



Local Advisory Committee Meeting
Buxton Woods Coastal Reserve

May 23, 2022 – 2:00 p.m.
Fessenden Center
46830 NC-12, Buxton, NC 27920

Attendance

<u>LAC Partner Organization Members</u>	<u>Present</u>
Caper Hatteras National Seashore, Boone Vandzura	N
UNC Coastal Studies Institute, John McCord	N
NC Wildlife Resources Commission, David Turner	N
NC Natural Heritage Program, Scott Pohlman	Y
Dare County Sheriff's Office, Doug Oberbeck	N
Dare County Government, Danny Couch	N
NC Forest Service, Kayla Barnes	Y
NC Forest Service, John Cook	N
<u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u>	
Karen Lebing	Y
Russ Kiddy	Y
Harvey Scarborough, Jr.	Y
<u>Others Present</u>	
Erik Alnes, DCM, Northern Sites Manager	
Steve Jarvis, DCM, Northern Sites Stewardship Assistant	
Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy, Reporter	

Reserve-wide Program Business

*** Please see appendix for complete Reserve-wide updates ***

Individual Reserve Business (Erik Alnes)

- *Wildfire Management Plan Update*

NCCR staff and the FMP contractor met with the Natural Heritage Program and NC Forest Service staff on site in the winter to identify fire management options in the Buxton Woods Coastal Reserve. This included a field trip to Nags Head Woods, where TNC Staff have completed burning, mastication, and fuels management work, as well as meetings with the National Seashore NPS Staff to ensure recommendations for fire policies would work in harmony of each other. Some of the big takeaways from the meetings included; focusing any active fire management strategies on small areas along WUI boundaries; identifying unique solutions to satisfy the requirements of the NHP such as planting live oak in areas of high fire danger; and identifying the main areas of concern for ingress, egress, fuel breaks, habitat types, and working to balance resource objectives while allowing room for management options within our policies. The Contractor expects to have a draft of the plan completed in early fall.

- All of the LAC members showed interest in participating in a workshop to discuss the FMP and provide input regarding the plan. We will likely hold this workshop as an agenda item during next LAC meeting.
- Harvey Scarborough noted that several areas were of concern for fire management. This included keeping the east trail open due to the steep nature of the surrounding area, working with NPS to manage the boundary trail as a fuel break, and assessing NPS fuels projects to coalesce with the potential projects in Buxton Woods.
- Kayla Barnes indicated that the NCFS would be conducting mastication and potential burning on County owned property adjacent to the Reserve. This could be a source of a study area to determine what treatments would work best in the Reserve.

- *Site Stewards Expansion Project*

Site Stewards are trained volunteers that work under the guidance of the Site Manager, who provide observations and help maintain the stewardship of the site. In December of 2021, the Northern Sites Manager provided a training for patrons of the Kitty Hawk Woods Reserve. We have since expanded the program to all northern sites, including the Buxton Woods Reserve. A Reserve-wide training was held in May to train those interested in volunteering with the Northern Reserves. 1 individual attended the training, and Alnes will hold a second training in the field to train them on trail maintenance and other priority volunteer areas for the site. If anyone in the community is interested in volunteering with our program, please have them email Erik Alnes and he will facilitate training and growing the volunteer program here. FOR also provided funding for t-shirts to help our volunteers be visible in the field, and promote the stewardship of the site.

Member Roundtable (Staff response in italics)

- Russ Kiddy noted that he had concerns about horses using and tearing up the roads. Also, he noted that there was some type of beetle eating dogwood trees in the swale areas.
 - *Kayla Barnes noted that they have been receiving reports of Dogwood Twig Borer, but there is not real treatment for the pest. They shouldn't kill the trees.*
 - *Alnes noted that he would ensure signage was clear where horses should not be riding in the Reserve.*

- Karen Lebing adopted one of the priority blocks in Buxton Woods to help contribute to the NC Bird Atlas. As of the meeting, she had seen screech owls, kinglets, warblers, cedar waxwings, and wide eyed vireos. She also noted that her group that conducts the Christmas Bird Count had a great year, and have over 40 years of data for bird counts in Buxton Woods and the surrounding area.
- Scott Polman was excited that the NCFS, Contractor, and his agency had the opportunity to meet in Buxton Woods to discuss fire management strategies. Also, he noted that there was over \$65 million of funds in the Land And Water Fund this year. They had 195 applications to purchase high quality ecosystems, which will be reviewed in the Spring.
- Harvey Scarborough indicated that he had rarely seen Buxton Woods with such low water as this year. With the low water levels, he expressed concern for the Wood Ducks that frequent the site and nest in the Wood Duck Boxes. Also, he noted interest in conducting a reptile and amphibian study, which has not been conducted since 1988. *Alnes said he would follow up with Harvey regarding the study in the future.*

Final Comments, Review of Action Items, and Wrap-up

- The group of LAC members expressed interest in relocating the transects that were installed on the site. Some had been reidentified during the CSI study, but there are 6 others that could be rediscovered. Staff will look to identify these plots next winter when the vegetation dies back.

Adjourn