



Local Advisory Committee Meeting  
Currituck Banks Coastal Reserve

May 18, 2023 – 10:00 a.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	N
NC Wildlife Resources Commission, OBX Center for Wildlife, Sharon Meade	Y
The Nature Conservancy, Aaron McCall	N
APNEP, Jimmy Johnson	N
NHP, Nathan Shepherd	N
<u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u>	
Brett Harrison	N
Edward Ponton	N
<u>Others Present</u>	
Erik Alnes, NCCR, Northern Sites Manager	
Steve Jarvis, NCCR, Northern Sites Stewardship Assistant	

Reserve-wide Program Business

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

## Individual Reserve Business (Erik Alnes)

- *Boardwalk Refurbishment Project*

The site was closed from October 31 – March 10 as a construction crew replaced the entire 1,920 linear feet of the Currituck Banks Boardwalk. The project, funded in part through a \$122,000 grant from the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant Program, removed and replaced the 20-year-old boardwalk's decking, railings, benches, and toe kicks. DCM and DEQ staff repaired, capped, and sealed the over 400 pilings that support the boardwalk, which should extend the life of the boardwalk for another 20 years. The old wooden benches were replaced with composite material, enhancing the safety and comfort of the viewing areas. There is a small event planned for June 1 with Secretary Biser, among other partners and elected officials, to celebrate the reopening of the project.

- *Interpretive Signage Update*

Staff have developed 9 new interpretive signs that have been sent for print. Staff hope to receive and install them this summer, which will augment the educational experience along the boardwalk. Four of the signs focusing on the ecology and culture of Currituck Sound, submerged aquatic vegetation, fauna of the estuary, and storms on barrier islands will be installed at the marsh overlook. Four additional signs will be peppered along the forested boardwalk area, with content focusing on birds of the Reserve, maritime forest ecology, features of a barrier island cross section, and Corolla's wild horse herd. Last, a large new interpretive sign introducing the site will be installed at the entrance.

- *Chronolog*

As discussed in the previous LAC meeting, staff installed Chronolog's at all three of the Northern Sites of the Coastal Reserve. Chronolog is a small mount that allows users to take a picture from a stationary point and upload it to a timelapse organized by time and day. In Currituck Banks, it was installed near the end of the boardwalk, where the frame captures water levels, will help monitor marsh dynamics, and monitor the tree line. This citizen science tool has been highly utilized since its installation in March, with over 100 submissions as of April. This will help staff with long-term monitoring efforts at the site.

- *Horse Fencing Updates*

As discussed in the previous LAC meeting, a group of horses had been getting around the southern fence bordering the Reserve, out into the town of Corolla. Staff worked with the Corolla Wild Horse Foundation, and permitted the installation of a temporary electric fence that quelled the behavior along that horse trail. The horses then began going underneath the boardwalk and kept escaping south. Staff again worked with the CWHF and installed boards underneath the boardwalk. This work significantly reduced the number of escapes. Upon reopening, the electric fence was replaced with nylon rope to ensure the safety of visitors. Staff are discussing replacing the rope fence with a permanent wood fence along the 70-foot section and will look to construct it in the fall.

- *Stanback Coastal Fellow*

TNC hired a Stanback Coastal Fellow from Duke that will be working with TNC and Reserve Staff for 11 weeks this summer. He will be assisting both agencies with researching and investigating efforts related to best resource management approaches to assist with the long-term health of the Currituck Banks Preserve and Currituck Banks Estuarine Research Reserve natural communities in relation to the surrounding areas of Corolla, and the beach driving area that runs through our conserved lands.

Member Roundtable (*Staff response in italics*)

- No updates from LAC members.

Public Input

- No public participation.

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

- NCCR Staff reminded LAC members to RSVP for the Currituck Banks Reserve Boardwalk Re-opening celebration.

Adjourn