



**Currituck Banks Reserve
Local Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, 04 November 2010, 9 – 11 am**

<u>LAC Members</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Present</u>
Ms. Sally Baron	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Mike Hoff	USFWS	Yes
Officer Steve Jarvis	N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Enforcement	No
Sheriff Susan Johnson	Currituck County	No
Mr. Aaron McCall	The Nature Conservancy	Yes
Dr. Clarence Styron	N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education	Represented by Sharon Meade
Ms. Mary Riley	Community Member	Yes
Mrs. Donna Robinson	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Bill Robinson	Community Member	Yes
<u>Others</u>		
Mr. Frank Jennings	DCM, District Manager	Yes
Rebecca Ellin	DCM, Reserve Manager	Yes
Bo Dame	DCM, Northern Sites Manager	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. The committee felt that meeting annually was sufficient and that additional meetings should be added as needed.

Site Update – Bo Dame

- An overview of the past years activities and current site specific issues was provided.
- Research activities: Amphibian and reptile monitoring was conducted by students from Chowan University and Virginia Tech. Staff worked with the Corolla Wild Horse Fund to inventory and monitor the Corolla horses that use the Reserve site. Initial assessment of visitor use patterns was conducted. Development of dune/beach profiles by Reserve interns (with thanks to Bill Robinson) was initiated. Initial investigation into possible selenium contamination and pursuit of sampling support was conducted.
- Education/outreach activities: Staff delivered presentations on submerged aquatic vegetation, maritime forest, and Outer Banks processes to Dare Master Gardeners, College of the Albemarle, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Chowan University, North Carolina State University; staffed a booth at the USFWS Wildfest; and conducted a Herpetology Workshop with the Wildlife Resources Commission's Center for Wildlife Education.
- Stewardship activities: An easement agreement was finalized with the County to extend the multiuse path into the parking lot. New signage will be installed in the coming year including a Welcome Sign, Site Information Sign, Message Board, and "No Bikes on Trails" signs. Staff met with USFWS & The Nature Conservancy to discuss hunting statistics, permits, reported harvests, and the jawbone study.
- The Carolina Estuarine Reserve Foundation (CERF) donated a utility trailer to increase stewardship capacity.

Member roundtable and other comments

- Mrs. Robinson requested the Reserve consider allowing a gate be installed in the southern boundary fence to provide for emergency access and horse removal. An

existing gate does not coincide with an access easement near the intersection of Lost Lake Lane and Bear Foot Path.

- Dr. Dame expressed concern over providing a second access point along the southern boundary and cited potential problems with keeping an additional gate closed. He stated the Reserve will request input from Emergency Services and the Horse Fund and consider the request.
- Ms. Baron requested signs be installed informing hikers that hunting is allowed and hunters that hiking occurs in the area. She noted the presence of hunting sign (blood along the trail/boardwalk area).
 - Dr. Dame presented an example sign used at other Reserve sites, and stated these will be placed at the trailhead. He also stated that hunters are not allowed to access the Reserve for hunting in such a way that they cross or use the Boardwalk and/or Primitive Trail.

Meeting Follow Up – Bo Dame

- On November 8, 2010 contact information for Jason Dail was sent via email to all LAC members along with a reminder that additional comments on the Draft LAC Procedures should be sent to Jason by December 10th.