



**EAGLES ISLAND COALITION**  
**January 16, 2013**  
**Wilmington, North Carolina**

*Attendance list at end.*

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 2:08 by Chair Phil Prete. Attendees introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

**Announcements**

- *StriperFest* is Cape Fear River Watch's fundraising event this weekend – more details available through CFRW website – Please support!
- Captain Terry Bragg, Executive Director of Battleship – provided an update on projects at the Battleship. Overnight camping project is underway (\$2.5 M); second \$17M project underway (No. 1 priority for Department of Cultural Resources) to build sheet pile wall around the Battleship to do hull repairs; vision is for wall to serve dual purpose as walkway that runs parallel with downtown Wilmington. Need additional funds (donations) to complete project. \$2M of project intended for Outreach; also considering small piers for kayak launch, etc. 2013-2014 DCR budget item, so hope to get project completed in the short-term. The Battleship is looking for input from the community and opportunities for collaboration. *Phil Prete thanked Terry for his ongoing support of Eagles Island Coalition.*
- Dawn York - CFRW applying for 2 large grants through NOAA for construction of rock weir for fish passage at Lock & Dams 2 and 3.

**PRESENTATIONS: Wilmington Harbor Project Activities and their relationship to Eagles Island**

**Chuck Wilson – US Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District - Ecosystem Restoration Coordinator**

Restoration and other topics

- Wilmington Harbor Navigation Improvements Feasibility Study looks at 3 projects in Wilmington Harbor – details available online at - <http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Library.aspx>
- Projects include work to address navigation inefficiencies and safety issues in 3 areas: 1) entrance channel near Bald Head Island, 2) Battery Island Turning basin, and 3) Anchorage/Turning basin in Wilmington Harbor
- Will be difficult to widen turning basin without effect on Eagles Island; coastal marshes would be impacted, so need to find mitigation areas... still working to determine appropriate slopes, etc.
- Proposed mitigation areas are considered fairly low value ecological areas that can be restored to wetlands (e. g. Island 12)
- Considering project to control phragmites and converting areas back – this effort has been done in other places, but not yet on the Cape Fear
- Island 12 – considering 2 mitigation options of different sizes of marsh restoration to build a site similar to Island 13 site that has been so successful
  - Island 12 work expected to include excavation of areas of phragmites
  - Larger Island 12 proposal had been considered, but costs are much higher and benefits are not in line with cost increase
- *Question:* Has there been a title change for Eagles Island property – current maps show Maritime Commission with easement to USACE? *This item needs follow-up; not sure on entity that holds title to land on Eagles Island*
- Total acreage to mitigate for Wilmington Harbor Navigation Improvements work has not yet been determined... looking at turning basin work and other activities
- Dawn York has spoken with Chuck Wilson as grant has been advertised (up to \$1M) for estuarine work... projects discussed today are likely too large to be completed with this grant funding; deadline is February 8
- Alligator Creek restoration project is expected at \$8M
- Report available on previous study (General Reevaluation Report - GRR was previously on the website); new study will be available in the future

**PRESENTATIONS: Wilmington Harbor Project Activities and their relationship to Eagles Island**

**Bob Keistler – US Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District - Project Manager for Navigation**

- Main purpose is to provide safe navigation
- Deepening of Cape Fear River is not likely to be funded in near future
- Maintenance dredging of Cape Fear River will continue – sediment disposed on upland areas, including *Eagles Island Disposal Area...*
- When feasible, dredged material is placed on beaches but Cape Fear River material is non-compatible
- *Eagles Island Disposal Area* has 3 cells totaling about 900 acres; top elevation of all 3 dikes is 40-feet; raised cell 2 since last year, planning to raise height of cell 3 this fall; foundation is somewhat unstable, settling happens. Maintenance dredging is done each year in the area and use of disposal area is necessary; current deepening ends in January.
- In the past, USACE has looked for market for dredge spoil (1M – 1.5M cubic yards disposed on Eagles Island each year); annual dredging in turning basin of about 700K cu yd; seeking market has been unsuccessful
- In terms of safety, this is a crucial area in Cape Fear River and needs to be dredged annually
- USACE is also in process of deepening last section of the Cape Fear River that will be done in foreseeable future from 38-feet to 42-feet. Taking out 800,000 yards of material; 400,000 is rock
- *Question: Have upstream major sediment sources been identified???* *Not really, largest river basin in the state and opportunity for lots of inputs*
- USACE works hard to maintain dikes at *Eagles Island Disposal Area*, but sometimes issues/breaches happen... repairs are always made in a timely manner
- *Question: How much capacity is there in disposal area? Dikes can be raised to hold more material. Having disposal capacity at Eagles Island is crucial for navigation and crucial for state ports. Estimate of storage capacity is ~5-8 years if dikes are not raised*
- *Question: Is terminal height reached on dikes? Still being tested; proposals to widen the base of the dike, but need to consider impacts. For additional storage, USACE may also consider cell 4 (just north of cell 3), but not feasible right now. Cost for mitigation is likely too high. Cell 4 already has dikes, but is currently out of service*
- *Question: Is sea level rise / storm surge factored in the equation as calculations are completed related to storage capacity? Sea level rise is not specifically factored; but safety factor of 1.3 to 1.5 is considered*
- USACE is looking to do what needs to be done for Eagles Island to keep existing disposal area open... have been pumping material here for 75 years. Current plan is to use cells 1, 2, and 3 for next decade and look to options to increase capacity after that
- *Question: Are there closure plans for any of the cells? Don't have any yet... have looked at ways to take the material out and haul it away*
- *Question: What type of testing is done on material that is removed from river? Permits for dredging require extensive testing... USACE works hard to keep bad material out of cells; material is rejected if it does not meet standards*
- Good use for material could be making brick – could be value-added use for what is pulled from river – bad materials would be burned off in the process for brick making

Chair Phil Prete thanked Chuck Wilson, Bob Keistler and Jonathan Bingham, Project Management for USACE Wilmington District, for attending our meeting and sharing information with the Eagles Island Coalition and invited them to be regular participants.

**Minutes – September 12, 2012**

Two spelling corrections were offered by Ruth Hass prior to the meeting; *motion by Bill Hart to approve the minutes with discretion to make edits that are non-substantive; second; minutes approved.*

**UPDATE - Cape Fear River Partnership – Phil Prete**

Cape Fear River Partnership Meeting to be held Friday at battleship – partnership is arranged under NOAA and working on a plan to restore fish access in Cape Fear River basin and protect and improve habitat and water quality to benefit fish, wildlife, and people in the basin. All are encouraged to go to website and look at plan that has been developed for migratory fish in the Cape Fear River; plan is posted, although public comment period is closed - <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/protection/capefear/index.html> . At the April EIC meeting, intend to request endorsement of plan by EIC.

#### COMMITTEE UPDATES – Funding and Development – Committee Chair Dawn York

- Have been looking at several grants – current project will be NOAA proposal for FY2013 for coastal marine habitat restoration; recovery of threatened, endangered, listed species; looking at anadromous fish. Building a rock weir at L&D 2 and 3 is high priority in the Cape Fear River Basin Action Plan for Migratory Fish. CFRW has also been awarded a smaller \$95,000 grant to restore fish habitat. Large meeting last week with agencies to pursue project at L&D 2 and second proposal for L&D 3. L&D 2 project is high cost, so considering a half-ramp due to costs. Full rock weir at L&D 3. May be requesting letters of support from partners
- Phil Prete – funding opportunity associated with superfund site cleanup in Navassa (former creosote treatment site); \$900,000 available to do restoration / mitigation work to correct damages by Kerr-McGee Plant (injury to the benthic community – marsh restoration). Total settlement dollars may total \$4.2M... \$900,000 is beginning of payments; \$25B in total damages for problems caused at many sites by Kerr-McGee. At this point, there has been no expressed interest by McLaughlin heirs to sell property, but site could be a nice fit for the mitigation work due to proximity. Scott Pohlman and others to work on assessment report of how to spend \$900,000; anticipate that McLaughlin site will be one of the top contenders. Report / recommendations to go out for public hearing in March or April. Will keep EIC in the information loop and provide opportunity for public comment. Winner Property may also be part of the discussion.

#### COMMITTEE UPDATES – Recreation & Cultural Resources – Committee Chair Niel Brooks

- Working to get paddle trail signage completed and trail markers installed (state has signed off that permits are not needed for this activity)
- In process of getting quotes for poles / signage to install
- Hope to install in the Spring
- Media blitz planned when this is done when we have some tangible things to show
- Suggestion that volunteers could be organized to install signage
- Lots of credit to Jim Kapetsky for mapping and work and Rob Moul for volunteering his time for EIC

#### COMMITTEE UPDATES – Education & Outreach

- Co-Chairs Shawn Ralston and Kemp Burdette absent today due to schedule conflicts
- Phil Prete mentioned that Gordon Johnson is doing a great job of keeping the website current and we appreciate his support! Please visit - <http://www.eaglesisland.org/> to see information that is posted

#### COMMITTEE UPDATES – Land Acquisition & Conservation Plan – Chair Dru Harrison

- Committee needs to meet to re-focus on Conservation Plan

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- Chuck Wilson mentioned that Brunswick Town has issues with marsh erosion and looking for motivated partner to help with issues; potentially a role for the EIC?
- Phil Prete – election of new officers to be discussed at April meeting; 2 year terms for current officers will end in July 2013, so new officers will need to be elected. Executive Committee will work on nominations, but consider serving or provide nominations for office of Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary. If interested, please let us know. We may also wish to reconsider length of term – 2-years may be a difficult commitment for some.
- 501(c)3 status – group consensus seems to be there is not enough need to push this issue due to cost; especially when we have partners in the EIC that are willing to be leads on grant projects, etc.
- *Question:* Will there be any future opportunities for the public to walk on USACE property if some conservation / education is done? *Might consider observation platform or other limited access area... open access probably not likely now or in the future. Limited group tour of the site may be a good first step and will be pursued in the future.* Phil Prete to follow-up on this item to see if we can line something up for a small group in early 2013. Even without public access, may try to explore different land management strategies that would enhance existing habitat.
- *Question:* Would the USACE have an interest to sign on as an EIC Partner? *Will continue to attend meetings and provide information; signatory is probably not likely*
- Comment – EIC may also wish to consider inviting coast guard to meetings and CFCC



**Adjourn**

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:05.

**Attendees**

Niel Brooks  
Nancy Buckingham  
John Carpenter  
Kristina Fischer  
Dru Harrison  
Bill Hart  
Jim Herstine  
Clark Hipp  
Gordon Johnson  
James Kapetsky  
Phil Prete  
Dan Ryan  
Rosemary Toumey  
Dawn York  
Chris Vargo