

Cape Fear Arch Coastal Collaborative
Minutes from the
April 17, 2007 meeting
Lake Waccamaw State Park, Lake Waccamaw, NC



Attending:

Jenna Begier, Dan Bell, Leslie Bell, Pete Benjamin, Anne Deaton, Suzanne Dorsey, Don Eggert, Christine Ellis, Steve Everhart, David Farren, Laura Gadd, Mike Giles, Dru Harrison, Tommy Hughes, Angela Mangiameli, Hervey McIver, Marilyn Meares, Shelly Miller, Tancred Miller, Scott Pohlman, Nancy Preston, Phil Prete, Carol Price, Shawn Ralston, Fritz Rohde, David Scott, Tracy Skrabal, Anthony Snider, Hope Sutton, John Taggart, Penny Tysinger, Andy Wood,

Partner Updates

Marilyn Meares reported on Eagle Island, stating that they were under contract to purchase 257 acres and intend to put the northern part of the island into public ownership. They are currently seeking funding sources. If anyone has any leads please contact Marilyn.

Mike Giles reported that Hugo Neu has changed its plans to build an auto landfill in Brunswick County.

Don Eggert reported that the planning of the proposed Southport port has slowed to a crawl. Senator Soles has asked DOT for a feasibility study from the proposed port to US 17, Hwy 211, 87, 133, and the proposed new bypass around Boiling Springs Lakes.

Andy Wood mentioned that Audubon is looking for white ibis. If anyone sees them, please let him know. The statewide waterbird census will also be occurring in May and June. If interested in volunteering, please call Sue Cameron with.

One Year Objectives: Progress and Next Steps

Dan reviewed the Cape Fear Arch's one year objectives and reported on progress to date.

Smith Creek Initiative

Phil Prete is an environmental planner with the City of Wilmington. He discussed the City and County's newest initiative to look at the protection of the Smith Creek watershed. The watershed is the largest in New Hanover County and contains some of the most undeveloped land along the creek. The Smith Creek Initiative Group, formerly known as the Tidal Creeks Advisory Committee, is beginning the process of targeting properties for restoration and acquisition. The group is taking a holistic approach by looking at the potential for passive recreation by including the possibility of incorporating water public access points and ecotourism opportunities.

Brunswick County Conservation District

Leslie Bell reported that the Brunswick County Commissioners adopted a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and added a conservation zoning district which will recognize all existing environmental areas, including conservation and protection zone areas. The County is working on creating a database of conservation properties and parks. Properties already placed within this

zone include ones held by the Nature Conservancy, Coastal Land Trust, Bald Head Island Conservancy, and property on Eagle Island. The County is also in the process of requesting permission from the County Commissioners to waive the re-zoning fee for those who want to place their property in conservation.

It was also noted that Brunswick County also has voluntary agricultural districts and the conservation district does not include properties within city limits.

Mapping out our Community Conservation Visions

Dan Bell initiated a discussion of what the Cape Fear Arch conservation priorities should consist of. As an example of other protection plans and collaborative efforts, Dan discussed the structure of the Maine Coast Protection Initiative, a group similar in nature to the Arch in that it works to protect the natural resources of coastal Maine. They focus on habitat, points of access to the coast, and scenic and cultural features in their mapping and planning efforts.

It was decided that the map should show high priority habitats and species in need of attention, working landscapes, networks of conservation lands and waterways, (cores, corridors, and buffers), and information that helps a variety of sources (such as local governments). The group then brainstormed on the following categories:

1. *Local Initiatives or Districts*
e.g. Smith Creek, Lockwood Folly, Eagles Island, watershed plans, Pender County conservation districts, Brunswick County conservation districts, stewardship development program, subdivision ordinances.
2. *Land Use or "Vision" Plans*
e.g.- Brunswick 2020, Boiling Spring Lakes red cockaded woodpecker plan, CAMA plans, Wilmington future land use plans, South Carolina statewide plan.
3. *Greenway Plans*
e.g.- Brunswick County, Wilmington's River to Sea, local park plans (passive recreation), East Coast greenway
4. *Water Corridor Plans*
e.g.- Columbus County (Lumber and Waccamaw), Cape Fear corridor plan, Pender County paddle trail plan, Town Creek, Hewlett's Creek
5. *Ecotourism and economic development*
6. *Oyster plans*
7. *Wildlife Action plans/bird trail/IBA's*
8. *Local park plans*
9. *Spawning nurseries*
10. *CHPP*
11. *Guilds(groups of animals tied to specific habitats)*

The following were categorized as non-conservation priorities:

1. Transportation overlay
2. Fire buffers
3. Transportation
4. Power/Utilities

5. Water/Wastewater
6. FEMA floodplain
7. Dredging plans
8. School plans
9. NC DOT T.I.P. projects
10. Strategic highway corridor
11. Municipal transportation plans
12. Local CTPs
13. Council of Governments

The conservation design subcommittee was then charged to take these ideas and suggestions and work on creating a map for the larger group to use.

After lunch and a hike to Lake Waccamaw, the group then broke into the following sub-committees: conservation design, fundraising/outreach, and transportation/port.

Notes from the breakout sessions begin on the next page.

Next Meeting:

The **next meeting for the Cape Fear Arch will be held on July 17th at Lake Waccamaw State Park**. If you have items that you would like to add to the agenda, please email them to Dan Bell at dbell@tnc.org.

Cape Fear Arch Conservation Collaborative
Conservation Mapping Breakout Session – Draft Summary
April 17, 2007

In attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Jenna Begier	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Shawn Ralston	New Hanover County
Hope Sutton	The Nature Conservancy
Scott Pohlman	NC Natural Heritage Program
Angela Mangiameli	Audubon North Carolina
Hervey McIver	The Nature Conservancy
Anthony Snider	DCM Coastal Reserve
Phil Prete	City of Wilmington
Laura Gadd	NC Plant Conservation Program
Steve Everhart	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Tommy Hughes	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
David Scott	Lake Waccamaw/Winyah Rivers Foundation
Christine Ellis	Waccamaw Riverkeeper
John Taggart	UNC Wilmington
Marilyn Meares	Cape Fear RC&D

We had a good discussion in our breakout session. After a little background on past mapping efforts (Onslow Bight) and current statewide efforts (Strategic Plan for One NC Naturally), we started talking about what mapping for the Cape Fear Arch should include. We liked the approach that the group in Maine had used, but to avoid clutter, we thought conservation design should be one map, and ecotourism would be another. Also, it is important to not only be thinking within our focus area, but to also think without – looking at connections to Onslow Bight, South Carolina, Sandhills, Lumber River, etc. Some key layers that we thought we would need to compile, or at least warranted further discussion:

- Restoration Layer
 - from ecosystem standpoint. Among other things, could help guide Farm Bill programs
- Agriculture and Forestlands
 - Voluntary Ag Districts
 - Prime soils
 - Could use Present Use Value to identify
 - It would be key to overlay these lands with wildlife corridors
- Management Buffers/Wildland Urban Interface
 - Fire is important in this landscape
- Municipal Boundaries/Subdivision/Transportation
- Waterfowl Focus Areas/Important Bird Areas
- Preservation/Conservation

- Public Access/Recreation/Ecotourism/Education opportunities
- Impact Management
 - Places where we would like to work to reduce impact, or not have things take land out of its potential
 - May be aided by seeing where threats overlap conservation priorities
- Heritage Tourism
 - Anthony and Chris are tracking down sites with trails
- Projected growth
 - Expansion of impervious surface
 - Population growth from census data
 - Water and sewer; roads (including planned)
 - Impress upon people the potential future
 - “Is Lake Waccamaw on track to become White Lake?”
- South Carolina Data
 - Especially conservation focus areas

Scott will make a map showing what State One NC Naturally map would look like, and will convert to pdfs (quick survey showed that most of the group did not have GIS capacity). He will also make shapefiles available to those that request. (Bring your portable memory devices to the next meeting).

Since there was mention of the Cape Fear Arch Conservation Collaborative being able to contract some GIS work, the group identified which layers would be more appropriate for this GIS person to take the lead on pulling together:

- Agricultural and Forestlands
- Municipal boundaries/Subdivision/Transportation
- Public Access/Recreation/Ecotourism/Education opportunities
- Projected growth
- Could help with Heritage Tourism
- Could help with Wildland Urban Interface, depending on what is already available

Cape Fear Arch Conservation Collaborative
Transportation & Port Breakout Session – Draft Summary
April 17, 2007

In attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Pete Benjamin	US Fish & Wildlife Service
Leslie Bell	Brunswick County
Dan Bell	The Nature Conservancy
Steve Cox	Columbus County
David Farren	Southern Environmental Law Center
Don Eggert	Cape Fear Council of Government
Mike Giles	NC Coastal Federation
Fritz Rohde	NC Division of Marine Fisheries

After a brief conversation about the status of the proposed NC International Port, the group turned their attention to the Brunswick County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). Due to a lack of information from the NC Ports Authority, the CTP Steering Committee chose not to include the Port in their traffic forecasts. The Ports Authority needs to provide NCDOT and Brunswick County with accurate information about capacity, rail vs. truck projections and infrastructure requirements, among others.

The primary objective at the steering committee's 3/15/07 meeting was to agree on population projections and traffic forecasts for long-term planning (2035). On the recommendation of NCDOT, the steering committee adopted a straight county-wide forecast of 3% population growth every year through 2035. That population forecast was then overlaid on Brunswick County's current road infrastructure to identify "deficiencies". No projects in the current NCDOT TIP were considered in those forecasts. [This would include the Oak Island Bridge, I-140, Carolina Bays Parkway, and NC 211 improvements, among others.]

Under that scenario and not considering any projects in the TIP, every highway in the county was projected as "over capacity". The one exception is NC Highway 211 between US 74-76 and US 17 which remains at less than half capacity. The map is on-line at:
http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/tpb/PDF/Brunswick_2035Deficiencies.pdf

The NCDOT summary of the meeting is on-line at:
http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/tpb/PDF/Brunswick_CommitteeMeetingSummaries.pdf
<http://www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/tpb/planning/BrunswickCo.html>

Pete Benjamin provided a perspective on the CTP planning process from the NC Interagency Leadership Team (<http://www.ncdot.org/programs/environment/development/interagency/ncilt/>)

The ILT has adopted a goal which states: Local land use and long-range transportation planning result in projects that meet mobility, economic and environmental goals.

The ILT has supported the CTP Planning process as a mechanism that would provide environmental review in long-term planning. The CTP is intended to provide a comprehensive trail of documentation and facilitate later comprehensive environmental reviews. Some in the group expressed concern that the timeline for the CTP would not allow for such a review. It was also noted that growth patterns in Brunswick County are not uniform and the application of a 3% model may not represent the “best” land use planning.

Members of the steering committee agreed to speak with the NCDOT representative about these concerns. NCDOT has responded favorably and, with Brunswick County, “agreed to take a more comprehensive look at future growth patterns and to await information from the Brunswick County Phase 2 Land Use Plan.” This should not change the overall timeline, with a plan expected by the end of 2007.

The next meeting of the CTP Steering Committee will be July 19. The CTP will be on the Arch’s July 17 meeting agenda.

Cape Fear Arch Conservation Collaborative
Fundraising & Outreach Breakout Session – Draft Summary
April 17, 2007

In attendance:

Name

Nancy Preston
Andy Wood
Suzanne Dorsey
Tancrid Miller

Affiliation

NC Coastal Land Trust
NC Audubon
Bald Head Island Conservancy
NC Division of Coastal Management

The Fundraising and Outreach Committee met after lunch and discussed a couple of items including potential grant sources, possible outreach plans, and long term goals for the overall group.

The first item discussed was how to proceed if the Z. Smith Reynolds grant is approved for funding of a coordinator for the Arch. The committee thought that it would be best if the tasks assigned to this potential position would include coordinating the meeting planning, coordinating and overseeing the mapping component of the Arch, and to lead in the fundraising efforts.

The committee then discussed potential ways to educate the community about the Cape Fear Arch region. We discussed targeting environmental educators, groups such as Rotary and Kiwanis, and creating a way to energize the general public in order to involve them in creating a sense of place. We also discussed partnering with the local museums, aquarium, and teachers in order to develop a curriculum.

Action items discussed included creating a workshop for educators, looking into EEC certification and UNCW's environmental education certification program, and looking at reaching out to nontraditional educators, including the staff at the aquarium and at Halyburton park in Wilmington.

Potential strategies include chartering a course for how to provide a comprehensive overview for the region, to identify key areas to conserve, and to engage the general public so that they have an ownership of the area and a sense of place.

The committee then discussed steps to take in order to get the Outreach and Development plans implemented. We thought that it would be key to have a goal and a slogan and a 30 second "elevator pitch" that all parties could use when talking about the Arch. We also discussed potential target audiences and considered grass roots groups, legislatures, and any other parties who could help us achieve our goal. We also discussed developing a timeline, a marketing and outreach plan, and creating a budget.