



Local Advisory Committee Meeting
Currituck Banks Coastal Reserve

May 23, 2022 – 2:00 p.m.
The Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education
1160 Village Lane, Corolla, NC 27927

Attendance

<u>LAC Partner Organization Members</u>	<u>Present</u>
Currituck County Planning Department, Jennie Turner	Y
Currituck County Sheriff's Office, Terrence Sutton	N
Currituck National Wildlife Refuge, Mike Hoff	N
NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Jarrett Culbreath	Y
NC Wildlife Resources Commission, OBX Center for Wildlife, Sharon Meade	Y
The Nature Conservancy, Aaron McCall	Y
APNEP, Jimmy Johnson	N
NHP, Nathan Shepherd	N
<u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u>	
Brett Harrison	Y
Edward Ponton	Y
<u>Others Present</u>	
Erik Alnes, NCCR, Northern Sites Manager	

Reserve-wide Program Business

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

Individual Reserve Business (Erik Alnes)

- *Coastal Reserve Rule Amendment*

The two-hour parking limit for the Currituck Banks Reserve parking lot was included in the rule amendments. Now that the rule is included in Administrative Code, the Coastal Reserve will begin enforcing the rule through towing, and potentially ticketing. Alnes opened the floor to discuss potential assistance in enforcement through the County Sheriff's Office.

- Turner indicated the County Sheriff's Office may be able to help, but we would have to investigate the process of ticketing and fines.
- Harrison noted that if we called the towing company and the vehicle left the lot before the company arrived, the company may charge the State.
- McCall recommended posting all parking spots with signs, as they are currently signed every-other spot in the lot. He also stated it may be beneficial to install a large sign in front of the rain garden to ensure those who used the lot were aware of the rule.
- Culbreth stated WRC *could* enforce the rule, but logistically they would not be able to patrol the site on a regular cycle. He also brought up that if NCCR staff were to enforce the rule by calling the tow company, it may jeopardize staff safety if an individual became unruly.
- Alnes will set up a meeting with the sheriff's office to discuss options to utilize Currituck County Sheriff's office to enforce the rule through ticketing.

- *Boardwalk Refurbishment Project*

This project will be started in 2022. The Reserve parking lot will be closed for a mandatory pre-bid meeting on June 2nd from 0800-1200. After a contract is made with a vendor, we expect construction to begin in November or December of this year, and finish in early 2023. During the construction, we will work closely with the County to provide alerts to local residents regarding any closures of the site and will be updating the general public through press releases, signage on site, and through our social media platforms. We are excited to have this board-for-board replacement project underway.

- McCall recommended keeping the leftover wood for other small projects that may come up at other sites or repairs at Currituck Banks.
- Turner stated the County would be happy to help with outreach through Currituck Alert when the site was going under maintenance.

- *Interpretive Signage Update*

Coastal Reserve staff are working on drafting 8 signs that will be developed and installed on the boardwalk to augment the educational experience for visitors of the sites. Financing for these signs was provided through PAC funding. Alnes discussed the sign topics, which include the history of waterfowl hunting in Currituck County, maritime forest trail, Corolla's wild horse population, SAV and marsh platform benefits, flora and fauna of the site, priority birds of the site, and barrier island storm impacts of hurricanes and nor'easters. Alnes asked the LAC to provide feedback on the signage and will collaborate with them in the future regarding images to use on the signs.

- Meade stated she had a large library of pictures that could be used for the history of waterfowl hunting in Currituck County.

- *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 Currituck Banks. A Reserve-wide training was held in May to train those interested in volunteering with the Currituck Banks Reserve. 2 individuals 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.

- Meade noted that they have a group of high schoolers that would be happy to volunteer on the site. Alnes will follow up with Meade about this and look into the State policies regarding volunteers under the age of 18.

- *Hunting Report*

This year, we had 79 individuals obtain authorizations to hunt Currituck Banks. NCCR staff conducted a hunter survey this year, collecting data from 20% of the user group who received authorizations for Currituck Banks or Kitty Hawk Woods. Of those contacted, we had 2 deer taken from Currituck Banks Reserve, hog sign was observed by hunters, but no hogs were seen or taken. NCCR staff re-posted the boundary sign on the beach before hunting season, which assisted hunters in knowing where to park on the beach.

Member Roundtable (Staff response in italics)

- Aaron McCall met with Steve Jarvis and the USDA hog eradication staff in April and walked the Reserve property to the TNC property. Josh believes there are 2-3 wild hogs left and is looking to place a hog trap on TNC or County property.
- Jarrett Culbreth noted they have not seen much hog sign on the property. Also, he noted that they did not observe many hunters on the beach this year.

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

- NCCR Staff will set up a meeting with the Currituck County Sheriff's Office to investigate the efficacy of using police to enforce the 2-hour parking limit at the Currituck Banks Parking Lot.
- During the pre-bid meeting on June 2nd, as well as closures of the site during construction, the Northern Sites Manager will reach out to Currituck's communication team to spread the word via Currituck Alert.
- The Northern Sites Manager will meet with Sharron Meade to look through pictures to use for the PAC signage.
- The Northern Sites Manager will investigate the use of volunteers under 18 years old and talk with Sharron Meade about using them on the site if it is allowed.

Adjourn