



Rachel Carson Reserve
 Local Advisory Committee Meeting
 Dec 5, 2023, 3pm
 101 Pivers Island Road, Beaufort with a WebEx option

Attendance

LAC Partner Organization Members	Present
Ben Fleming, N.C. Div. of Parks and Recreation	Yes
Ben Wunderly, N.C. Maritime Museum	Yes
Greg Piniak, NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science	Yes
Todd Clark, Town of Beaufort Administration	Yes
Paul Burdette, Town of Beaufort Police Department	Yes
Misty Buchanan, N.C Natural Heritage Program	No
Sue Stuska, Cape Lookout National Seashore	Yes
Jimmy Johnson, Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership	Yes
NC Wildlife Resources Commission	No
Community Members	
Miriam Sutton	Yes
Susan Schmidt	Yes
Ann Carter	No
John Fussell	Yes
Perry Barrow	No
Stan Rule	Yes
Dan Rittschof	Yes
Janina Millis	No
Jeff Benoit	Yes
Others Present	
Paula Gillikin, Reserve Central Sites Manager	

Reserve-wide Administrative Update – Paula Gillikin

The Reserve-wide Update, which includes a range of Reserve activities, was shared with committee members prior to the meeting, reviewed during the meeting, and is included as Appendix A.

Rachel Carson Reserve Business – Paula Gillikin

Site update

- **Educational Activities**

Educational field trips and presentations were provided for 542 participants to include community groups, K-12 students, and university students.

- **Wild Horses**

In September, a sick foal in public view was removed from the island and transported for veterinary care. The foal seemed to be improving but passed away a few days later because of complications of septicemia and pneumonia. Also, in September, a foal was stuck in the mud for a few hours but as the tide came up, the foal was able to free itself and rejoin its social group. In November, a stallion became entangled in rigid plastic debris. The debris was removed, and the horse had a small abrasion. He is doing fine, now. Paula thanked Dr. Stuska (National Park Service (NPS) partner) and Miriam Sutton (volunteer) for assisting with one or more of these incidents.

- **Carrot Island Living Shoreline**

The Carrot Island Living Shoreline project, led by Carteret County and Moffatt and Nichol, is moving through the permitting and State Construction Office processes. Construction will likely begin in March 2024. A general conceptual design was presented to show the location of two different types of oyster sills. Committee members asked questions related to the materials being proposed and navigation safety around the project area. Dr. Rittschof requested to obtain a small piece of the material that will be used for the offshore oyster sill. He would like to conduct testing to see if the material has impacts on invertebrates. Ben Fleming commented that construction may take longer than anticipated based on Fort Macon State Park's experience with a living shoreline project.

- **Pony Patrol**

Pony Patrol was a success at Cape Lookout National Seashore last summer, which Dr. Stuska described. The Reserve will launch the program at the Rachel Carson Reserve in 2024 and the Reserve and NPS will conduct volunteer training jointly in 2024.

Carrot Island boardwalk floating dock request

- The Reserve received two written public requests to install a gangway and floating dock at the end of the Carrot Island boardwalk to enhance access. Committee members, generally, did not support the idea. There were concerns about 1) people tying up for long period of time 2) a dock inhibiting other vessels, motor and kayak, from accessing the boardwalk beach 3) boaters waiting for the boat ramp may use the dock and 4) maintenance and repair after storms will require fast response and monetary capacity. One member mentioned that a floating dock could increase accessibility for some visitors, but overall thought it would cause more problems than benefits. Committee members proposed cutting off the boardwalk to expose more beach area for better access and/or adding another opening with steps on the west side.

Roundtable Discussion

- Miriam is concerned about the crab pots being set in Taylor's Creek (some inside the Reserve boundary) because she has observed them being moved around by the strong current and many of the buoys are pulled underwater making them a hazard to navigation. She inquired if the

Town could prohibit crab pots from being set in Taylor's Creek through the Navigable Waterways Ordinance. Chief Burdette commented that the ordinance would not allow for this. Paula will speak with Marine Patrol about these concerns inside of Reserve boundaries. Stan suggested that a conversation with the crabber may be beneficial. Miriam also pointed out that the broken-off piling is still submerged at the end of the boardwalk and continues to be a hazard.

- Susan highlighted the publication of Orin Pilkey's new book, "Sand."
- John inquired about sightings of unusual birds in preparation for the Christmas Bird Count.
- Todd provided up an update on the timeline for Bulkhead Channel Range 1 dredging, the Environmental Assessment for Bulkhead Channel and Beaufort Harbor, and the waterfront improvement project.

Public Comment

None

Final comments, Action Items, and Wrap-up

- Paula will speak with Marine Patrol about submerged crab pot buoys within site boundaries. Paula will also speak with a contractor about the broken-off piling.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40pm