



**Emily and Richardson Preyer Buckridge Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, 1 November 2017, 10:00am-11:45am**

Attendance

LAC Members	Affiliation/Interest	Present
Mr. Mark Cagle	NCWRC – Enforcement	Yes
Mr. David Turner	NCWRC –Biologist	Yes
Mr. William Ridgeway	NCWRC – Game lands	Yes
Mr. Howard Phillips	PLNWR	No
Sheriff Darryl Liverman	Tyrrell County Sheriff’s Office	No
Mr. Mike Clements	Community Member	Yes
Mr. David Clegg	Tyrrell County Government	Yes
Mr. Dan Feola	NCDFR	No
Mrs. Nina Griswell	Tyrrell County Government	No
<u>Others Present</u>		
Woody Webster	DCM, Buckridge Site Manager	
Dwayne Norman	Conservation Tech - NCWRC	

Reserve Program Update

Reserve-wide Administrative Update – Fall 2017

New Reserve-wide update attached at the end of the minutes.

Site Update and Old Business – Woody Webster

Property Updates

- Due to various delays, funding for the Woodley Tract acquisition has been extended. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has purchased the parcel, and currently the U.S. Air Force (USAF) is reviewing the easement language. As explained at previous meetings, the Reserve was approached by The Nature Conservancy regarding this boundary expansion opportunity a few years ago. Their Air Force partner is supplying 50% of the purchase price through REPI funds to protect operational areas around the Dare County Bombing Range. It is hoped the Reserve will close on this addition to Buckridge within the next few months.
- The same TNC/USAF partnership also pursued the purchase of 260 acres at Grapevine Landing, known as the Primland Tract. The Reserve secured funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund toward this addition last year. However, slow responses and a desire for an additional last-minute appraisal by the current landowner led to the purchase falling through. The grant funds had to be returned to the Trust Fund unspent. Tyrrell County leadership still desires a formal boat ramp at this location, and plans for a waterfront access area were discussed by the Division. TNC has voiced their desire to continue to pursue the parcel, but a quick purchase seems unlikely.
- Monitoring the Buckridge boundary at Gum Neck Landing was increased due to an adjacent landowner project. The Reserve allowed the landowner to secure a CAMA permit to dredge the canal along his property line, abutting Buckridge. However, after completing only a portion of the project, the landowner passed away, and the project parcel is now for sale. Regulatory staff indicate the permit can be transferred to a new owner if desired.

Invasive Controls

- An isolated outbreak of alligatorweed at Otis Road canal was located, and staff began evaluation of imazapyr as a control method. Monitoring has indicated good control over the growing season with a 1% solution, though the initial dieback from spraying was much slower than is typical for glyphosate. Imazapyr is more expensive to use, but continued monitoring will help determine whether the reduction in staff time required for retreatment might make up for higher initial expense.
- The Division of Water Resources is treating alligatorweed along the Alligator River at Buckridge, starting at Gum Neck Landing. This marks the return of the cost-share agreement between DCM and DWR after a brief hiatus.

Hunting Statistics

- Bear harvest in 2016 decreased to 11, from 18 the previous year. The reported deer harvest fell from 24 to 7. Storms with significant flooding caused at least some closure to hunting roads during the month of October for the past two years. Last year's hunting season was also marred by extremely wet conditions and a deteriorated road system early on. This year saw no such closure during October, so harvest numbers may rebound. Also, the 2016 December bear season saw very few hunters at Buckridge.
- NCWRC has made good progress on their plan to rehabilitate the roads at Buckridge. Sturdier temporary road closures have been erected and the gravel added this year improved Eastern Road all the way to the first spur road (Roundabout Road). Other roads have been reshaped where feasible, and mowing was recently completed. Additionally, NCWRC completed purchase of a depot in the town of Columbia, and are currently operating staff out of it.
 - Mr. Williams and Mr. Turner indicated that NCWRC have received numerous complaints regarding the temporary road gates. Their supervisors continue to support the plan for improving the roads at Buckridge. Mr. Williams indicated signs would be installed to explain why new gates are there. Mr. Williams then asked Mr. Cagle about policing the new temporary gates. Mr. Cagle told the LAC that there is currently no officer assigned to Tyrrell County (due to retirement), nor is their one in Washington County (due to transfer). Hyde County has two, but one will soon be leaving. Mr. Clegg asked why these vacancies went unfilled. Two main reasons were discussed, the limited schooling available for NCWRC enforcement officers and that few seek a post as remote and rural as Tyrrell County. Still, Mr. Cagle agreed to try and monitor the new gate situation.
 - LAC members then began a discussion of somehow limiting the number of bear hunters (in the name of infrastructure preservation). Mr. Turner indicated that Van Swamp Game Land (where conditions are less favorable for stable bear population dynamics) hunters were surveyed about similar issues there. While the surveyed majority agreed there were too many bear hunters at Van Swamp, they also agreed that no one wanted limits placed on the number of bear hunters allowed. It was felt that Buckridge hunters would voice a similar sentiment.

Research Update

- Contractors working for the N.C. Department of Transportation confirmed the presence of Northern long-eared bat on Buckridge in January 2017. This is a species listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service due to population declines associated with white-nose syndrome. Mr. Turner added that contractors have located this species on numerous other game lands, despite their failure to find them on the nearby Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.
- Sea Grant and the N.C. Coastal Reserve have a fellowship opportunity open to applications until November 29.

Visitor Access Issues

- Buckridge saw the illegal installation of an additional crab dock this year. Permitting staff were contacted, and the fisherman in question removed the structure.
- Wildlife trail cameras have been deployed since late 2016, though a shooting vandalism temporarily took one out of the field this spring. The bullets severely damaged the protective metal case, and thankfully failed to seriously damage the camera within.
- Mr. Clements presented a letter (attached below) listing a neighboring landowner's issues with hunter trespass as they seek to access a portion of Buckridge inside the Gum Neck Drainage District. This landowner called the Buckridge office recently, but wished to remain anonymous to preserve relations with neighbors. A long discussion on neighbor trespass issues commenced, with LAC members acknowledging no perfect solution is possible, especially not quickly. Mr. Turner indicated that over the long term, the Reserve could request a change of this portion of the property to archery-only hunting, or could remove it from the game land designation altogether. This would take time, as well as documentation and a well-worded letter from the Division to NCWRC. In the meantime, Mr. Williams offered to make additional "No Access to Game Lands" signs, such as those used at Jonestown Road. The landowner may then post them at problem locations. Mr. Clements agreed to talk to the landowner to see how many signs would be necessary.

Upcoming Activities

- Outreach for Tyrrell Elementary School's 1st grade was done February and May this year, and outreach events for 2nd and 3rd grade are planned for the spring.
- Bear season starts November 13. NCWRC staff expressed the importance of their visibility during this time, given the concentration of hunters at Buckridge.
- Moving forward, the Buckridge Site Manager will begin to assist other Reserve components with acquisition projects. The first will be associated with the Kitty Hawk Woods Reserve.
- The Woodley tract inclusion into the Buckridge Reserve should be complete before next summer.

Member Roundtable

Mr. Turner asked whether water drawdowns for roadwork were a possibility. The site's canals are currently the same elevation as the River, given the River's high water levels. There is little the Reserve can do to lower water levels at current River water heights, much less with an active beaver dam in the northern part of the Reserve. Limited drawdowns in support of road work were not discounted as a possibility, should conditions become more favorable.

Public Comments

No members of the public were present.

Review of Action Items

Long-term solutions to landowner complaints within the drainage district will continue to be investigated.

Attachment 1:

N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve Fall 2017 Local Advisory Committee Meetings Reserve-wide Update

The Reserve-wide Update now includes a broader range of Reserve activities with the addition of a new section titled “Recent and Upcoming Program Activities”. This section will share events that committee members may be interested in and enhance the awareness of activities across the Reserve’s programs. The activity descriptions are intentionally brief; committee members may request more information and/or future presentations for topics of interest and find event information on the event calendar at www.nccoastalreserve.net.

Periodic Rules Review

Both the Rules Review Commission (RRC) and the Joint Legislative Administrative Procedures Oversight Committee approved the rules review report for the Coastal Reserve rules 15A NCAC 07O this summer. These actions follow input received on the classification of each rule in 07O from the local advisory committees (Spring 2016), N.C. Coastal Resources Commission (July 2016), and a 60-day public comment period (September-November 2016). One comment was received during the public comment period and it was supportive of the proposed classification of the rules. The rules identified in the final report must be readopted using the permanent rulemaking process. Staff is working with the Department to establish a timeline and process for readoption.

Federal Budget

The budget table below is a summary of the current status of the federal budget for fiscal years 17 and 18 as it relates to the Coastal Reserve. Recall that the federal fiscal year is October 1-September 30. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) budget line provides funding to the 29 reserves within the System through cooperative agreements that are matched by the states, and supports national coordination of programs and implementation of system-wide and competitive projects. The Coastal Zone Management (CZM) grants budget line provides funding to coastal states with approved coastal management programs through cooperative agreements that are matched by the states. The Division of Coastal Management (DCM) receives funding from both budget lines to operate the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve (NCNERR) and N.C. Coastal Management Program. The CZM grant funds DCM receives provides funding for Reserve staffing, state site operations, and administrative support.

Federal Budget Lines	Final Omnibus Appropriations FY2017	President's Budget Request FY2018	House Appropriations FY2018	Senate Appropriations FY2018
NERRS	23,500	0	23,500	25,000
CZM Grants	70,000	0	45,000	70,000

In thousands of dollars

- Federal Fiscal Year 17: Congress approved the federal budget for fiscal year 17 in April with a \$500,000 increase for the NERRS (see budget table), resulting in a \$14,000 increase to base operational funding for each reserve within the System. As a result, the DCM received \$633,000 from NOAA for operation of the NCNERR portion of the Coastal Reserve during this state fiscal year (July 2017-June 2018). The additional funds are being used to cover fixed cost increases and to fund a portion of the temporary staffing positions through the annual budget.
- Federal Fiscal Year 18: Congress passed a continuing resolution in September to fund the federal government from October 1, 2017 through December 8, 2017 based on fiscal year 17 funding levels. The budget table summarizes the President's budget request and the House and Senate appropriations committees' numbers for fiscal year 18:
 - The President's budget request does not include funding for the NERRS or the CZM grants budget lines.
 - The House supports fiscal year 17 level funding for the NERRS and the Senate supports a \$1.5 million increase for the NERRS.
 - The House reduces funding for the CZM grants to \$45 million and the Senate supports fiscal year 17 level funding for the CZM grants.

Next steps for the federal fiscal year 18 budget include individual House and Senate votes for their fiscal year 18 budgets and then a conference between the chambers to agree on a final budget.

Thank you to the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association and Friends of the Reserve for their work to educate Congress on the value of the national system and the NCNERR.

Staffing News

Michelle Brodeur started as the Reserve's new Communications Specialist in August. Michelle is a marine ecologist who recently completed her PhD at UNC Institute of Marine Sciences. As a graduate student, she worked as a NOAA-NERRS Fellow to explore how interactions within oyster reef communities affect oyster reef growth and restoration success in the Rachel Carson Reserve. Michelle has always held a passion for science communication and is excited to join the

Reserve staff as the Communications Specialist. She brings her knowledge of estuarine ecosystems and her experience communicating research to broad audiences through formal education, public outreach events, and filmmaking.

Recent and Upcoming Program Activities

- **Coastal Explorations Educator Workshop** (11/2/2017) - Beaufort: Participants of this workshop will learn about estuaries and the Reserve program through classroom activities that they can use with their students and groups. Field-based explorations and activities will also be conducted during a field trip to the Rachel Carson Reserve. Teacher renewal credits and Environmental Education Certification credits are offered for this workshop.
- **Coastal Government Planning for Open Space Workshop** (11/30/2017 Wilmington & 12/5/2017 Plymouth): Participants will learn about the benefits of open space protection; learn how open space can service multiple needs; identify contacts that build framework for open space protection; and learn how other communities approach open space protection. This event is being held in partnership with the Division of Coastal Management.
- **Marine Planning Process Workshop** (1/8-9/2018) - Beaufort: Marine and coastal resource managers are challenged to address key ocean challenges, give states and communities greater input in governmental decisions, streamline federal and international decision-making, save taxpayer dollars, and promote economic growth. This course provides managers with the tools to utilize effective marine planning techniques. *Partners:* Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership, Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment.
- **CCVATCH NERRS Science Collaborative Transfer Grant:** The Reserve received a Science Transfer grant with the North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to facilitate the use of a new tool, known as the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Tool for Coastal Habitats (CCVATCH), to assess habitat vulnerability to ecosystem stressors using the knowledge of Reserve staff and local experts. To enhance resilience through management actions, the tool produces vulnerability scores which can help guide and prioritize land acquisition, restoration, policy, and other management decisions. Meetings are currently underway to score the vulnerability of marshes at the 4 national sites in North Carolina.
- **Seeds to Shoreline NERRS Science Collaborative Transfer Grant:** The Reserve is a partner on a multi-Reserve project through which participating teachers and students will learn hydroponic growing techniques to grow saltmarsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) in their classrooms and plant for future restoration efforts. *Partners:* Guana Tolomato Matanzas NERR, ACE Basin NERR, North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR, Sapelo Island NERR, and the marine education specialist with the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium.
- **Thin Layer Deposition NERRS Science Collaborative Grant:** The Reserve will serve as an experimental site for a project testing the effectiveness of thin-layer sediment placement as a climate adaptation strategy. The project tests how small additions of sediment affect the resilience of marshes to sea level rise and develops standardized monitoring protocols as well as siting and permitting guides for this technique. *Partners:* Elkhorn Slough, Great Bay, Waquoit Bay, Chesapeake Bay Maryland, Chesapeake Bay Virginia, and San Francisco Bay NERRS; University of New Hampshire.

Attachment 2:

Buckridge Tract in Gum Neck community near and around Pumping Plant and Post Office Road

Dogs Hunting on Game Lands

- Cannot contain to only game lands
- Hunters often trespass on private land to receive access to dogs
- Dogs run over private lands often scaring game off those tracts
- If dogs tree or bay bear on private lands hunters often go shoot bear and trespass doing so
- Vehicles park near private properties to watch for chased game crossing private properties making private landowners feel uncomfortable
- During bear seasons same hunters try to fudge the system and hunt for bear on deer only days
 - Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday first week second season, Saturday on first season
- Training dogs and hunt with on non-hunting days: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday

Access to Game Lands not specified

- Private field paths and laterals often used to gain access to lands by Game land users assuming there is right of way through them
- When those paths are torn up, landowner is responsible for repairs and maintenance

Availability to anyone with sportsman license

- People with those license may not be clear of boundaries and unfamiliar with community

Land is bordered by many private owners

- With so many private landowners surrounding tract no real available access without being near others property

Location of acreage in a drainage district

- This tract of land is within perimeter of drainage district that has a drainage tax, which state is exempt, cutting income for drainage maintenance and repairs

11-1-17
Concerned Boarding
Land Owner