



Kitty Hawk Woods Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Nov 09, 2017
Kitty Hawk Town Hall
Kitty Hawk, NC

Attendance

<u>LAC Partner Organization Members</u>	<u>Present</u>
Chief Joel Johnson, Kitty Hawk Police Department	n
Andy Stewart, Town Manager	y
Jeff Pruitt, Kitty Hawk Town Commissioner	Y
John McCord, Coastal Studies Institute	y
Aaron McCall, Nature Conservancy	y
John Cook, NC Forestry Commission	y
Gary Perry, Mayor of Kitty Hawk	y
Steve Jarvis, NC WRC	n
<u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u>	
Clifton Perry	y
<u>Others Present</u>	
Willie Midgett, Town of Kitty Hawk Public Works	
Lt. Wade Styons, Kitty Hawk Police Department (for Sgt. Joel Johnson)	
Kate Jones, NC Coastal Reserve Northern Sites Manager	
Rachel Veal, NC Coastal Reserve Northern Sites Stewardship Assistant	

Reserve-wide Administrative Update (Site Manager)

- *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 have been approved and must now be re-adopted by DCM. *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 Friends of the Reserve (FOR) for their work to educate representatives about the importance of the Reserve System. FOR is a non-profit organization that works to support the Coastal Reserves. *No Comments.*

- *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. *No comments*
- The NC Coastal Reserve has hired Michelle Brodeur as a Communications Specialist. Michelle is based in Beaufort, but is working with all of the reserves to increase our visibility and disseminate information about the Reserves to the public. *No comments.*

- *Upcoming Reserve-wide activities include:*

- A workshop for coastal government planning for open space; Dec 05 in Plymouth, NC
- Marine Process Planning workshop; Jan 8-9 in Beaufort, NC (sponsored by APNEP)
- CCVATCH meeting for Currituck Banks; Jan in Corolla, NC
- Seeds to Shore at Rachel Carson; teaching hydroponic growing of *Spartina alterniflora* in classrooms- students will also plant their seedlings
- 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. *Gary Perry asked if that means they will be filling in the wetlands. The Site Manager responded that they would not be filling in wetlands.*

Site Update - Old Business (Site Manager)

- *Kitty Hawk Woods Access Plan*

Site Manager conducted a survey to learn more about access issues at Kitty Hawk Woods. The results of the survey indicated the need for improvements to the trail system including better trail signage and clarity of property boundaries. Site manager passed around maps of current trail system followed by maps of proposed trail improvements. Trail improvements that have already been completed include the installation of split rail fencing at the ends of “out and back” trails, along with signage to inform visitors that private property begins beyond fence. Site manager would also like to discontinue several of the shorter out and back spurs that lead to private property, to make the trail system more cohesive and easier for visitors to navigate. In addition, old trails that appear on existing maps but that are no longer in existence will be removed. *No comments.*

Site Manager reopened discussion of a potential connector trail to link the Birch Lane trail to either Sandy Run Park or the Kitty Hawk Skate Park. *Commissioner Jeff Pruitt said that the city was interested. He said that the town of Kitty Hawk is currently looking at the feasibility of such a project and would like to meet to discuss. Mayor Perry added that they have laid the groundwork by talking to relevant property owners and exploring feasibility of access and that the next step would be to set up a meeting to discuss details and move forward. Site Manager noted that the project might be eligible for a State Parks Recreational Trail grant. Willie Midgett noted that the town recently got a State Parks Grant to do work on the multi-use path.*

Site Update - New Business

- *Land Acquisition*

Plans are in the works to acquire land at Meter Point. The Reserve will be applying for a grant from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to purchase the Meter Point parcel. If we receive this grant, this money would be used in addition to federal funds to buy the property.

Clifton Perry indicated that he would like would like Fred's (Annand, of the Nature Conservancy) contact information so that he could talk with him about property that he would like to sell. He indicated that the land, located at 1134 W Kitty Hawk Rd., is on a high ridge and that he believes it would provide good access to other Kitty Hawk Woods Properties in the Carrenda Ridge area. Site Manager noted that she could look at the

Buxton Woods Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

property, but that the Reserve had already evaluated priority tracts that they would be interested in acquiring, and that she did not believe this tract was on that list. She also noted that though the Reserve does sometimes work with the Nature Conservancy to assist with land acquisition, that Fred would not assist in acquiring property for the state that the state did not want. Aaron McCall said that he would give Clifton Fred's contact information.

The Reserve is also in the process of purchasing the Aguirre Tract- a parcel of land adjacent to the Hard Tract off Eckner St. The Reserve hopes to purchase the land next year.

- *Vegetation Monitoring*

Using protocols established in the Carolina Vegetative Survey, the Reserve has begun an effort to collect yearly vegetative data in two areas of the Reserve. One area was previously sampled in 1988, and the other area in 2014. Site Manager shows a map of survey areas. Conducting this vegetation monitoring will help us to track changes in plant composition over time. *(Clifton Perry commented that after Hurricane Irene, many of the cypress trees that were closer to the sound were killed due to saltwater inundation.)*

- *Controlled Burning Plans*

The Reserve is considering plans to perform a controlled burn on the Kitty Hawk Bay Islands. Site Manager passed around a map showing location of the islands. *(John Cook noted that they were last burned on July 04, 2012.)* The town of Kill Devil Hills has contacted the Reserve regarding marine debris removal on the islands. Site Manager is still working through details of whether or not debris can be removed, and if so, how. *Jeff Pruitt noted that the islands are a "boat graveyard."* Site Manager responded that N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has tried to get numbers from the boats in order to contact their owners to remove them, but has not had any success. *(Clifton Perry indicated that he needed to leave at this time, but that the Site Manager could contact him regarding his LAC membership term details. Aaron McCall said that it looks as if at least 16 boats have been abandoned in one of the islands channels, and that removing them would be a big effort- potentially not worth it. John Cook wondered if a marine debris grant would be available and noted that we could improve our eligibility for such a grant if we partnered with other wetland areas. Lt. Wade Styons wondered if there may still be fuel, oil, or other hazardous materials on the boats. John Cook indicated that North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) would be able to do the burn and that he could assist with completing the appropriate paperwork)*

- *Site Stewards Program*

Site Manager plans to implement a Site Stewards program at Kitty Hawk Woods based on a similar program in place at Rachel Carson Reserve. This would entail enlisting a core group of volunteers who use and know about Kitty Hawk Woods and can act as the eyes and ears of the Reserve to increase the presence of Reserve staff. These volunteers would be able to interact with visitors, answer questions about the Reserve, Site Manager, perform trail work, etc. Site Manager asks that any suggestions for candidates be sent to her. Site Steward volunteers would receive training and a t-shirt and would report to Site Manager. The number of hours for this commitment would be

Buxton Woods Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

negotiable. *(John McCord suggested that he could post recruitment information at CSI. Site Manager responded that she would get back to him, as she might want to limit the selection pool to a smaller number of hand-picked volunteers)*

- *Friends of the Reserve*

FOR (Friends of the Reserve) is a non-profit arm of the Coastal Reserve. All 10 North Carolina sites have FOR groups, but in recent years, membership has lagged at the Northern Sites. Recently involvement has increased and we currently have three board members working to contact local businesses and raise money and awareness for Kitty Hawk Woods: Bo Dame, Kathy Mitchell, and Lindsey Dubbs. They are currently organizing a fundraising paddle trip into Kitty Hawk Woods on New Year's Day. Site Manager will send details regarding this event. *No comments.*

- *Visitor Use Research Project at UNCW*

UNC Wilmington's Department of Recreation, Sports Leadership, and Tourism & their Department of Environmental Studies are conducting a research project entitled "Understanding access and visitor use at the North Carolina Coastal Reserve System." Kitty Hawk Woods and Currituck Banks have been selected as sites for the study. The Site Manager has just received a copy of the proposal and can make it available to community members. She hopes that it will build on the information that has already been gathered regarding visitor use in the Reserves, but is still learning about the details of the study. *No comments.*

- *LAC Process*

The Reserve will be seeking applications in January of 2018 for LAC members. Any current members that have been a part of the LAC since before 2013 will need to re-apply. The Reserve strives to have a membership that reflects the following: Recreational Users, Traditional Users, Citizen at Large, Potential Volunteer, Adjacent Property Owner, and Commercial User. Site Manager asks for any suggestions for community and partner members be sent to her. *No comments.*

Roundtable Discussion *(Staff response in italics)*

- Gary Perry- Birch Lane access was the only item on my agenda, which we have already discussed.
- Jeff Pruitt- I was contacted by horse riders regarding downed trees that are difficult to navigate horses around. They are happy to remove, but wanted permission first. *Site Manager said that they only need to contact her for permission, and that they should feel free to contact her in the future whenever they have questions or concerns.*

If you ever have a Reserve Clean Up Day, there is an old dump off of Twiford that needs attention. You may be able to get a 4 wheeler back there to assist with hauling trash out. *Site Manager is aware of dump, and has it on her agenda for a future project.*

Buxton Woods Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

- Lt Wade Styons- The issue of hunting in the marshes has come up regarding the Kitty Hawk Bay Islands. Is there any possibility of the Reserve setting up a blind and setting up a lottery for the blind? County rules are too vague to be enforceable, and blind owners upset with people hunting from islands. *Site Manager said that the Reserve would not be able to set up a blind on the island.*
- Aaron McCall didn't believe the possibility existed for a blind on the islands because of the 500-yard rule. Suggested potential for Kitty Hawk Bay Islands (KHBI) to be managed by Gamelands? (Jeff Pruitt noted that if you registered the Bay Islands under Gamelands, then they could put up a blind and manage it. It wouldn't matter if you are within 500 yards since it is on private property, and the rule only applies to public property. 300 yards is a safe distance. People currently hunting on the islands are trashing them, and registering it would offer more protection.) *Site Manager said that she had talked with Steve (Jarvis) about the possibility of putting KHBI and Meter Point into Gamelands and that it seems like it is a possibility. She will talk with Rebecca (Ellin, the Reserve Program Manager) and see what her thoughts are. Aaron also wonders what the status of Covered Bridge Road is. Site Manager responds that she is still waiting for lawyer before she can move forward with any actions regarding Covered Ridge Rd or the guard shack.*
- Willie Midgett noted that the dumping issue at Tackle Ridge seems to have lessened since the letters were sent out (to homeowners). He also pulled some things out of Reserve (where it borders the public right of way) and hauled them away. He said that the Homeowners Association President says they will start cracking down more on dumping in the Reserve. Site Manager noted that Reserve had also installed "No Dumping" signs along the public right of way.
- John Cook- Will show Site Manager contract for burning Kitty Hawk Bay Islands and discuss boat exclusion. Can also look for area wildfire mitigation plan grants for Kitty Hawk Woods.
- Andy Stewart asks about budget for Kitty Hawk Woods. *Site Manager offers a brief explanation of funding sources for the Northern Sites of the N.C. Coastal Reserves.*

Action Items

- Site Manager will be sharing relevant documents via Google Drive
- Site Manager will meet with Kitty Hawk town officials to discuss possibility of Birch Lane Trail connector.
- LAC members will send any LAC or site steward candidates to Site Manager
- Site Manager will continue making plans for a controlled burn of the Kitty Hawk Bay Islands