



**Currituck Banks Reserve**  
**Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**March 13, 2017, 1 pm**  
**Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education in Corolla**

**Attendance**

| <b><u>LAC Partner Organization Members</u></b>                      | <b><u>Present</u></b> |
|---|-----------------------|
| NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Steve Jarvis                      | Yes                   |
| NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Anna Barbosa                      | Yes                   |
| Currituck County Sheriffs Office, Jason Banks                       | Yes                   |
| Currituck County Planning Department, Ben Woody                     | Yes                   |
| The Nature Conservancy, Aaron McCall                                | No                    |
| Currituck National Wildlife Refuge, Mike Hoff                       | Yes                   |
| NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Sharon Meade                      | Yes                   |
|   |                       |
| <b><u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u></b> |                       |
| None  |                       |
|   |                       |
| <b><u>Others Present</u></b>  |                       |
| Kate Jones, Northern Sites Manager, NCNERR                          | Yes                   |
| Rebecca Ellin, Reserve Program Manager, NCNERR                      | Yes                   |
| Elise Gilchrist, Communications Specialist, NCNERR                  | Yes                   |

**Welcome – Kate Jones**

The Site Manager welcomed the committee to the Spring 2017 meeting and explained that the focus of this meeting will be the NCNERR management plan update. The Site Manager reminded the committee that a site update was sent out electronically prior to the meeting and explained that there will be time at the end of the meeting for questions/comments regarding the site update.

## **NCNERR Management Plan Update – Rebecca Ellin**

The Reserve Program Manager welcomed the committee and thanked the members for their participation in the management plan update process.

The Program Manager explained that the purpose of this meeting is to review the updated NCNERR management plan and gather feedback from the local advisory committee. She provided a brief overview of the management plan update process including: the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's requirement to have and maintain an updated management plan that adheres to guidelines established for all Reserves within the National Estuarine Research Reserve System; the public input process that the NCNERR conducted to inform the plan update; the history of NCNERR management plans and that this document serves as the fourth plan for the Reserve; and reminded the committee of the four themes identified from the public input process - program visibility, visitor use, research awareness, and partnerships. Committee members were reminded to submit written comments on the plan to the Program Manager by March 22.

The Program Manager reviewed the agenda for this portion of the meeting: discuss each section of the plan; discuss general questions regarding the plan; public comments; and next steps.

### **Section by section review of the management plan**

The Program Manager walked the committee through each section of the plan, providing an overview of each section and requesting their input on the following questions for each section: What works well in this section? What needs improvement in this section? What suggestions would you make to improve this section? The input is provided by section.

#### *Introduction*

- Mike pointed out that Elizabeth City is not in Currituck County (pg. 34 of the management plan).
- Anna identified a numbering error on pg. 14.

#### *Education Program Plan*

- Anna asked if the Currituck Banks Reserve gets many education requests to which Kate responded that there are not many requests.
- Mike said he was previously unaware of how much this program did and he learned a lot.
- Sharon asked how many volunteers the Currituck Banks Reserve has. Kate acknowledged that the numbers are low and the volunteer base needs some work. Sharon offered to help connect the Reserve with more local volunteers.

#### *Coastal Training Program Plan*

- No comments

#### *Research and Monitoring Plan*

- Ben asked if the Reserve reaches out to researchers in the Tidewater, Virginia area as the Currituck Banks Reserve may have more in common with that area as opposed to other parts of North Carolina. Staff explained that normally researchers approach the Reserve to conduct research on the sites but there is a good opportunity for awareness building in that area.

#### *Stewardship Plan*

- The committee likes the Allowable use table.
- Mike said that the way the easements are summarized looks good.

#### *Topical Areas*

- Mike liked seeing references to sea level rise.

#### *Administration Plan*

- No comments.

#### *Facility Development and Improvement Plan*

- No comments.

### **General questions**

The committee discussed the following general questions regarding the plan.

- Is the format and presentation of the plan effective? Is the plan user friendly and easy to read/navigate? Are the maps, keys, and images easy to read and understand?
  - Yes to all questions.
- Four themes emerged from the public input process: program visibility, visitor use, research awareness, and partnerships. Does the plan adequately acknowledge and address these themes through its goals, objectives and actions?
  - Mike asked what happens if a MOU does not make it into the plan and if that means there is no option to enter a MOU in the future. Rebecca explained that MOUs can be established during the course of the management plan even if they are not mentioned in the plan.

### **Public comments**

- None

### **Next steps**

The Program Manager provided an overview of the next steps in the management plan process. The deadline for committee members to submit written comments on the plan is March 22. The plan will be updated to reflect local advisory committee input and presented to the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission at their April 2017 meeting. The Department of Environmental Quality and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will then review the plan. A 30-day public comment period for the draft management plan will be scheduled after all reviews are complete and 3 public meetings, in the northern, central and southern regions of the coast,

will be scheduled the during comment period. The Program Manager thanked the committee members for their review of the plan and thoughtful comments.

### **Site Update – Kate Jones**

The Site Manager asked if there were any questions related to the specific site update that was sent to LAC members. Several members asked if the reserve is planning to submit a press release about aerial gunning that the USDA will be initiating to control the feral hog population. The Site Manager confirmed that the NC Coastal Reserve will work with DCM as well as USFWS to write a public press release with information about the project. The Wild Horse Fund has already been consulted, and will continue to be involved with any communication efforts as needed.

### **Action Items**

- The Reserve Program Manager will inform committee members when the public comment period for the management plan is scheduled.
- The Site Manager follow up with Communications staff and USFWS staff about the aerial gunning project.
- The Site Manager will be in touch with committee members to plan the next meeting.