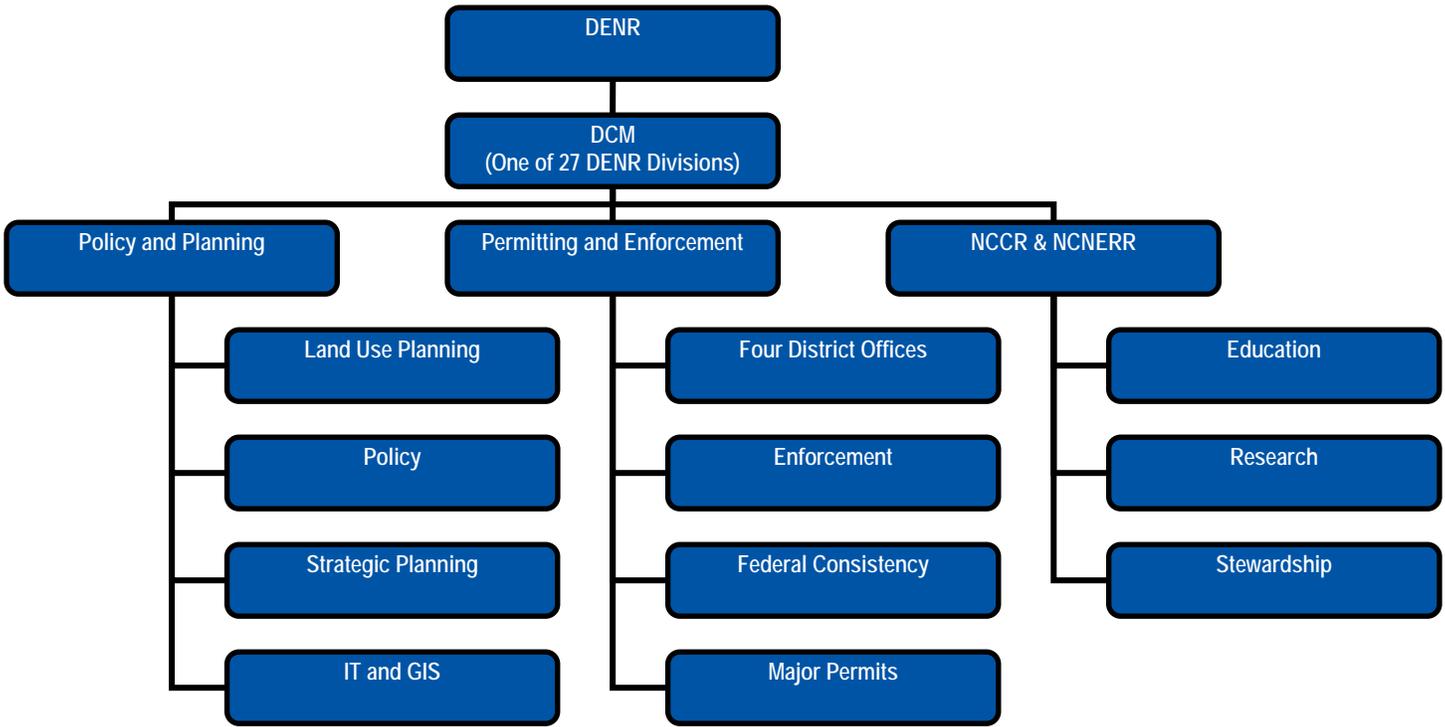
- Both organizations have similar missions as both are authorized by CZMA legislation to protect coastal resources through education, research, and stewardship programs, albeit the mechanisms through which these programs are conducted are different;
- DCM administers associated CZMA authorized programs that receive funding under sections 306, 306A, 309, and 310;
- Reserve education, research, and stewardship programs seek to address pertinent coastal management issues;
- The results of Reserve education, research, and stewardship programs are directly accessible to the DCM and the coastal management community; and
- The Reserve benefits from the 309 program, land use planning, policy and regulatory programs, and has direct involvement in coastal management issues.

As the NCNERR and DCM partnership grew and evolved over the years, it became apparent that opportunities existed to strengthen this relationship. The September 2005 312 NCNERR Evaluation Findings recommended the following:

- Identify ways to improve communication between the NCNERR and DCM;
- Identify specific needs and expectations the organizations have of each other and strategic projects to collaborate on rather than the current opportunistic approach;
- Seek ways to raise the visibility of the NCNERR within DCM, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the state; and
- Evaluate the vertical placement of the NCNERR within the DCM organizational chart.

In July 2006, a new section was created within the DCM for the North Carolina Coastal Reserve and NCNERR (Figure 11). Elevated from the Policy and Planning section, the NCNERR now experiences increased visibility within the division and improved communication with the division director and assistant directors. As a result, there is an increase in cross-section collaborations; opportunities for such collaboration are identified throughout this plan. The complementary missions and programs of the DCM and NCNERR form the basis of a model partnership. Through the continued commitment and efforts of NCNERR and DCM management, the administrative objectives and activities in this management plan articulate steps to achieve such a partnership.

Figure 11: DENR/DCM Organizational Chart



3. University of North Carolina at Wilmington

The NCNERR has a long-standing relationship with the UNCW, which has provided administrative and staffing support for the NCNERR since 1989. A large percentage of the NCNERR annual operations award is contracted to UNCW to fund six full-time permanent contract positions and to house four of these staff at the UNCW’s Center for Marine Science. This relationship allowed the NCNERR to expand its staff when the state was not able to create more staff positions and it provides a staff presence near the southern components. The NCNERR and UNCW are also currently updating their MOU which will be added when the agreement is complete (Appendix J).

Co-locating the Reserve with the UNCW’s Center for Marine Science provides mutual benefit to the parties since the mission of the University and its Center for Marine Science is to “*promote basic and applied research.*” This partnership also supports the Reserve’s mission to “*promote informed management and stewardship of North Carolina’s estuarine and coastal habitats through research, education, and example.*”

The Reserve provides a science to management relationship between the University and the coastal decision-maker community and a science to education connection between the University and K-12 and community audiences. The Reserve and the University enhance their respective research capabilities through collaborative partnerships addressing relevant, coastal habitat and management related questions consistent with their respective missions.

This partnership with UNCW also allows for collaboration with UNCW's Biology and Marine Biology, and Environmental Studies departments. Faculty and graduate and undergraduate students conduct research projects on the southern sites and NCNERR staff consult with faculty on site management and coastal resource issues. For example, the Reserve has funded Dr. Amanda Southwood, a UNCW faculty member, during the past several years to monitor sea turtle activity on the Masonboro Island component.

4. Local Advisory Committees

Local Advisory Committees (LAC) serve as advisory groups through which local citizens work with NCNERR staff to provide feedback and recommendations on site management, research, and education activities at the components, and review management plan policies and implementation strategies. Committee members are expected to discuss relevant issues with the local community.

Each component has, by State law, a LAC. Committee composition consists of representatives from the following public sectors as appropriate based on the Reserve component: citizen, adjacent landowner, local government, state government, research, education, volunteer, commercial business that operates on the component, traditional user, law enforcement, and non-profit organization. Members are appointed by the Secretary of DENR to serve as long as they wish. Replacement members are appointed as needed. The LACs meet on an annual basis at the request of the Reserve.

5. Carolina Estuarine Reserve Foundation

The Carolina Estuarine Reserve Foundation (CERF) is a non-profit organization that works exclusively to support the preservation, development and cooperation of the North Carolina Coastal Reserve and NCNERR for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes. CERF is a voice to speak on behalf of the Reserve and works to sustain and increase funding for the Reserve programs.

CERF moved headquarters from Beaufort to Kitty Hawk in 2004 and back to Beaufort in 2006 in an effort to provide better geographic representation on the board of directors. The board is comprised of representatives from the northern, central, and southern regions of the coast to reflect the distribution of Reserve components and the Reserve Manager in an ex-officio capacity. The Reserve Manager ensures that CERF is aware of and is addressing NCNERR needs and is coordinating with existing NCNERR programs. The direction and foci of CERF are articulated in its strategic plan and the goals and actions address high priority Reserve needs (Appendix K).

6. Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to organization relevancy and growth. The NCNERR maintains a variety of partnerships to accomplish its mission and will continue to do so through current Memoranda of Understanding and collaborative projects (Appendix J). The September 2005 312 Evaluation Findings recognize the accomplishments of the education and stewardship programs through partnerships and suggest seeking additional partnerships to leverage and strengthen the research program. Significant progress has been made on the research partnerships since the last 312 evaluation. Projects reflecting new research partnerships include the NCNERR's involvement in the Currituck Sound Study to monitor water quality at the Currituck Banks component (N.C. Division of Water Resources and United States Geologic Survey), atmospheric deposition monitoring at the Currituck Banks component (N.C. State University, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and UNC Institute of Marine Science), reinstating SWMP-like monitoring at the Rachel Carson component (National Park Service), and state-wide collaboration on an estuarine shoreline stabilization project (CCFHR, UNCW, and UNC Institute of Marine Sciences). Additional organizations with which the Reserve currently works and how are listed in Appendix L.

C. Facilities Plan

The NCNERR has a responsibility to provide the facilities necessary to implement the education, research and monitoring, and stewardship programs of the NCNERR in accordance with federal and state guidelines and laws. The Reserve currently operates from three offices due to the geographic distribution of the components: the Northern Sites office in Kitty Hawk supports the Currituck Banks component; the Headquarters office in Beaufort supports the Rachel Carson component and serves as the headquarters for the Reserve due to its central location; and the Southern Sites office in Wilmington supports the Masonboro and Zeke's Islands components.

All buildings are located off-site to avoid impacts to the components. The buildings are leased or shared with partners to promote collaborative opportunities and maintain economical prudence.

1. Maintenance of Buildings and Public Use Areas

The NCNERR does not employ maintenance staff. Upkeep of buildings and grounds is included in lease and service fees. Public use areas are patrolled by the Stewardship Coordinator and the site managers as time allows. Vandalism and misuse is reported to DENR and appropriate local law enforcement. Volunteers participate in Reserve clean-up events and assist in the upkeep of the boardwalks and trails.

All facilities recycle and employ 'green' techniques and technology where appropriate. For example, in November 2003 the NCNERR, along with DCM, CCFHR and Duke University Marine Laboratory, received a \$40,000 planning grant from the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) to develop a plan to reduce stormwater management and aquaculture effluent into estuarine waters surrounding Pivers Island in Beaufort, N.C. This plan was completed in February 2008. In early 2009, \$496,000 was awarded by the CWMTF to implement the plan, which includes installation of cisterns, bioretention areas, stormwater

wetlands and several proprietary devices on Pivers Island. The grant also includes funding for a trail around the island to highlight the various stormwater control devices for educational purposes. The facility in Beaufort also recently received a NOAA Green Mini-Grant (\$29,500) to ‘green’ the aging facility. Funds from this grant will: 1) retrofit four diesel emergency generators and a seawater heater to biodiesel; 2) replace all faucets and showerheads with low-flow units; 3) install solar hot water systems; and 4) convert substantial parts of the campus to ‘no-mow’ with native wildflower development.

2. Construction Principles

All construction activities will be completed under the guidance of the following principles to ensure the Reserve meets its guiding principle of promoting good environmental stewardship and to meet the NERRS Sustainable Design Guidelines.

1. Facilities and access routes will create minimum visual or environmental impacts both within and beyond the component boundaries.
2. Facilities will be designed and located to support multiple Reserve goals to the greatest extent possible.
3. Planning for significant new facilities will solicit input from representatives of user groups or those to be affected by the facilities.
4. Facilities construction and equipment shall strive for energy efficiency, incorporate green building materials and techniques, and anticipate technological advances.

The facilities for each office and NCNERR component are listed below. Needs are identified and are based on current capabilities at the offices and components and program priorities for 2009-2014.

3. Northern Sites Office in Kitty Hawk (Currituck Banks)

The program priorities for the Currituck Banks site and Northern Sites office are listed in order of priority: stewardship, community/visitor education, research, K-12 education/Coastal Training Program (CTP) (Table 3).

a. Office Space

- i. *Existing*: Office space is leased from the Town of Kitty Hawk to house the Northern Sites Manager (Appendix J), who manages the Currituck Banks component of the NCNERR and two state sites (Kitty Hawk Woods and Buxton Woods Coastal Reserves). The office is located approximately 25 miles south of the Currituck Banks component. The office is approximately 900 square feet and contains field and office storage space, common meeting space (for up to 6 people), and four work stations. Boat and vehicle storage is also provided at the office. Laboratory space is informally provided by the UNC-Coastal Studies Institute, located in Manteo, as needed for research and stewardship activities. Public meetings and education events are held at partner facilities such as the Town of Kitty Hawk meeting room.

- ii. Needs: The office space currently leased from the Town of Kitty Hawk does not meet the needs of the staff or the program priorities of the site. The plans the Town of Kitty Hawk has for the office are unknown, but eviction is not an immediate concern as the lease for the office was recently renewed through 2011 (Appendix J).

The desired facilities for the Northern Sites office include the following to support the aforementioned priorities:

- Three to five offices to house staff;
- Small laboratory area in which to conduct basic research activities;
- Small visitor interpretive center showcasing the Currituck Banks component, and its importance, unique habitats, and history;
- Indoor and outdoor storage capacity for field equipment and boats;
- Lodging accommodations for one to two researchers. The high cost and limited availability of housing in the area is prohibitive for researchers and students wishing to conduct work at Currituck Banks; and
- Community meeting room in which to hold workshops and meetings. This room also supports the results of a recent Town of Kitty Hawk needs assessment that identified the need of such a meeting room for use by community groups.

It is desired that the new facility be located in Kitty Hawk and will serve the Kitty Hawk Woods and Buxton Woods components of the NCCR in addition to the Currituck Banks component of the NCNERR. Given the limited Reserve staff and the lack of maintenance staff, it is the preference of the DCM to maintain a long-term partnership agreement with a local or state agency for such a facility in which the agency maintains ownership of the facility and the DCM pays an established fee for use. The Reserve Manager, Northern Sites Manager, and DCM staff will work to locate permanent, suitable office and lab space within an existing facility to accommodate the needs of Currituck Banks. The Reserve has approached Dare County regarding a possible partnership facility in the Town of Kitty Hawk and will continue to investigate other partnership opportunities for the office needs.

b. Equipment

- i. Existing: The Northern Sites office has one boat used for stewardship and research, a 16 ft. Jones Brother semi-V hull equipped with a four-stroke 50 hp Johnson outboard engine. The N.C. Division of Motor Fleet leased vehicle is a 2007 four wheel-drive Grand Jeep Cherokee. The Northern Sites office is equipped with computers, Geographic Information System (GIS)/ Global Positioning System and tools needed for land management and maintenance.
- ii. Needs: The Northern Sites office is in need of a new copier.

c. On-site Facilities

- i. **Existing:** A pervious parking lot provides access to the Currituck Banks component from N.C. 12. From the parking lot, visitors may walk along the 1/3 mile boardwalk through the maritime forest to Currituck Sound. Plants and trees are identified by small signs along the boardwalk. Interpretive signs were installed along the boardwalk in 2006. A 1.5 mile primitive trail departs from the boardwalk and heads north through the maritime forest with benches located along the trail. Visitors may also access the component via the North Beach Access ramp at the end of N.C 12.
- ii. **Needs:** To increase visitor awareness of the Reserve and its appropriate use, a variety of signage needs exist. Much of the existing signage on the Reserve is outdated, damaged or aged to the point that it is no longer effective, with the exception of the boardwalk and plant signs. Types of signage needed include: rules signs, placename signs, informational signs, boundary identification signs, and trail markers. The Reserve will also evaluate opportunities for increased public access.

4. Headquarters Office in Beaufort (Rachel Carson)

The program priorities for the Rachel Carson site and Headquarters office are listed in order of priority: education (K-12, community/visitor, and CTP), stewardship, and research (Table 3).

a. Office Space

- i. **Existing:** The joint CCFHR-NCNERR administration building on Pivers Island was completed in 2007 and Reserve staff has been operating from this facility since July of that year. This location provides quick access to the Rachel Carson component that is located across the Beaufort Channel from the island. The facility is two stories and totals 17,270 ft². The Reserve occupies 2,405 ft² of office space including the teaching laboratory space. The auditorium and large conference room are shared with CCFHR for workshops and meetings. The NCNERR office space contains eight offices, two cubicles, a reception area and a small conference room providing space for the Reserve Manager, Education Coordinator, Education Specialist, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, and Research Coordinator as well as temporary staff and interns.
- ii. **Needs:** The administration building was designed as an education facility prior to the Reserve's reorganization in the early 2000s. As a result, the headquarters office does not comprehensively serve all program needs and new needs have arisen since occupation of the building. The Reserve Manager participated in the recent development of the CCFHR Master Plan which seeks to address facility and program needs of all parties on the CCFHR campus on Pivers Island. The following needs exist and were incorporated into the plan:
 - a. ***Research lab and office space:*** The research program does not currently have designated research space at the headquarters office. Eight hundred

square feet of laboratory space and three offices are needed to support the Research Coordinator and research activities at the Rachel Carson Reserve. The Research Coordinator currently uses laboratory space at the UNC Institute of Marine Sciences, located nearby in Morehead City, when needed.

- b. *Field storage area:* The headquarters office does not have appropriate space to store field research and stewardship gear. This gear is currently stored in a shed located on Pivers Island and a dedicated storage area will better address Reserve needs and allow for removal of the temporary shed.
- c. *Outdoor classroom:* Education is the top priority at the Rachel Carson component and an outdoor classroom will support Reserve K-12 and public education programs, taking advantage of the natural setting and close proximity of the Rachel Carson Reserve and Gallants Channel. A touch tank in the outdoor classroom will provide education experiences that incorporate live animals and are not currently feasible in the indoor teaching laboratory.
- d. *Boat docks:* The Reserve has two boats and currently leases dock space from the Duke University Marine Laboratory because CCFHR docks are not able to easily and safely accommodate students and the general public. Dock facilities are needed to accommodate the boats and Reserve programming and CCFHR is interested in collaborating with the Reserve in redesigning the eastern docks to address this need.

b. Equipment

- i. *Existing:* The Beaufort office is well equipped for the programs offered. Laptop computers, projectors and slideshow software are available for presentations. Copiers and color printers are available to create handouts for programs. Water quality testing equipment is maintained for use with student groups. The Reserve owns two boats for field trip transportation to the Reserve component, a 17 ft. Jones Brothers boat equipped with a Suzuki outboard motor and a 24 ft. Carolina Skiff boat equipped with a Yamaha outboard motor. The office also has a N.C. Division of Motor Fleet leased 2007 four wheel-drive Dodge Durango, and two kayaks.
- ii. *Needs:* No needs were identified at the time of publication of this plan.

c. On-site Facilities

- i. *Existing:* The Rachel Carson interpretive trail is a one-mile primitive loop that guides visitors through representative habitats found within the component. A brochure describes posted points of interest. A boardwalk on Rachel Carson was constructed in 2007 across from the Town of Beaufort public boat ramp. The boardwalk is approximately 500 feet in length crossing Carrot Island and terminating with an observation deck overlooking the North River Channel. The boardwalk is constructed of composite decking and railings. Interpretive signs highlight the different habitats and species located along the boardwalk.

- ii. Needs:
 - a. *Signage:* To increase visitor awareness of the Reserve and its appropriate use, a variety of signage needs exist. Much of the existing signage on the Reserve is outdated, damaged or aged to the point that it is no longer effective, with the exception of the boardwalk signs. Types of signage needed include: rules signs, placename signs, informational signs, boundary identification signs, and trail markers.
 - b. *Kiosks:* Information kiosks will greet visitors at the ferry drop-off locations at the Rachel Carson component to orient them to the site and to appropriate use of the site.
 - c. *Interpretive trail redesign:* The interpretive trail can only be used at low tide and needs to be redesigned to avoid wet habitats so that it may be used throughout the tidal cycle.

5. Southern Sites Office in Wilmington (Masonboro and Zeke's Islands)

The program priorities for the Wilmington office are organized per site and listed in order of priority (Table 3):

- Masonboro Island: stewardship, research, community/visitor education, and K-12 education/Coastal Training Program, and
- Zeke's Island: research, K-12 education/Coastal Training Program, stewardship, and community/visitor education.

a. Office Space

- i. Existing: The Reserve's Wilmington-based staff moved into their new quarters at UNCW's Center for Marine Science (CMS), across the Intracoastal Waterway from the Masonboro Island component, in May 2008. The office space is approximately 1450 ft² and contains four offices, a large laboratory for research and monitoring operations, a common area/workspace for shared equipment, computers, and supplies, and a storage area/mud room. The office houses the GIS Specialist, two Research Specialists, and the Stewardship Coordinator.
- ii. Needs: No needs were identified at the time of publication of this plan.

b. Equipment

- i. Existing: The Wilmington office is equipped for research, stewardship, and GIS tasks. The NCNERR owns three boats designated for research and stewardship that are housed at the Wilmington office. They include a 19 ft. Jones Brother's Bateau equipped with a Yamaha four-stroke 60 hp outboard engine, a 16 ft. Carolina Skiff outfitted with a Yamaha four-stroke 25 hp outboard engine, and a 16 ft. aluminum Jon boat with a 15 hp Yamaha four-stroke outboard engine. In addition, the office has a N.C. Division of Motor Fleet leased four wheel-drive Dodge Durango. Computers, water quality and meteorological dataloggers, autosamplers, color printers, a plotter, telemetry equipment, necessary software, and supplies needed for maintaining equipment are on location.

Needs:

- a. *24 ft. Carolina skiff boat:* The Wilmington office is in need of a 24 ft. Carolina Skiff boat to support research and stewardship activities that cannot currently be accommodated safely in the smaller boats the office has and to support transport of students and volunteers to the sites. The boats the office currently has are too small to transport the numbers of students or volunteers necessary for programming needs.
- b. *Boat lift:* The Wilmington office is in need of a boat lift at the UNCW's CMS boat dock. It is not possible to keep the Reserve boats in the water at all times since the dock is located along a narrow section of the Intracoastal Waterway because of potential damage from boat wakes. Furthermore, the boat ramps located near the components are problematic due to heavy traffic and little to no parking. A boat lift will provide quick access to the boat for field work and reduce staff time needed to manage field operations. Reserve staff has discussed this need with UNCW personnel and the Reserve and UNCW are interested in collaborating on the installation of several boat lifts at the dock, one of which will solely support the Reserve.

c. On-Site Facilities

i. Existing:

- a. *Masonboro Island:* There are currently no on-site facilities.
- b. *Zeke's Island:* The Zeke's Island Basin Area is used to access the component and the Basin for Reserve operations and by recreational users. This area is located outside of the component boundary and is operated by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. The Federal Point group, a collection of agencies and organizations with interests in the Zeke's Island Basin Area, has designed improvement plans, including interpretive signage, and funding has been received by the State to implement the plans. A rock jetty, commonly known as "The Rocks," extends from the parking lot at the Basin Area several miles separating the Basin from the Cape Fear River. The Rocks, under the control of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, is a sediment control structure and is hazardous to public safety.

ii. Needs:

a. *Masonboro Island:*

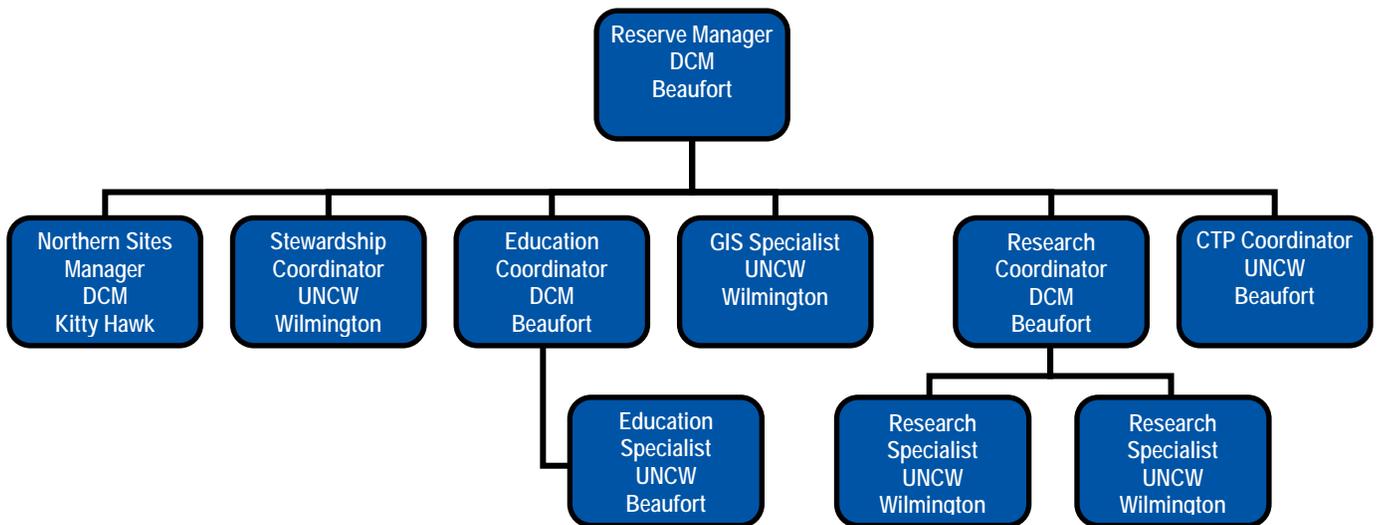
1. *Signage:* To increase visitor awareness of the Reserve and its appropriate use, a variety of signage needs exist. Much of the existing signage on the Reserve is outdated, damaged or aged to the point that it is no longer effective. Types of signage needed include: rules signs, placename signs, informational signs, boundary identification signs, and trail markers.

2. *Camping sites:* Masonboro Island is the only component at which camping is allowed. Currently, there are no designated camping areas and visitor impacts from camping are evident at many locations on the island. Design and installation of designated primitive camping sites and signage will direct visitors to these locations reducing visitor impacts.
- b. Zeke’s Island:
1. *Signage:* To increase visitor awareness of the Reserve and its appropriate use, a variety of signage needs exist. Much of the existing signage on the Reserve is outdated, damaged or aged to the point that it is no longer effective. Types of signage needed include: rules signs, placename signs, informational signs, interpretive signs, boundary identification signs, and trail markers.

D. Staffing Plan

An adequate staff is necessary to implement the management plan and to achieve the NCNERR’s education, research, and stewardship objectives. The NCNERR is currently staffed by ten full-time permanent positions employed by the DCM or UNCW. Figure 12, the NCNERR organizational chart, indicates the employer and location of each position. Current staff responsibilities and duties are outlined below as are rationale for future staffing needs.

Figure 12: North Carolina NERR Organizational Chart with Employer and Location



1. Current Staff Responsibilities and Duties

Reserve Manager:

- Fulfill Reserve mission, goals, and objectives
- Ensure the policies in the management plan are followed and that Reserve programs successfully meet the mandates of the NERRS and the DCM
- Seek and administer federal and other grants, contracts, and state budget appropriations
- Provide oversight and coordination of education, research and monitoring, and stewardship programs
- Develop and maintain partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, groups and individuals to enhance NCNERR exposure and capacity
- Supervise the following positions: GIS Specialist, Education Coordinator, CTP Coordinator, Research Coordinator, Stewardship Coordinator, and Northern Sites Manager
- Responsible for all activities, lands, and facilities within the Reserve boundaries and for office and laboratory facilities leased from partners
- Receive and evaluate input from Local Advisory Committees with site managers

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist:

- Manage the GIS program and database
- Support NCNERR programs through dataset and product development
- Provide technical support to staff
- Maintain and update GIS equipment
- Manage the GIS budget
- Assist with education, research, and stewardship programs as needed

Education Staff

Education Coordinator:

- Manage the K-12, teacher professional development, community outreach and summer camp programs, bringing estuarine and watershed concepts and science to these audiences, in accordance with the NCNERR management plan and NERRS and DCM mandates
- Develop and maintain partnerships to enhance education programs
- Represent the NCNERR at local, state, and national levels
- Supervise the Education Specialist and temporary Rachel Carson site management staff
- Manage the education budget
- Coordinate with the Coastal Training Program Coordinator to ensure education programs are complementary
- Translate research and monitoring results for incorporation into education programs with research staff
- Assist with field trips and workshops as needed
- Oversee development of all educational materials
- Manage the Rachel Carson component of the NCNERR in the absence of site management staff

- Assist with Rachel Carson site management and research and stewardship programs as needed

Coastal Training Program Coordinator:

- Develop and produce workshops for coastal decision-makers based on formal and informal needs assessments in accordance with the NCNERR management plan and NERRS and DCM mandates
- Develop and maintain partnerships to enhance the CTP
- Represent the NCNERR at local, state, and national levels
- Manage the CTP budget
- Coordinate with the Education Coordinator to ensure education programs are complementary
- Translate research and monitoring results for incorporation into the CTP with research staff
- Develop CTP-related materials
- Assist with field trips, Rachel Carson site management, and other education program events as needed

Education Specialist:

- Conduct K-12 student field trips and outreach programs
- Develop and implement summer camp programs
- Develop materials for K-12 and teacher programs
- Manage the volunteer program at the Rachel Carson component in conjunction with temporary Rachel Carson site management staff
- Manage the public field trip program
- Provide presentations to civic groups about the NCNERR
- Represent NCNERR at festivals and meetings
- Develop display boards for festivals and meetings for NCNERR staff
- Assist the Coastal Training Program Coordinator with workshop preparation
- Assist with Rachel Carson site management and stewardship and research programs as needed

Research Staff

Research Coordinator:

- Manage the research and monitoring programs, focusing on high priority coastal management needs, in accordance with the NCNERR management plan and NERRS and DCM mandates
- Develop and maintain partnerships to further research programs
- Represent the NCNERR at local, state, and national levels
- Supervise two Research Specialists
- Manage the research budget
- Translate research and monitoring results for incorporation into education programs with education staff

- Assist with boat management and transportation, site management of Rachel Carson component, and stewardship and education programs as needed

Research Specialists (2):

- Implement the System-wide Monitoring Program in accordance with NERRS and the Centralized Data Management Office (CDMO) requirements
- Procure and maintain SWMP equipment and supplies
- Deploy equipment as scheduled
- Quality Assurance /Quality Control data and prepare annual reports for submittal to CDMO
- Perform data analysis with Research Coordinator
- Assist the Research Coordinator with developing and maintaining partnerships to further research programs
- Assist the Research Coordinator with managing the research budget
- Assist the Research Coordinator with grant proposals, preparation of manuscripts for publication, presentations and other outreach activities
- Assist with Reserve research projects
- Assist with stewardship, GIS, and education programs as needed

Stewardship Staff

Stewardship Coordinator:

- Manage the stewardship program (managing the NCNERR components for research, education, and compatible traditional uses) in accordance with the NCNERR management plan and NERRS and DCM mandates
- Manage the Masonboro and Zeke's Islands components of the NCNERR
- Develop and maintain partnerships to enhance stewardship programs
- Represent the NCNERR at local, state, and national levels
- Manage the stewardship budget
- Coordinate with the Northern Sites Manager and the Rachel Carson Site Manager (see Education Coordinator) on site management policies and issues
- Conduct Local Advisory Committee meetings with Reserve Manager
- Provide community outreach and education programs as resources allow
- Facilitate and assist with research at the components in conjunction with research staff

Northern Sites Manager:

- Manage the Currituck Banks component of the NCNERR
- Develop and maintain partnerships to enhance stewardship programs
- Represent the NCNERR at local, state, and national levels
- Coordinate with the Stewardship Coordinator and the Rachel Carson Site Manager (see Education Coordinator) on site management policies and issues
- Conduct Local Advisory Committee meetings with Reserve Manager
- Provide community outreach and education programs as resources allow
- Facilitate and assist with research at the component in conjunction with research staff

2. Staffing Needs

The geographic distribution of the NCNERR components resulted in a regional parsing out of programs due to program priorities and location of staff as discussed previously in section I, C, 5. A recent internal evaluation of programs, facilities, current staffing levels, and projected staffing needs revealed there are needs and opportunities for core programs at all offices as well as administrative assistance to facilitate operation of the NCNERR. The following staffing needs are critical for implementation of core education, research, and stewardship programs at all four NCNERR components. The Reserve Manager will work to develop position descriptions, seek funding and establish the positions through DCM or UNCW as funding resources allow, without detriment to current programs.

Administrative Assistant

The NCNERR does not currently have any designated administrative assistance. The staff in each office has taken on many of the duties themselves to ensure operation of the office. As the program has grown, however, the time spent handling administrative duties such as ordering supplies, making copies, managing mail, and maintaining office equipment and vehicles, has increased. With the establishment of the Reserve headquarters in Beaufort, occupation of the Pivers Island facility, and the majority of the staff operating from this office, an administrative assistant will relieve headquarters staff of these duties and will assist the northern and southern sites offices when necessary. This will provide staff with more time for program development and implementation.

Assistant Manager

The implementation of Reserve goals and programs at the four NCNERR components given the differences and distances between the components will benefit from the addition of an Assistant Manager. The purpose of this position will be to support the Reserve Manager with daily operation of the Reserve as well as maintain responsibility for discrete tasks based on need and skill. This will provide the Reserve Manager with more time for broader partnership development, coordination at the state, regional, and national levels, and fundraising. This position will be located at the Reserve headquarters in Beaufort.

Northern Sites Research and Education Specialist

The Currituck Banks component offers many exciting research, stewardship, and education opportunities. The Northern Sites Manager is not able to fully take advantage of these opportunities without the creation of a Northern Sites Research and Education Specialist position in the Kitty Hawk office. Establishment of the Specialist position will allow for the reintroduction of SWMP water quality monitoring at the component and additional research, education and outreach activities. The remoteness of the component also presents a safety concern when the Northern Sites Manager is in the field alone and the two positions will support each other while in the field. The Northern Sites Research and Education Specialist's duties will draw from the Wilmington Research Specialist and Beaufort Education Specialist's duties, be supervised by the Northern Sites Manager, and work closely with the Research and Education Coordinators.

Rachel Carson Site Manager

The Rachel Carson component is currently managed by a part-time temporary staff person and education program staff when the site manager is not in the office. The temporary staff person is funded by salary savings created by staff vacancies; this is not a sustainable scenario by which to manage the Rachel Carson component. Limited financial resources have prohibited the creation and hiring of a full-time site manager. In the absence of a temporary staff person, it is unrealistic for the education staff to manage the education program and appropriately manage Rachel Carson with the level of oversight and continuity the component needs. Effective management of both the component and the education program requires the establishment of a full-time, permanent Rachel Carson Site Manager position. This position will emulate the Northern Sites Manager responsibilities and also assist with research, education and boat management activities at the site.

Southern Sites Manager

The Stewardship Coordinator is currently responsible for managing stewardship activities at all four components in conjunction with other stewardship staff and managing the daily activities of the two southern components, Masonboro Island and Zeke's Island. Given the complexity of the issues at the two southern components and the distance between all four components, it is necessary to create a Southern Sites Manager position. This will allow the Southern Sites Manager to focus on Masonboro and Zeke's Islands and the Stewardship Coordinator to focus on managing the activities at all of the components. This position will emulate the Northern Sites Manager duties and will be supervised by the Stewardship Coordinator. Once established, the Reserve Manager will explore opportunities for locating the Stewardship Coordinator in the Beaufort office so the position is more centrally located and in the same location as the other Reserve Coordinators.

Wilmington Education Specialist

Many educational opportunities exist at the Masonboro Island and Zeke's Island components managed from the Wilmington office. Education staff located at the Beaufort office are not able to fully take advantage of these opportunities because of the distance between the Beaufort and Wilmington offices and the workload of the small education staff. Additionally, Wilmington office staff already have full workloads and are not able to fully develop educational programming for the components. The Wilmington Education Specialist will fill this critical gap; duties will emulate the Beaufort Education Specialist and the position will conduct general public, K-12, and coastal decision-maker education programs relevant to the components under the supervision of the Education Coordinator. Expanding educational programming in the Wilmington area is important because it is the most densely-populated area of the coast and two of the four NCNERR components are located in this area.

Volunteer Coordinator

A Volunteer Coordinator is needed to manage the Reserve's volunteer program. The Volunteer Coordinator will: produce a volunteer needs assessment; write duty statements for each volunteer position or function; streamline the policies and procedures for recruiting, screening, and placing volunteers; determine volunteer recognition procedures and award scales; develop volunteer orientation and training programs, including a comprehensive docent training program; track and report volunteer hours; and recruit new volunteers through outreach to schools, non-profits, civic

organizations, and businesses near the Reserve components. This position will be located at the Reserve headquarters in Beaufort and will support volunteer activities at all four components.

E. NCNERR Administrative Objectives

NCNERR administration activities address the following Reserve objectives (Figure 1; Table 1):

- **Objective 5.1:** The NCNERR will strengthen its relationship with NOAA-ERD.
- **Objective 5.2:** The NCNERR will strengthen its relationship with DCM.
- **Objective 5.3:** The NCNERR will strengthen its relationship with UNCW and CCFHR.
- **Objective 5.4:** The NCNERR will assess use of the sites by various education, research, and commercial entities.
- **Objective 5.5:** The NCNERR will ensure its operating infrastructure is adequate to fulfill the program mission.
- **Objective 5.6:** The NCNERR will ensure its staff has the skills necessary to perform their jobs and are able to do so safely.
- **Objective 5.7:** The community will recognize the NCNERR and understand how the Reserve serves the citizens and visitors of North Carolina.
- **Objective 5.8:** The NCNERR needs will be more fully met by volunteers and volunteers will be trained in coastal issues.

F. Activities in Support of NCNERR Administrative Objectives

Administrative objectives are presented in bold, italic text with the objective number that refers to Figure 1 in parentheses. Objective activities are presented beneath each objective.

1. The NCNERR will strengthen its relationship with NOAA-ERD (5.1)

The NCNERR has maintained a healthy working relationship with NOAA-ERD since its designation. This relationship is mutually beneficial in that NOAA funds and guides the Reserve through the NOAA and NERRS strategic plans and system-wide programs and the Reserve implements NERRS policies as set by ERD, the NERRS managers, and the Strategic Committee while addressing state needs.

Maintain open communication with NOAA

NCNERR administration will work to maintain and strengthen this relationship by maintaining open and regular communication with ERD and the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource

Management, keeping staff up-to-date on Reserve progress and relevant local and state issues, and gaining insight from the national perspective.

Submit grants and performance reports in a timely manner

To facilitate open communication, the NCNERR will submit its grants and performance reports in a timely manner to ERD.

Address evaluation recommendations

NCNERR grants, performance reports, and management documents will address evaluation recommendations.

Participate in national meetings, serve on workgroups, and provide leadership

NCNERR staff will continue to participate in national meetings, and will serve on and lead system-wide initiatives and workgroups, providing expertise and a North Carolina and southeast perspective. NCNERR staff will also collaborate with regional NERRs and partners to further NERRS and state coastal management goals.

2. The NCNERR will strengthen its relationship with DCM (5.2)

The NCNERR is uniquely partnered with the DCM in that both entities have similar missions to protect coastal resources through informed management. This relationship is mutually beneficial for the reasons articulated in section II, B, 2 of the Administrative Framework. The NCNERR and DCM partnership has evolved since the designation of the NCNERR and both parties are working together to form a model partnership to manage North Carolina's coastal resources. The September 2005 312 NCNERR Evaluation Findings recommended several ways to improve this relationship and this objective outlines ways the NCNERR will work to achieve such a partnership.

Maintain open communication with DCM

The NCNERR will work to maintain and strengthen this relationship by maintaining open and regular communication with DCM leadership and staff. This will be accomplished through regular, formal and informal communication with the Division director and assistant directors regarding NCNERR needs, initiatives, and issues and activities at the national NERRS level. The NCNERR will also work to build understanding about the NCNERR among DCM staff by working with regional staff and creating opportunities for staff to learn more about the Reserve and its components by participating in research, stewardship, and education projects and events. NCNERR will also inform DCM's Coastal Resources Advisory Council and Coastal Resources Commission about its activities and initiatives to allow further integration of Reserve staff into Division-level activities and issues.

Serve as a technical resource with expertise in education, research, and stewardship

The NCNERR has significant expertise in coastal education, research, and stewardship concepts and techniques. The NCNERR will serve as a technical resource in these arenas to support DCM, DENR, and other relevant state initiatives by advising, participating in, and leading relevant coastal management workgroups and projects. Examples include staff involvement in the DCM's Ocean Policy workgroup, the Coastal Resources Commission's Estuarine Shoreline Stabilization Biological workgroup, the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan's Strategic Habitat Areas and Submerged Aquatic Vegetation workgroups, and DENR's Environmental Education workgroup. The Education and Research Coordinators are developing Division-wide Education and Research Plans to identify common program elements and collaborative opportunities.

Collaborate with other DCM sections on mutually beneficial activities

The NCNERR possesses capabilities through its education, research, and stewardship programs to conduct site-based research and education on coastal management issues. Many of these issues are relevant to the Permitting and Enforcement and Policy and Planning sections within DCM. The NCNERR will conduct education, research, and stewardship projects that address priority issues based on DCM and NCNERR needs and NCNERR capabilities. Regular communication with DCM leadership regarding needs will facilitate this collaboration. Examples of cross-sectoral collaboration and integration include work with the Policy and Planning section to develop and host the Estuarine Shoreline Mapping Summit and with the Permitting and Enforcement section to develop and host workshops to inform marine contractors of changes in the regulatory program and to train Local Permit Officers. Additional collaborative opportunities exist including working more closely with the Planning and Policy's 309 Program Enhancement and Land Use Planning groups.

3. The NCNERR will strengthen its relationship with UNCW and CCFHR (5.3)

The NCNERR shares facility space with UNCW's Center for Marine Science and CCFHR's Beaufort laboratory. As such, it is important to maintain and strengthen its relationship with both entities to ensure adequate infrastructure and operations support.

Maintain open communication with UNCW and CCFHR administration

The NCNERR will work to maintain and strengthen its relationship with UNCW and CCFHR by maintaining open and regular communication with the administrations of both organizations. This will be accomplished through regular, formal and informal communication with UNCW's Center of Marine Science Director and CCFHR's Director. The NCNERR will also work to build understanding about the Reserve program among UNCW and CCFHR staff by working with facility staff and creating opportunities for staff to learn more about the Reserve and its components by participating in research, stewardship, and education projects and events.

Continue to work on UNCW and CCFHR facility Memoranda of Understanding

The NCNERR will continue to work on the UNCW and CCFHR facility Memoranda of Understanding. These documents will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Participate in facility committees as necessary

Since NCNERR has office and laboratory space at both facilities, Reserve staff at each facility will participate in facility committees as necessary. The Beaufort staff participates in several CCFHR committees including: the Administration Team, Safety Committee, Occupant Emergency Plan Committee and the Emergency Management System Committee.

Collaborate with UNCW and CCFHR on mutually beneficial activities

The NCNERR possesses capabilities through its education, research, and stewardship programs to conduct site-based estuarine research and education. Where appropriate, NCNERR staff will collaborate with UNCW and CCFHR staff on activities that support the Reserve mission. See section II, B, 1 & 3 for examples.

4. The NCNERR will assess use of the components by various education, research, and commercial entities (5.4)

The NCNERR components are utilized by a variety of educational, research, and commercial groups to further the NCNERR mission as well as their own. Increased understanding by the NCNERR regarding the types of groups operating on the components and how they operate will enable the NCNERR to better manage the components, implement NCNERR programs, and allow for additional partnership opportunities with the current user groups.

Maintain the research permit system

The NCNERR will maintain the research permit system to track and report research that is conducted on the components by outside researchers. To make the permit process more efficient an online application will be developed.

Develop and implement a reservation and reporting system for educational and commercial users

The NCNERR will develop a reservation and reporting system for education and commercial users that is complementary to the research permit system. The reservation component of the system will support the Reserve in scheduling internal and external events to protect the components from over usage. The reporting system will gather information from commercial vendors on the number of visitors that utilize the site to inform NCNERR reporting and management. This system will be implemented in a phased approach with input from these users. This process will begin with voluntary reporting of Reserve usage by commercial vendors.

Develop and provide users with training and materials to support activities

The NCNERR will develop materials to support educational, research, and commercial users including informational materials regarding the NCNERR, the individual components and specific rules and appropriate use associated with each, and the reservation, reporting, and permitting systems. Trainings will also be developed for educational and commercial users and conducted on a regular basis to ensure that operators have the most up-to-date information regarding the components and their use. Evaluations of the trainings and materials will be built into the program as appropriate. The materials and trainings will be jointly developed by the education, research, and stewardship programs.

5. The NCNERR will ensure its operating infrastructure is adequate to fulfill its mission (5.5)

Maintain infrastructure and partner relations to ensure longevity

Existing facilities will be maintained in a manner that promotes and supports Reserve use for many years to come. The NCNERR will work with CCFHR and UNCW to provide and maintain appropriate administrative, education, and research space at the Beaufort and Wilmington offices, respectively.

Assess infrastructure needs on a regular basis

Facility needs will be assessed on a regular basis and the NCNERR will work with existing building partners and seek new partnerships, if needed, to address facilities needs.

Increase state monetary support of the NCNERR

To continue successful administration of the NCNERR, the NCNERR and DCM will work with DENR to increase state fiscal support for Reserve operations and DCM staff positions to reduce the heavy reliance on federal funds to operate and staff the Reserve. The limited state fiscal support of the NCNERR was recognized in the 2005 Evaluation findings for the NCNERR. Progress made thus far and future strategies are outlined in Appendix M.

Seek outside funding to help administer program

NCNERR staff will continue to seek external funding to support the education, research and stewardship missions of the Reserve. The Reserve has been successful in this endeavor to date. From 2006 until present, NCNERR has received in excess of \$918,000 in competitive NOAA grant awards to support research, education, land acquisition and construction. These additional funds have allowed the Reserve to accomplish objectives that would otherwise not be achieved due to fiscal constraints.

6. The NCNERR will ensure its staff has the skills necessary to perform their jobs and are able to do so safely (5.6)

Safety concerns were identified in the September 2005 312 evaluation of the NCNERR. This management plan addresses those concerns and brings the NCNERR into compliance with the DENR safety program as well.

Provide and participate in training opportunities to enhance and expand staff skills

The Reserve will provide and staff will participate in training to enhance and expand their skills to ensure the NCNERR is equipped to fulfill its mission and address coastal management needs. Training opportunities will span a breadth of topics and may include attendance and presentation at professional conferences, appropriate use of hand tools, boating skills, supervisory training, contract administration, and grant writing. Reserve staff will receive training annually on hurricane preparedness and post-storm recovery.

Address staffing needs as resources allow

The staffing plan is contained within this chapter and articulates staff duties and staffing needs. Staffing needs will be evaluated based on program priorities, geographic coverage of programs, and available resources.

Ensure staff is equipped to perform jobs safely

Education, research and stewardship activities and the environment in which these activities are carried out demand adherence to a safety plan. The NCNERR safety plan is located in Appendix N. Staff will be appropriately trained in first aid and boat handling and have access to the equipment to perform their jobs in a safe manner.

Review safety and hurricane plans annually

The NCNERR safety plan (Appendix N) and DCM, UNCW, and CCFHR hurricane preparedness plans will be reviewed and updated annually as needed.

Participate in relevant safety committees

NCNERR staff will participate in DCM safety subcommittees representing the Reserve in the DENR safety initiative and in CCFHR safety committees as occupants of the CCFHR facility.

7. The community will recognize the NCNERR and understand how the Reserve serves the citizens and visitors of North Carolina (5.7)

This objective addresses the September 2005 312 Evaluation Findings recommendation to increase the NCNERR's visibility to improve programs and stature.

Develop and implement an external marketing and communications plan

In order for the NCNERR to successfully fulfill its mission, the community that the Reserve operates within and serves must recognize the NCNERR name, know where the components are, and understand how the NCNERR serves the citizens and visitors of North Carolina. Community members are defined as the residents of the 20 coastal counties, the coastal management community, coastal decision-makers, the State of North Carolina, the Coastal Resources Commission, NOAA, NCNERR visitors, and relevant non-profit organizations. To accomplish this, the NCNERR will develop and implement an external marketing and communications plan to address these goals and audiences. The plan will include activities geared towards these audiences such as publishing the newsletter and accomplishments report, marketing the new logo and Web site, organizing facility dedication and anniversary celebrations; relevant activities will include measures to evaluate performance. Sector-specific communication needs will also be identified to support program marketing and address sector challenges. The plan will also outline strategies for working with the DCM Public Information Officer and ERD's Communications Specialist to ensure appropriate engagement at both the state and federal levels.

Assess plan effectiveness at regular intervals

The marketing and communications plan will be reviewed at regular intervals (*e.g.*, every two years) using measures to evaluate the activities and strategies. Activities and strategies will be refined and the plan updated based on these evaluations.

8. The NCNERR needs will be more fully met by volunteers and volunteers will be trained in coastal issues (5.8)

Increase coordination with NCNERR non-profit organization, Carolina Estuarine Reserve Foundation (CERF)

The Reserve Manager serves as an ex-officio member on the CERF board to guide the direction of the non-profit group based on the activities and needs of the NCNERR, and to assist in implementing CERF's strategic plan. CERF updates are provided at the quarterly NCNERR staff meetings to keep the rest of the staff informed and Reserve updates are provided at quarterly CERF board meetings.

Conduct local advisory committee meetings

The Reserve Manager and stewardship staff will hold annual LAC meetings to solicit feedback and recommendations on site management, research, and education activities and policies at the components. Meetings will be held more frequently as need dictates. The Reserve Manager will evaluate the need for a Reserve-wide advisory committee to provide input and oversight of the entire NCNERR in addition to the local committees for each component.

