



**Zeke's Island Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2017 – 10 am
Fort Fisher Recreation Area Education Room**

Attendance

<u>LAC Partner Organization Members</u>	<u>Present</u>
Division of Archives and History, Nathan Henry	No
Division of Parks and Recreation – FFRA, Alyssa Taylor	Yes
NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher, Renee Weeks	Yes
<u>Community Members</u>	
Captain John Carty	No
Dr. Anthony Snider	No
<u>Others Present</u>	
Hope Sutton, DCM/NCCR & NCNERR Stewardship Coordinator/Southern Sites Manager	
Elizabeth Colhoun, DCM/NCCR & NCNERR Stewardship Specialist	
Elise Gilchrist, DCM/NCCR & NCNERR Communications Specialist	
Rebecca Ellin, DCM/NCCR & NCNERR Reserve Program Manager	

Welcome – Hope Sutton

The Site Manager welcomed the committee to the Spring 2017 meeting and explained that the focus of this meeting would 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 would 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 the meeting was 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 the document constitute the fourth plan for the NC 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

- Renee stated that the maps look great and the introduction was informative.
- Alyssa commented that the maps are great and the section looks good.

Education Program Plan

- Renee said this section was very thorough and great overall.
- Alyssa asked if the Reserve gets the numbers from the State Park regarding their education programs. Hope responded that the Reserve does not get those numbers but it would be good to better define what types of programs the Reserve wants to capture. Rebecca mentioned that this is also a good opportunity to encourage greater communication between the Reserve and its partners.

Coastal Training Program Plan

- Renee commented that the Coastal Training Program is a very important service, especially as more people move to the coast and there is increased development, people need to be thinking about sustainability.
- Alyssa said that it is great for realtors and local organizations to participate in because there is a lack of knowledge of how development affects the coastline.

Research and Monitoring Plan

- Alyssa asked how long the water quality station has been at Zeke's and if the data is downloadable for free. Hope replied that it has been there for over ten years and the data is free to download. Alyssa remarked that teachers can utilize that type of information.

- Alyssa also expressed a need to have more discussions with the Reserve about research to see what opportunities there may be to collaborate.
- Renee commented that it is amazing what the Reserve does with such a small staff.

Stewardship Plan

- Alyssa commented that information on visitor use and hunting is especially important at Zeke's Island because they receive calls about hunting. She asked for clarification if hunting was allowed on the Zeke's Island Reserve. Hope responded that it is allowed. Alyssa explained that it is confusing for some users because it is not allowable to bring a long gun onto state park property. Staff discussed that the boundary between the two properties is not as well marked as it could be and that it is important to make that border clear.

Topical Areas

- Alyssa liked that the Reserve is addressing sea level rise and integrating that into the Coastal Training Program.
- Renee commented that this section was very informative and thorough.

Administration Plan

- Alyssa and Renee said this section looks great.

Facility Development and Improvement Plan

- Alyssa said they would like to partner on interpretive signage.
- Renee thinks this more interpretive signage is great because most aquarium visitors do not know anything about the Reserve. She also mentioned that the aquarium is designing a panel on water quality for an upcoming exhibit which could be a good opportunity to partner. She loved the idea of a kayak trail.

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?
 - Alyssa said yes, especially regarding visitor use.
 - Renee said yes and that she particularly loved the education chapter.

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

Site Update and Old Business – Hope Sutton

The following written update was provided to the committee in advance of the meeting.

Staffing Update

- Elizabeth Colhoun joined the Coastal Reserve in January as the Stewardship and Education Specialist. She will spend approximately 75% of her time supporting stewardship activities and 25% on education activities. Originally from Apex, NC, Elizabeth attended UNC-Wilmington for an undergraduate degree in Oceanography (2011-2015). While at UNCW, she worked as a summer intern with the Coastal Reserve assisting in the sea turtle monitoring program on Masonboro. She recently completed a Master's degree in Marine Biology at Nova Southeastern University in Florida where she worked for USGS as a research assistant focusing on benthic organisms and seagrass health in the Port of Miami. She also worked as a sea turtle specialist for the Broward County Sea Turtle Conservation Program monitoring nesting and hatching sea turtles.

Site activities

- Field work to treat the white poplar stand on Zeke's Island proper is scheduled for April 13 from 8 am-12 pm.
- A cleanup and installation of additional rules and site marker signs is scheduled for April 28 from 9 am-1 pm.

Volunteer programs

- The Reserve has a variety of outreach and volunteer programs planned in the spring (see flyer below). Most are centered on species of concern monitoring programs at the Masonboro Island Reserve, but volunteers are welcome from any area of the local community. The Terrapin Tally will include routes at the Zeke's Island site this year to provide local paddlers with an opportunity to participate.



NC Coastal Reserve Spring 2017 Outreach Calendar

Feather Friends Work Day at Big Bay

April 1, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

Join the N.C. Coastal Reserve staff for a day of service and training as we set up an enclosure for the 2017 bird nesting season. **Limited transportation available or meet us out there! Registration is required.**

Community Paddles

March 24, 5-7:30 pm

**Check in time is 4:45pm at Trails End Park*

June 8 & 23, 6:00-8:30 pm

**Check in time is 5:45pm at Trails End Park*

Enjoy an evening paddle to Masonboro Island with the Reserve Staff. Limited number of kayaks available for rental or bring your own for free!

Pre-registration required, colhoun@uncw.edu.

The following events will be held at:
UNCW Center for Marine Science Auditorium
5600 Marvin K. Moss Lane

Sea Turtle Monitoring & Information Session

April 20, 6:00-7:30 pm

Please plan to attend if you would like to volunteer for our summer sea turtle nest monitoring program.

Planet Ocean Seminar

Hosted by UNCW

April 11, 6:30-8:30 pm

Presentation by Dr. Darren Rumbold
Professor of Marine Science at Florida Gulf Coast University

Come learn about toxin impacts on coastal systems and risk assessment.

**To reserve seats, please call:
910-962-2301**

2017 Terrapin Tally

Calling all citizen scientists!

The N.C. Coastal Reserve & National Estuarine Research Reserve along with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission need your help to estimate the population of Diamondback Terrapins within the Masonboro Island Reserve!

Teams of 2 participants are needed to paddle preplanned routes to log terrapin sightings on their smartphones along the way.

A training session is required for participation.

Procedures for logging sightings will be explained and paddle routes/times will be assigned during these sessions to be held at the
UNCW Center for Marine Science Auditorium.

***Please register for training session at
colhoun@uncw.edu**

Training Sessions (select one)

April 6, 6:00-8:00 pm

-or-

April 8, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

Terrapin Tally Dates

Saturday, April 29

Data collection sessions:

8:00-10:00 am

11:00 am-1:00 pm

Saturday, May 6

Data collection sessions:

7:00-9:00 am

4:00-6:00 pm

Saturday, May 13

Data collection sessions:

8:00-10:00 am

11:00 am-1:00 pm

For more information or to register for a program, contact Elizabeth Colhoun at
colhoun@uncw.edu.

www.nccoastalreserve.net

Action Items

- The Reserve Program Manager will inform committee members when the public comment period for the management plan is scheduled.
- The Site Manager will be in touch with committee members to plan the next meeting.