



**Buxton Woods Reserve  
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Nov. 07, 2017  
Buxton Fire Hall  
Buxton, NC**

**Attendance**

<b><u>LAC Partner Organization Members</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>
National Park Service, Karol Jones	y
NC Forest Resources, John Cook	y
Wildlife Resources Commission, Bob Martine	y
Coastal Studies Institute, John McCord	y
Dare County Sheriff's Department, Doug Oberbeck	y
<b><u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u></b>	
Pat Moore	y
Harvey Scarborough	y
Marcia Lyons	y
Russ Kiddy	n
Carol Kiddy	n
Carol Anderson	n
<b><u>Others Present</u></b>	
Bryan Perry, Buxton Fire Department	
Karen Lebing	
Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy	
Kate Jones, NCNERR Northern Sites Manager	
Rachel Veal, NCNERR Northern Sites Stewardship Assistant	

**Reserve-wide Administrative Update (Site Manager)**

- *Staffing*

The Northern Sites office of the NC Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve hired Rachel Veal as a Stewardship Assistant for a 6-month term. Rachel began in May of 2017. *(Marcia recognized that hiring of additional staff as a positive development for the Northern Sites Office.)*

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- *Rules Review*

Rules that were discussed in Spring of 2016 have been made available for public comment and have received 1 comment in support. These rules must now be re-adopted. *No Comments.*

- *Budget Update*

The 2018 federal budget has not yet been released. The presidential budget requested \$0 (zero) for NERRS funding, but the House appropriated \$23 million, and the Senate appropriated \$25 million in their budget proposals. For the Coastal Management budget, the President requested \$0 (zero), but the House appropriated \$45 million, and the Senate \$70 million in their budget proposals. We hope to know the outcome of federal budget negotiations some time in December. Kate recognized the work of both the National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) and the Friends of the Reserve (FOR) for their work to educate representatives about the importance of the Reserve System. Both NERRA and FOR are non-profit organizations that work to support the Coastal Reserves. *No Comments.*

- *Other Reserve updates and events*

- The NC Coastal Reserve has hired a new Communication Specialist, Michelle Brodeur. She is a graduate of UNCW and is assisting all the Reserves in public outreach, social media, etc.
- Upcoming Reserve-wide activities include:
  - o A workshop for coastal government planning for open space; Dec 05 in Plymouth, NC
  - o Marine Process Planning workshop; Jan 8-9 in Beaufort, NC (sponsored by APNEP)
  - o CCVATCH meeting for Currituck Banks; Jan in Corolla, NC
  - o Seeds to Shore at Rachel Carson; teaching hydroponic growing of *Spartina alterniflora* in classrooms- students will also plant their seedlings
  - o Experimental project at RC testing the effects of thin layer sediment placement to enhance marsh accretion; to increase resiliency of marsh to rising water levels

### **Site Update - Old Business (Site Manager)**

- *Controlled Burning in Buxton Woods*

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Site Manager discussed possibility of controlled burning in Buxton Woods with Ecologist at N.C. Natural Heritage Program (Heritage). His suggestion was that we begin vegetation monitoring and find an area to have a control burn test plot before proceeding with any larger scale prescribed burn efforts. Vegetation monitoring has begun and will be discussed later in the meeting. Bryan Perry wonders if there are specific studies or other scientific evidence that would lead Heritage to believe that introducing fire in Buxton Woods would be detrimental to the system? Marcia wondered what their specific concerns were? Site Manager responded that she did not think there was anything specific to Buxton Woods, but more to maritime forests in N.C. in general. The concerns of the ecologist centered mainly on the possibility of eliminating oak saplings and reducing oak habitat. She added that the goal was to proceed with caution, but that the door is not closed to the opportunity for controlled burning in the future based on data collected from vegetation studies and test plot. Bryan noted that Buxton Woods has changed dramatically since Hurricane Emily in 1993, and the amount of dead and downed vegetation has increased substantially due to both the storm and the bark beetle. John Cook noted that there is a need to introduce disturbance into the system in Buxton Woods, and that proceeding with small steps, similar to what was done at Nags Head Woods Preserve, would be a good idea.

- *Fire Management Plan*

Site Manager introduced a completed wildfire plan for Buxton Woods, which shown all access points, roads, and water sources. A copy can be made available to members who request if they want to look at it in more detail or make comments. Karol Jones and Bryan Perry requested copies of the plan.

### Site Update - New Business

- *Vegetation Monitoring*

Site Manager introduced the Vegetation Monitoring Plan that is being undertaken at Buxton and Kitty Hawk Woods Reserves. This plan is based on Carolina Vegetative Survey Protocols. Several plots were established in the Reserves in 1988, and attempts have been made to find these plots to resample so that the data from this time can be used for comparison. In addition, new plots will be established to clarify vegetation trends and inform decision-making on fire, as well as other management decisions. A write-up of the protocol was passed around for viewing. Harvey Scarborough indicates that he may know the location of some of the vegetation plots from 1988 and would be happy to show Kate and Rachel.

- *Site Stewards Program*

The Northern Sites Office is currently in the process of adopting a Site Stewards Program. This program will be based on a similar program that exists at the Rachel Carson Reserve (RCR). Site stewards would be trained volunteers that could assist with increasing our presence at the Reserves through visitor outreach, by reporting issues at

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the reserves (such as downed trees, visitor misuse, etc.), and assist with projects such as trail maintenance. The Site Manager is currently in the recruitment process, so if members know of anyone who is interested, or is interested themselves, let her know. Marcia wonders if there is a minimum number of hours that site stewards would have to complete? Site Manager said she would talk to manager at RCR, and is open to input. John McCord suggested reaching out to schools and suggested some teacher contacts (Traci Schissler and Erin Delmonte). He also pointed out that the local school is designated as a school of Coastal Studies, so being involved with the Coastal Reserve would fit into their mission. The Site Manager indicated that she thought working with the schools would be a great idea.

- *Christmas Bird Count*

The Site Manager recognized Pat Moore as being the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) organizer in Buxton Woods and asked her to give a report on the history, as well as current details of the CBC. Pat told attendees that the bird count originally started as a bird shoot, with hunters dividing their take for the day into type of species while competing for the highest number. In the early 1900's, the goal shifted from hunting to counting the birds. Currently there are over 2000 counts. Each count occurs in the same places every year for data comparison, and centers on a 15-mile radius. Our center is the Frisco Post Office and is always on Dec 27. It was established by Harry LeGrand in 1981. Pat has been running the Buxton CBC since 2000, and has been assisted by Marcia Lyons. Pat also told attendees about other local CBCs.

- *LAC Process: Community Member Partners*

Some of our current community member (everyone but Harvey) partners have expired, and these members will need to reapply. Applications will be accepted after the first of the year. This only applies to community members. Site Manager indicated that the reserve appreciates their service. Several members indicated that they would like to reapply. She also provided applications to give to anyone that current members know who would like to apply. She also gave members a list of types of community members that would be desirable including: commercial user, adjacent property owners, community members at large, potential volunteer, traditional user, and recreational user. The Site Manager also noted that Danny Couch will be joining the meeting in the future, but could not attend today as he had to go to a funeral. Pat Moore stated that she would be retiring from the LAC, though she still plans to attend meetings. The Site Manager recognized Pat's many years of service to Buxton Woods as a LAC member. Pat Moore suggested Karen Leibig as a candidate, and Marcia suggested that Sylvia Mattingly who owns Equine Adventure would be a potential candidate as a commercial user.

### **Roundtable Discussion** (*Staff response in italics*)

- John Cook- noted that Community Wildfire Protection Plant Grants will be available soon (proposals accepted in January 2018) and that the money could be used for burning, trail maintenance, test plots, making or improving fire breaks and for other improvements. Can discuss further with Site Manager. Also commented on Gypsy Moth spraying program in spring. It is a pre-emergent spray. He also noted that there has not been much communication from

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the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding the spray program. *Site Manager said she would email for update*

- Pat Moore- noted that it has been a pleasure to serve the LAC, and wants to hear the update on the Wood Ducks from Harvey.
- Harvey Scarborough- says that there were lots of rat snakes in the wood duck boxes, and even saw three in one box. Overall though, there was a decent hatch, but he noted that he did not see any Blue Winged Teal fly over in spring. Some boxes need to rehab due to racoon and other damage, and he indicated that he could take care of repairs.
- Marcia- Led a walk for “Wings Over Water” at Hatteras National Seashore and encouraged participants to visit for Buxton Woods.
- John McCord- Noted the change of directors at Coastal Studies Institute (CSI). With their previous director retiring, they have had an interim Director, Mike Piehler, who will be in place until July 01, 2018. Currently a search is underway for a new director who is expected to be chosen by February in place by July 2018. Their title will be Dean of Coastal Programs. CSI will also be hiring 12 more faculty members.
- Bob Martine- noted that he has been seeing visitors hiking without wearing any orange. He advises them that they should wear bright colors when hiking during hunting season. *Rachel noted that this has also been a problem at other reserves despite signage.*

### **Action Items**

- Site Manager will be sharing relevant documents via Google Drive
- Site Manager will contact potential LAC members as well as local schools
- Site Manager will contact DOA about spring Gypsy Moth Spray
- LAC members will send any LAC or site steward candidates to Site Manager
- Site Manager will email minutes for comments/changes