



Periodic Review of 15A NCAC 07O

**North Carolina Coastal Reserve &
National Estuarine Research Reserve**





Presentation Objectives

Reserve Overview

Rules Review
Process

Input

Purpose – NC G.S. 113A-129.1-3

Codified at 15A NCAC 07O. 0101*

- **Preserve** representative coastal N.C. ecosystems
- Conduct relevant **research** to inform sound management of coastal resources
- Increase **awareness and understanding** of coastal ecosystems, their importance, and the effects humans have on them
- Accommodate compatible **traditional uses****

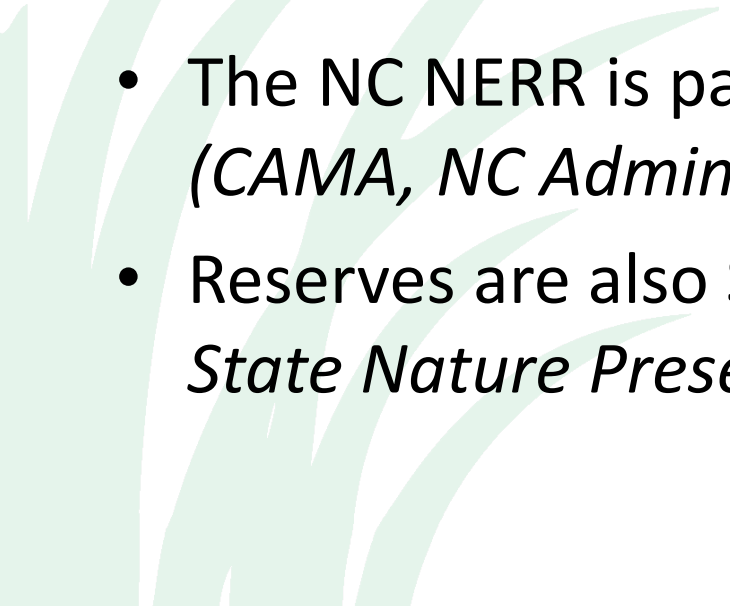
*Paraphrased

**Traditional uses = public trust uses including fishing, hunting, navigation, and recreation

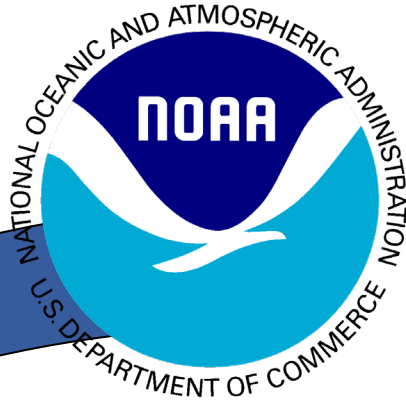


Background

- NC National Estuarine Research Reserve (NC NERR) designated in 1985, 1991 (*Coastal Zone Management Act*)
- NC Coastal Reserve created in 1989 per amendment to NC Coastal Area Management Act (*CAMA*)
- The NC NERR is part of the NC Coastal Reserve (*CAMA, NC Administrative Code*)
- Reserves are also State Nature Preserves (*CAMA, State Nature Preserves Act*)



Organizational Structure



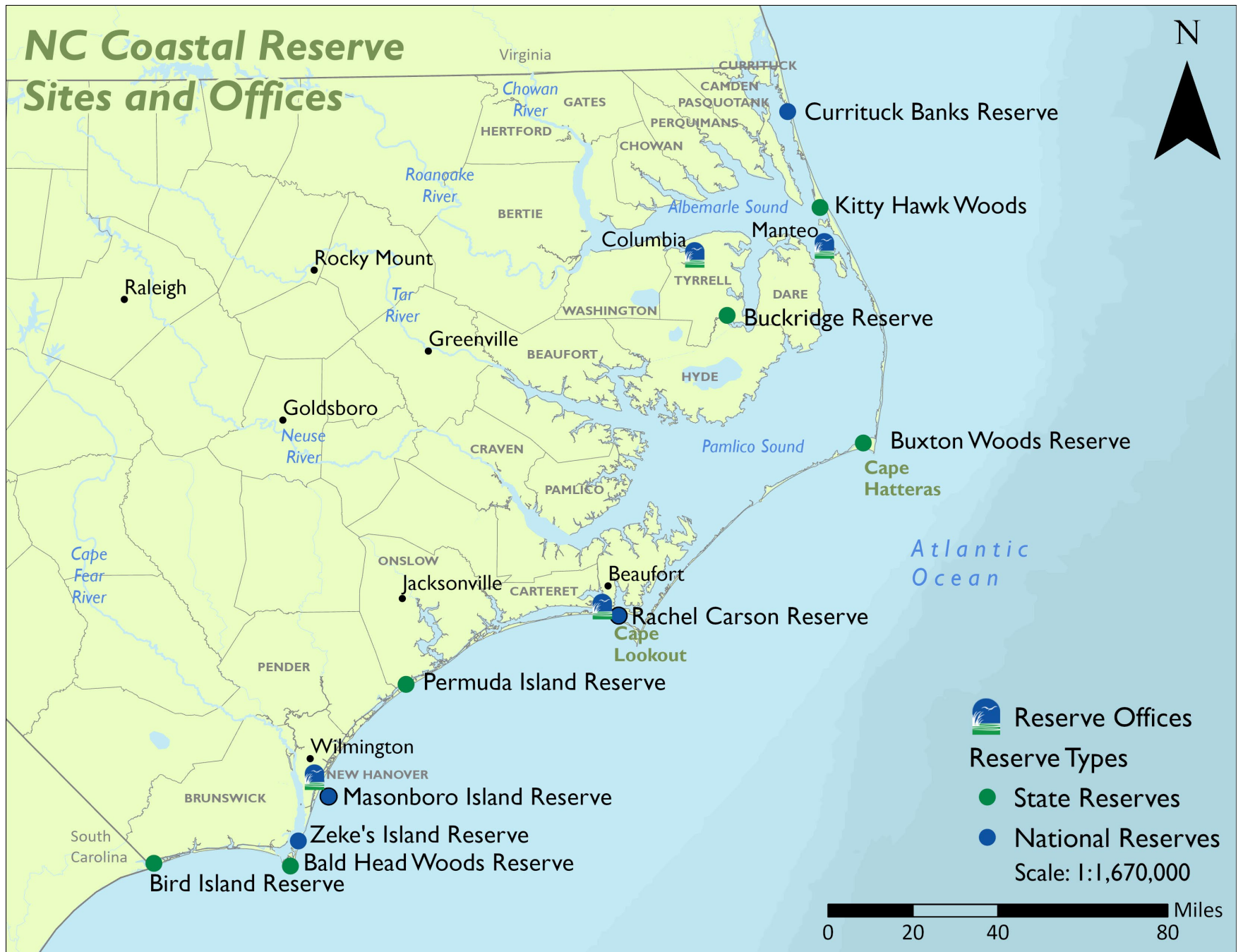
North Carolina
Coastal Reserve &
National Estuarine Research Reserve

National Estuarine Research Reserve System

The NC Reserve
is 1 of 30
in the nation



NC Coastal Reserve Sites and Offices



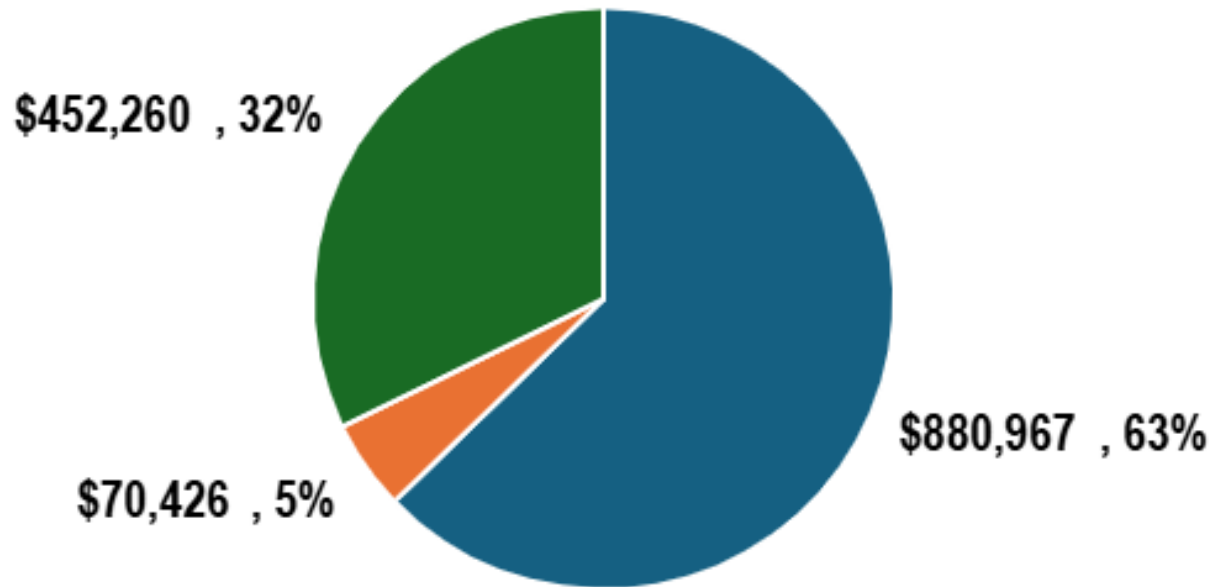


Reserve Specifics

- 10 sites protecting 44,000 acres
- 4 program areas (Stewardship, Education, Training, Research)
- Programmatic themes: water quality, coastal and estuarine ecosystem protection, coastal hazards resilience
- 16 staff in 4 offices (Manteo, Columbia, Beaufort, Wilmington)
- Funding Sources
 - Federal 315 for operation of the NC NERR
 - Federal 306 for support of state sites
 - State Appropriations
 - External Funding

Budget FY July 2024-June 2025

Total Base Budget: \$1,403,653



■ 315 Federal

■ 306 Federal

■ State Appropriations



Operating Documents and Processes

- Federal and State Statutes
- NC Administrative Code - 15A NCAC 070
- Management Plans
- Dedicated State Nature Preserve Letters of Allocation
- Local Advisory Committees
- Coastal Resources Commission



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Stewardship

Protect sites to inform management and appreciation of coastal and estuarine ecosystems;
Accommodate compatible traditional uses



- Species protection & monitoring
- Non-native species management
- Public access
- Visitor use monitoring & issues
- Special Activity Authorization
- Volunteers & community outreach
- Debris cleanup
- Land acquisition
- Resilience planning & implementation

Education

Enhance understanding and awareness of the importance of coastal and estuarine systems



- K-12 students
- Educators
- General Public

Coastal Training Program

Deliver science-based trainings and technical assistance to inform coastal decision making



- Regulators
- Resource managers
- Consultants

- Local communities and officials
- Real estate agents
- Contractors

Research and Monitoring

Advance scientific understanding and inform management of coastal and estuarine ecosystems



- System-wide Monitoring Program (SWMP)
- Internal research and external research partnerships
- Facilitation of research at reserve sites

2024 By the Numbers



Education

87

EDUCATORS SERVED

4,300+

K-12 STUDENTS SERVED

94

COLLEGE STUDENTS
SERVED

82

PUBLIC PROGRAMS
ATTENDEES

Coastal Training

12

EVENTS

532

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

Masonboro Sea Turtles

2

GREEN NESTS

40

LOGGERHEAD NESTS

Research

21

RESEARCH
PERMITS ISSUED

59

RESEARCH
SYMPOSIUM
ATTENDEES

Stewardship

750+

VOLUNTEER
HOURS

24

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES
AUTHORIZATIONS

Masonboro American Oystercatchers

37

NESTING PAIRS

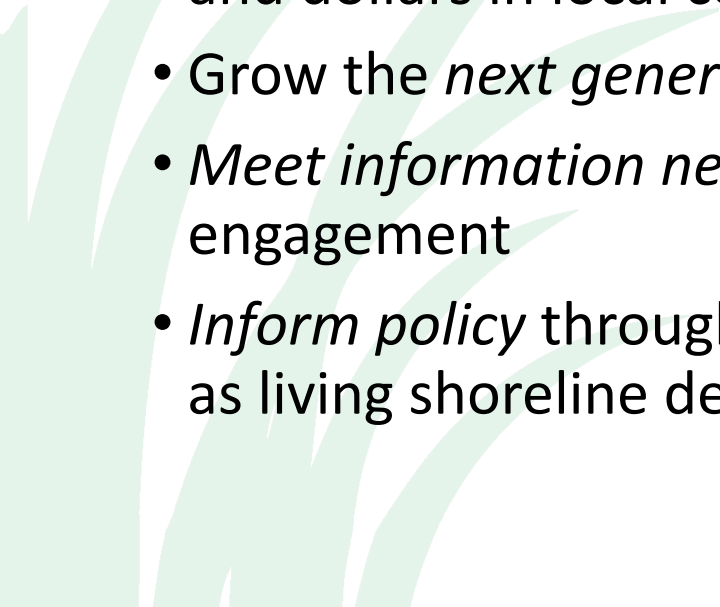
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FLEDGED CHICKS



Impact Beyond the Numbers

- Serve as *protective barriers* buffering communities from storms
- Serve as *integral parts of local communities*, supporting human health and well-being and providing ecological benefits
- Support *local economies* as people visit the sites and spend time and dollars in local communities
- Grow the *next generation* of coastal stewards and professionals
- *Meet information needs* through stakeholder and end-user engagement
- *Inform policy* through research and demonstration projects such as living shoreline design and oyster management





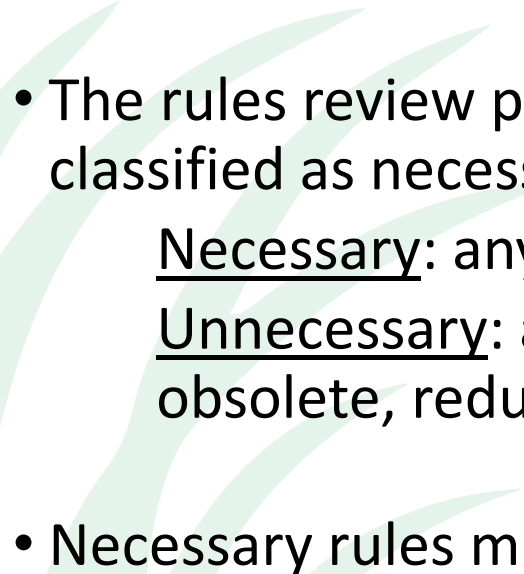
Impact Beyond the Numbers

- Serve as *protective barriers* from storms
- Serve as *integral parts* of human health and well-being
- Support *local economies* and dollars in local communities
- Grow the *next generation* of leaders
- *Meet information needs* through engagement
- *Inform policy* through living shoreline

19 authorized commercial businesses and institutions brought **40,798** visitors to 4 Reserve sites for compatible recreational and educational activities in 2024, equating to **\$1,428,198** in estimated minimum profit for these authorized users

Rules Review Process



- Legislative Periodic Review and Expiration of Existing Rules process (G.S. 150B-21.3A) requires review of rules every 10 years
 - The rules review process requires that all rule citations are classified as necessary or unnecessary:
 - Necessary: any rule other than an unnecessary rule
 - Unnecessary: a rule that the agency determines to be obsolete, redundant, or otherwise not needed
 - Necessary rules must be readopted
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15A NCAC 070



- Department of Environmental Quality rules
- Scheduled for review by Rules Review Commission in April 2026
- Periodic review in 2017 with Local Advisory Committee and CRC input; rules were readopted and amended effective February 2022
- 8 rule citations
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0101 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0102 DEFINITIONS AS USED IN THIS SUBCHAPTER
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0103 RESPONSIBILITIES: DUTIES OF THE COASTAL RESERVE
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0104 STATE AND LOCAL COASTAL RESERVE ADVISORY COMMITTEES
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0105 RESERVE COMPONENTS
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0201 MANAGEMENT PLAN
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0202 RESERVE USE REQUIREMENTS
 - 15A NCAC 070 .0203 SPECIAL ACTIVITY AUTHORIZATION

Schedule



Table 1. 15A NCAC 070 Schedule for Rules Review

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Action</u>
April 2025	Division develop draft initial determination
May 2025	Department review draft initial determination
June 2025	Local Advisory Committee input sought on draft initial determination
August 2025	Coastal Resources Commission input sought on draft initial determination
September 2025	Department sends initial determination to public comment
September–October 2025	60-day public comment period
November 2025	Division compile report with draft final determination and public comment response
November 2025–February 2026	Local Advisory Committee and Coastal Resources Commission input sought on draft report, if requested
March 20, 2026	Department submit final report with determinations and responses to public comment to the Rules Review Commission
April 2026	Rules Review Commission review/approve report
TBD	Division initiates readoption process for necessary rules

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March 20, 2026	Department submit final report with determinations and responses to public comment to the Rules Review Commission
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Table 2. Draft Initial Agency Determination for 15A NCAC 07O following Department and Local Advisory Committee input.

Subchapter	Rule Section	Rule Citation	Rule Name	Date and Last Agency Action on the Rule	DRAFT INITIAL Agency Determination [150B-21.3A (a)]	Local Advisory Committee Input June 2025
SUBCHAPTER 07O - NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL RESERVE	SECTION .0100 - GENERAL PROVISIONS	15A NCAC 07O .0101	STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	43/43 agree with Necessary determination
		15A NCAC 07O .0102	DEFINITIONS AS USED IN THIS SUBCHAPTER	Amended Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	43/43 agree with Necessary determination
		15A NCAC 07O .0103	RESPONSIBILITIES: DUTIES OF THE COASTAL RESERVE PROGRAM	Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	43/43 agree with Necessary determination
		15A NCAC 07O .0104	STATE AND LOCAL COASTAL RESERVE ADVISORY COMMITTEES	Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	43/43 agree with Necessary determination
		15A NCAC 07O .0105	RESERVE COMPONENTS	Amended Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	43/43 agree with Necessary determination
	SECTION .0200 - MANAGEMENT: USE AND PROTECTION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL RESERVE	15A NCAC 07O .0201	MANAGEMENT PLAN	Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	43/43 agree with Necessary determination
		15A NCAC 07O .0202	RESERVE USE REQUIREMENTS	Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	42/43 agree with Necessary determination
		15A NCAC 07O .0203	SPECIAL ACTIVITY AUTHORIZATION	Eff. February 1, 2022	Necessary	42/43 agree with Necessary determination

Input



Draft initial agency determination with Local Advisory Committee Input = **all citations are classified as necessary**

15A NCAC 07O .0101 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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