



**EAGLES ISLAND COALITION**  
**January 14, 2015**  
**Wilmington, North Carolina**  
**Onboard the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA**

*Attendance list at end.*

**Welcome and Introductions / Announcements**

Niel Brooks initiated introductions at 2:09 pm. Attendees introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

**Brief Announcements**

Captain Terry Bragg welcomed the group to the Battleship and stated the Battleship has been in a primary stakeholder of the Coalition and described two major projects in the works. The overnight camping project has run into technical challenges and funding limitations that they are currently working through. A recent project is the Battleship hull repair due to corrosion. The Battleship has \$10 million to conduct the coffer dam repair and the Veterans Memorial Walkway. They are formally under contract with BMH Architects with the goal of designs being finalized by end of February 2015. Captain Bragg also discussed the initial phasing of the Expedition Trail and would like to challenge the Eagles Island Coalition to raise funds and support the longer phase of the Expedition Trail. Approximately \$150K is currently funded towards the initial phase of the Expedition Trail. It is a win-win partnership between the Battleship and the Coalition and the State, he said. Niel asked about the status of Battleship Park renovations. Captain Bragg responded that the CAMA permit supports all aspects of the area including the park. A fundraising campaign will be held with the public for this portion spring/summer 2015.

Commissioner Breault provided an update on the Belville Riverwalk. A CAMA permit is in line and construction will begin in 2015 on the riverwalk and pier. They are continuing towards coordination of the multi-use walk across Brunswick River. He stated they are in the final stages of discussion for an important piece of property to be given to Belville for the project.

Chairman Niel Brooks reviewed the agenda and the various minutes for approval.

**Minutes – September 2015**

Motion by Capt. Bragg to approve minutes as presented; second by Jim Kapetsky; minutes approved unanimously.

**Presentation by Dr. Jim Kapetsky on Historical Investigations of Eagles Island**

- Part I: Identifying historical artifacts along Eagles Island
- Three structures have been identified including three ILM and Manchester RR Trestles
- Conduct assessment of physical preservation, documentation of each structure and consider signage
- Can the road bed of the Wilmington and Manchester RR be used as a nature trail across part of Eagles Island?
- The spoil mounds could be linked for recreational purposes.
- A field assessment was done by Rob Moul, Chip Hemingway, Niel Brooks and Jim Kapetsky in January 2015 to observe visible remains of the RR bed.
- Soil samples showed various substrate material originally used for the RR bed.
- Meares Cut was transected with access via boat at half-tide.
- Using most of the possible RR bed as a nature trail does not appear promising.
- Develop new activity on possible uses of the spoil mounds for outreach. Marilyn proposes the April EIC meeting should be held on the mounds as an overnight camping trip.
- Rob Moul indicated the mounds are old disposal material used for wetland mitigation. The EEP would need to be brought into the discussion.
- Part II: Tidewater rice cultivation on Eagles Island as a cultural resource
- Questions to be addressed: Where was rice cultivated, what is the status of the canal system, how extensive is erosion among the remaining rice fields?
- Erosion of the remaining rice fields has resulted in 20% of the area of the remaining rice fields being eroded.
- Satellite images are only useful at higher tide levels which cause removal of soil.

- Conservation Management Plan: further actions on the rice farming system would require an expensive endeavor.
  - Physical re-creation and preservation of rice fields is not an option.
  - Digital preservation and digital re-creation of rice fields and canal systems is a realistic solution.
  - Cape Fear Museum will support with staff resources.
  - Outreach to NOAA – Jim will present methodology in a meeting in March. His abstract will be uploaded to the EIC website

#### **Draft Conservation Management Plan – Kristina Fischer**

- A work product has been assembled by panel of experts. All credit goes to the experts that have volunteered their time. Captain Bragg, Marilyn Meares, Jan Davis, Scott Polhman, Mike Schafle, Jim Kapetsky and others.
- A draft plan was provided to the EIC in December 2014.
- Format includes Executive Summary, Land Ownership, Matrix including Elements Defined, Indicators and Results, Summary of Targets, Implementation Steps, Implementing Stewardship Monitoring
- Master Matrix was described including goals, direct threats, contributing factors, strategies, timeframe and priority levels.
- High priority items will be implemented and/or focused on first. An appendix includes a current species list from the Natural Heritage Program. An additional appendix includes a variety of maps relevant to Eagles Island.
- The Natural Heritage Trust Fund has provided preliminary edits on the document.
- Kristina would like to open the floor to comments/feedback. FWS has discussed feedback with Natural Heritage with Susan Mason. Element Occurrences should not be provided in a public document for point data for endangered species. Polygons can be used to show for public eyes.
- Captain Bragg stated it was communicated well and will be used towards the design of the coffer dam repairs walkway.
- Doug Springer asked about historical elements including Drop Stitch's camp (modern time period) and that could make it a more marketable document. Can surrounding areas including Point Peter be included in the document to consider for future greenspace development? Kristina stated it was strictly focusing on Eagles Island.
- Phil indicated this is a work in progress and did not want to focus on a long narrative as there is a comprehensive inventory that exists and can be downloaded from the EIC website.
- The matrix is a starting point and not meant to be all inclusive. Strategies include identifying partners that will take the lead on each target for each system. A need to inventory further such as Drop Stitch's cabin would need to be conducted.
- The goal is to review the matrix for funding opportunities and will remain evolving. Comments can be emailed to Kristina Fischer by January 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Captain Bragg stated the Conservation Management Plan is comprehensive with the perspective of the environment rather than economic impact. Large donors funding Battleship initiatives are focused on economic opportunities. Long term funding will come through contributions to economy and job-building.
- Charles Robbins indicated the end result is defining what the public will see that would bring tourists to the area. Georgetown rice canals are an example. A visit to Georgetown may be helpful and provide ideas such as interpretive center.
- This Conservation Management Plan is a requirement of the Articles of Dedication by Natural Heritage Program for the properties that are held in conservation.
- Commissioner Breault stated that the Conservation Management Plan is comprehensive, however a marketing plan would need to be discussed. Phil replied that this plan challenges the other standing committees to use this information and implement the goals.
- Phil made a motion that the draft be adopted with a condition of revisions. Marilyn seconded Phil's motion to adopt the Draft Conservation Management Plan. There were no opposed.

#### **EIC Business Discussion – Niel Brooks**

#### **Program Ideas**

- Niel asked EIC members to provide feedback on topics/themes of 2015 quarterly meetings. Ideas include the following:
  - Update on Eagles Island land ownership
  - Ken VaFier offered to provide an update on the development of New Hanover County land on Eagles Island. Niel indicated Dru Harrison has been working towards coordinating a forum for Eagles Island landowners.
  - New Hanover County Comprehensive Plan update
  - Phil asked that a meeting focus on the conservation plan and identify partners to lead priority actions and demonstratable results for each committee to achieve. Once goals/targets are prioritized and agreed upon then funding opportunities can be reviewed.
  - Marilyn suggested a brainstorming session to prioritize project and fundraising.
  - Niel asked the group if they could think about where the EIC goes from here now that the Draft Conservation Management Plan has been developed.
    - He would like the group to focus on our small successes including the website, water trail and management plan.
  - Niel asked if the Coalition should take the lead on specific projects since it's a conglomeration of entities and not a 501 (c) 3.
  - Niel confirmed at least one of our quarterly meetings will be a work session.

#### **Involving Individuals in EIC**

- Niel indicated the MOU is signed by organizations rather than individuals.
  - It was suggested a "Friends of Eagles Island" could be developed for non-organizations. A question of whether they would be charged \$?
  - Dru confirmed existing funds are donations.
  - Phil asked for the EIC to define criteria and move forward to ensure we capture those individuals (i.e. Jim Kapetsky) that are working tirelessly with Eagles Island Coalition.
  - Commissioner Breault noted the EIC should make more of an effort to reach out to media to make people aware.
  - Niel confirmed that the EIC needs to actively promote the EIC membership and engage others with like interests.
  - Captain Bragg explained the "Friends of the Battleship" program and indicated the EIC members form a synergistic group.
  - Phil asked the group to develop an official supporting role for Jim Kapetsky, "Cultural Historian of Eagles Island Coalition".

#### **Call for Committees**

- Niel reviewed the four standing committees and asked for the EIC to consider joining one of the committees.
  - Conservation Planning Committee – Kristina Fischer, Chair
  - Funding & Development – Marilyn Meares, Chair
  - Recreation & Cultural Resources – Jim Herstine, Chair
  - Outreach & Education – Gordon Johnson, Chair

#### **Feedback**

- EIC Ideas for future programs/events:
  - Eighth grade program that includes a boat ride around Eagles Island (Doug Springer)
  - Media – video to provide substantive and graphic information on Eagles Island
  - Ecotourism – tap into birders through Audubon to host a walk and educate the public.
- Niel confirmed the Executive Committee will meet soon and discuss all of these ideas.

#### **Adjourn**

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:11.



**Attendees**

Dawn York  
Kristina Fischer  
Jim Kapetsky  
Phil Prete  
Rosemary Toumey  
Allan Smith  
Laura Fogo  
Charles Robbins  
Captain Terry Bragg  
Bill Graham  
Doug Springer  
Rob Moul  
Don Harty  
Gordon Johnson  
Camilla Herlevich  
Ken VaFier  
Chris Vargo  
Mamie Caison  
Marilyn Meares  
Frank Herzog  
Joe Breault  
Dru Harrison  
Jan Davidson

DRAFT