

**NC Coastal Resources Advisory Council  
Sheraton Atlantic Beach Hotel  
Atlantic Beach, NC  
April 23, 2003  
Meeting Summary**

**Attendance**

Frank Alexander	Bill Morrison
Natalie Baggett	Jim Mulligan
Joseph Beck	Lee Padrick
Gordon Cashin	Bill Price
Carlton Davenport	Spencer Rogers
Don Davenport	Bob Shupe, Vice-chair
Joe Dooley	Lester Simpson
John Doughty	Mike Street
Tom Ellis	Penny Tysinger
Ann Holton	Beans Weatherly
Joe Lassiter	David Weaver
Harrison Marshall	Ginger Webster, Chair
Joe Morris	Calvin Wellons

**Council Call to Order**

Ginger Webster called the CRAC meeting to order at 10:00 am. The meeting began with some sad news: Rosetta Short passed away in February, as has Charles Manooch's wife. Manooch intends to stay in the Science & Technology slot on the CRAC and will resume participation hopefully in July. Webster announced that Wade Horn has resigned from the CRAC in order to devote his time to his new business. A letter will be going out to all coastal municipalities seeking replacements for Short and Horne, including criteria for geographic balance and minority representation. Webster also announced that the July and October agendas would be discussed today by a newly formed agenda committee. Webster and the CRAC welcomed new members Bill Price of Onslow County, Gordon Cashin of NCDOT, and new DCM staff member Tancred Miller.

**NC Shore & Beach Preservation Assoc. (NC SBPA) Activities**

Harry Simmons presented the short- medium and long-term goals of the NC SBPA in three areas:

**1. Public Beach Access**

Within 1 year: identify & map all oceanfront public beach access in NC  
Within 5 years: increase funding for oceanfront public beach access  
Within 10 years: double the amount of oceanfront public beach access in NC

**2. Habitat Enhancement**

Within 1 year: identify & illustrate habitat restoration successes in NC  
Within 5 years: seek new opportunities to enhance habitat while restoring beaches  
Within 10 years: enhance habitat sufficiently to allow the de-listing of at least one threatened or endangered species.

### 3. Healthy Beach Restoration.

Within 1 year: seek full funding for beach restoration projects in NC for 2004  
Within 5 years: seek long-term sustainable funding for restoring public beaches  
Within 10 years: every NC beach will be wide & sandy and provide enhanced habitat for plants, animals and humans.

Simmons also mentioned the NC SBPA's upcoming annual conference at Carolina Beach in November, and the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association's (ASBPA) upcoming national conference in Wilmington in September. The ASBPA has a call for papers open with abstracts due by June 30<sup>th</sup>. The NC SBPA will be sending out a survey next month to gather data on public ocean beach access facilities in the state. Finally, Simmons noted that the NC SBPA does not support Rep. Bonner Stiller's Beach Preservation & Restoration Act bill (HB 1165). They do support an alternate version that was sent to Rep. Stiller, and they hope that a substitution is made.

### **Sturgeon City Restoration Project**

Glenn Hargett gave a report on the City of Jacksonville's Sturgeon City project. The city had multiple goals for the project, including shutting down the Wilson Bay wastewater treatment facility, stopping discharges into the New river, revitalizing downtown, retaining educated young residents, creating well-paying jobs, and improving the city's image. Hargett reported that the efforts thus far have been more successful than anticipated. With financial assistance from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and help from NC State, the Army Corps of Engineers and many others, the city has been able to clean up the bottom of Wilson Bay, plant three million oysters, and mitigate stormwater runoff. The project has been very successful in engaging youths and attracting volunteers—9000 volunteer hours have already been logged. Also, the city and Camp Lejeune have convened a meeting to discuss extending the project upstream. Hargett noted that water quality in Wilson Bay has improved through reductions in coliform bacteria, nutrients and other pollutants. Aquatic wildlife and waterfowl have now returned to the area, commercial crab fishermen have returned and recreational uses are up. He stated that the program can be replicated and efforts are underway to do so. Hargett reported that Phase 1 of converting the Wilson Bay WWTP is well underway. Treated wastewater is now being land applied. The Phase 1 wetlands restoration component is complete. Overall site design is complete and bids for other project components will be opened April 24<sup>th</sup>. There are 2 full-time staffers on board and many volunteers. Finally, the project has engaged over 300 students through its Student Leadership Development Institute.

### **Coastal Habitat Protection Plan Public Outreach**

Mike Lopazanski presented the Department's Coastal Habitat Protection Plan public outreach efforts. Lopazanski advised that while the 1997 Fisheries Reform Act requires DENR to develop a coastal habitat protection plan that must be adopted by the CRC, MFC and EMC, there is no provision for public input. Recognizing that public input is critically important for the CHPP to be effective, DENR is engaging the public through a series of 10 public meetings to be held statewide, a 12-page newspaper tabloid to be distributed to 250,000 households, informational brochures and a 7-minute video to be aired on TV and at public meetings. Lopazanski showed the video to the Council and explained that by representing coastal counties, cities and regional councils, CRAC

members could be instrumental in the outreach efforts. Lopazanski asked that the Council members take a copy of the video and have it shown at county commission, town council and other public meetings. He advised that a two-page list of talking points was available to help answer questions that might come up after showing the video. Lopazanski added that staff working on the development of the CHPP were also available to make presentations. Public meetings are scheduled to begin on July 23, 2003, in conjunction with the upcoming CRC meeting in Raleigh and that the entire public meeting schedule will be made available to the Advisory Council once it is finalized in May. There was good response from individual CRAC members in supporting the outreach effort.

### **Handicap Requirements at Beach Access Sites – Update**

Kathy Vinson noted that the CRAC has had continuing discussion on this issue for several meetings. Vinson informed the Council that the ADA requirements are already incorporated by reference into NC building codes, so any new public beach access that conforms to NC building code will automatically conform to ADA. Vinson stressed that all new public beach access facilities must conform to the codes, and existing facilities are required to conform to the new codes when they are being repaired or rebuilt—unless the local building inspector determines that it is technically infeasible. Technical feasibility assessments are made on a case-by-case basis.

Vinson expressed concerns over a federal proposal to amend the ADA that would require handicap access all the way to the high water mark (current regulations prescribe access only to the crest of the dune). Concerns include maintenance, potential hurricane or tide damage, and emergency vehicle and public navigation along the beaches. Vinson advised CRAC members to be alert for the rule to appear in the Federal Register, and to be prepared to submit comments as a body as invited in the rule-making process. Responding to questions, Vinson noted that DCM can only impose requirements on facilities that are funded through the division's public access grant program, and that local building inspectors and the Dept. of Insurance are best suited to deal with all other facilities. Vinson said that DCM can provide some level of code detail to local building inspectors through its website, but that detailed questions need to be referred to the Dept. of Insurance. Vinson suggested that the CRAC invite Laurel Wright of the Dept. of Insurance to the July meeting in Raleigh to respond to specific code questions that the Council may have.

Finally, Kathy Vinson announced her resignation from the Division of Coastal Management, and her move to Blue Land Water Infrastructure PA as of mid-May where she will do land use planning. She will be setting up an office in Onslow County, and invites calls from anyone who needs her. The Council thanked and applauded Kathy Vinson for her service to the program.

### **Old Business/New Business**

The Council talked briefly about upcoming agenda items, including the possibility of a field trip in July to a wetland restoration site that would be relevant to the CHPP.

### **Adjourn**

With no further business, the Council adjourned at 12:15 pm.