



Kitty Hawk Woods Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2017
Town of Kitty Hawk
101 Veterans Memorial Drive
Kitty Hawk, NC 27949

Attendance

LAC Partner Organization Members	Present
Town of Kitty Hawk, Mayor Gary Perry	y
Town of Kitty Hawk, Police Chief, Joel Johnson	n
The Nature Conservancy, Aaron McCall	n
Town of Kitty Hawk, Andy Stewart	y
CSI, John McCord	n
WRC, Jarred Culbreath	y
WRC, Steve Jarvis	y
<u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u>	
Curtis Pentecost	n
Jeff Pruitt	n
Gary Perry	n
Richard Reid	n
<u>Others Present</u>	
Kate Jones	

Reserve-wide Administrative Update

- Management Plan

The NERR management plan update process adheres to 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. This process included a public input process to inform the plan update. It also considers the history of NCNERR management plans and that this document serves as the fourth plan for

Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

the Reserves. There are four themes identified from the public input process - program visibility, visitor use, research awareness, and partnerships.

The plan was reviewed during the March 2017 Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meetings. The deadline for committee members to submit written comments was March 22. The plan was updated to reflect local advisory committee input and will be 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 three public meetings, in the northern, central and southern regions of the coast, will be scheduled during the comment period.

- **Budget Update**
The federal budget was released by the president. The new budget may impact grants NERR would receive in the summer/fall of 2018. As many of you are aware, the 2017 budget is under a continuing resolution (those are the operations funds that will start this summer/fall). We do not have much information about the 2017 budget right now; we are under the impression that it will be a continuing resolution for the whole year and we will receive about the same budget line, but there may still be changes to what we receive because the administration can put across the board cuts on the budget to fund high priorities. NERRA (National Estuarine Reserve Research Association) will be working on both the FY17 and FY18 budgets in the coming weeks.
- **Staffing**
The Southern Sites office of the NC Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve located in Wilmington, NC, hired Elizabeth Calhoun, to be their full-time Stewardship and Education Specialist. Elizabeth is a UNCW grad, who recently completed her Masters in Marine Biology and will be assisting the Site Manager with sea turtle and shore bird monitoring, volunteer management, and outreach activities associated with the Southern sites near Wilmington.
- **In memory – Bill Harris**
After recognizing Bill as a valued member of the LAC and Town of Kitty Hawk, mayor Perry asked is the LAC needed to replace the members that have been lost. *Site Manager confirmed that the Reserve is in the process of updating the LAC member terms policy and procedure, and will welcome recommendations from the mayor.*

Site Update - Old Business

- **Fire Management Plan –** Working off an older version of a wildfire management plan completed by a former site manager, efforts have begun to complete an overall Fire Management Plan for Kitty Hawk Woods that includes both wildfire management and prescribed fire activities. The first objective will be to uphold public safety and the protection of property. Expect to see a draft at the Fall LAC meeting. If anyone would like to be involved in reviewing the plan before the fall, please let the Site Manager know.

Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

- Mayor expressed concern that any controlled burning would not be led by the town. He did not want to see the town at fault for a potential fire event. Site manager explained that the N.C. Forest Service would be leading efforts to manage a fire, and this would be expertly organized as to minimize any issues. Mayor Perry added that the last marsh fire was in 1972 and began near Poor Ridge Rd and Herbert Perry Road.
- Dare County GIS KHW parcels – There were over 30 parcels in Kitty Hawk Woods that are state owned, but had The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as the primary address. These parcels were identified, and a list was sent to the county tax office, who proceeded to update the parcels with the correct address.
 - Steve Jarvis asked about any TNC owned parcels located in Kitty Hawk Woods. Site Manager confirmed that two parcels remain close to the Grenville Lane access area.
- Kitty Hawk Woods Access Survey results – The survey closed on March 10 with 95 respondents. See survey analysis document for details.
 - Mayor Perry made a comment relating to Sandy Run Park, and how it could offer a connection to the county managed Kitty Hawk Park and should connect to the trail that runs from Birch Lane. Mayor Perry remarked that a bridge or boardwalk would be needed to be built to navigate through the wetlands between the ridges.
 - Steve Jarvis mentioned that a trail exists off the boardwalk at Sandy Run Park, and runs up to the water tower.
 - Eckner Street and Birch Lane were mentioned by Andy Stewart as being confusing because there are no hiking trails that exist. They may be good hunting access points, but do not offer good hiking. Need to define what accesses are used for.

New Business

- Kitty Hawk Woods Access Plan – The Site Manager, with input from Reserve staff and LAC, is in the process of writing a Kitty Hawk Woods site access plan. Using the results of the survey as a starting point, a detailed plan will identify access points and trails that are a high priority for upgrades and possible expansion, as well as identify trails and access points that need to be removed or access blocked. Expect to see a draft Access plan at the fall LAC meeting.
- Candid Critters Project – The Site Manager is working with Coastal Studies Institute (CSI) to develop a curriculum for students to monitor wildlife activity in Kitty Hawk Woods. Using a combination of cameras from the Candid Critter project, as well as Reserve cameras, students will place the cameras, and use the eMammal website for photo processing and upload. Most likely this project will roll out later this year.
- Land Acquisition – The Site Manager was contacted by a land owner of a 36-acre parcel in Colington Point, adjacent to Kitty Hawk Bay who would like to sell his property to the state (see map). Currently, the parcel is being appraised. Upon approval of the appraisal and potential value by the state property office, a grant application will be made to the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant program which is administered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and has a grant deadline of June 30, 2017. The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grant program annually provides grants of up to \$1 million to coastal and Great Lakes states, as well as U.S. territories to protect, restore, and enhance coastal wetland ecosystems and

Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

associated uplands. The grants are funded through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, which is supported by excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel.

- Mayor Perry commented that this parcel has been for sale for a while, and will be difficult to develop. He is glad to see the Reserve is taking steps to preserve it.
- Potential Deer Study
Site manager would like to initiate a potential White Tailed Deer study to assess the health of the herd in Kitty Hawk Woods. In Buxton Woods, the National Park Service (NPS) would like to partner on a similar study, and this could be expanded to Kitty Hawk Woods and other maritime forests on the outer banks. The extension agent at N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) is interested in connecting the Reserves with researchers and is considering the possibilities.
 - Steve Jarvis asked if (WRC Biologist) David Turner would be involved, and the site manager remarked that he would be contacted to be involved. Site manager also mentioned that funding for this project is undetermined at this point, and could perhaps use the candid critter cameras.
- Landowner Education & Outreach (dumping)
Site Manager has received several calls related to dumping of landscape debris along Tarkle Ridge Road and Thick Ridge Road. Tarkle Ridge Road has an ongoing problem with much of the debris in both the town right of way and Reserve property. The Site Manager has been working with public works to address the problem. Many of the residents are concerned and wish to address the larger issue through education. Is the town interested in partnering on any outreach activities such as fliers, letters, or a public meeting? Does anyone have any good ideas for communicating with homeowners on this issue?
 - Andy Stewart mentioned that homeowners will likely not change because of a flier in their mailbox. Steve Jarvis said that if people are dumping trash, they can be fined and potentially charged. Depends on what and how much they are dumping. Mayor Perry asked if signs could be installed? Site Manager responded that signs have been ordered and will be installed as soon as possible.

Roundtable

Andy Stewart: The Town of Kitty Hawk was awarded a grant in the amount of \$190,050 to remove vegetative debris from the Town's canals and ditch network. The project was awarded under the North Carolina Disaster Recovery Act of 2016 to aid with repair of streams blocked and otherwise altered by Hurricane Matthew and Tropical Storm Hermine. Dare County Soil and Water Conservation District played an instrumental role assisting the Town in receiving these grant funds. The project will consist of removing any exposed and un-exposed vegetative debris within the Town of Kitty Hawk canal and ditch network. Non-vegetative debris such as trash will also be removed during these efforts. The project is expected to commence in 2017.

Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Mayor Perry: What is the status of the guard gate and the gate on Covered Bridge Road?
(Site Manager confirmed that a quote was obtained to replace the roof on the guard shack. Overall, no decisions have been made with regards to Covered Bridge Road, and the reserve is still waiting for the homeowners to respond to a 2016 letter asking them to prioritize their desires for the area.

Mayor Perry inquired about the existing lease at the NC Coastal Reserve office at 983 W Kitty Hawk Road and would like to document the change from an annual lease to a month to month lease.

Steve Jarvis: no comments

Jarred Culbreath: no comments

Public Input -none

Action Items:

Andy Stewart

- Will produce a letter to landowners in the Tackle Ridge and Thick Ridge Roads areas, addressing the problem of dumping landscape debris
- Will produce a month to month lease for the Reserve office located at 983 W Kitty Hawk Road and forward to Site Manager

Site Manager:

- Produce Access Plan by Fall LAC
- Produce Fire Management Plan by Fall LAC

Adjourn

Joel Johnson in a phone conversation after the meeting: He will include information about illegal dumping in this correspondence with community members. He also supports the land acquisition project.