



**EAGLES ISLAND COALITION**  
**March 14, 2012**  
**Wilmington, North Carolina**

*Attendance sheet separate.*

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 2:09 by Chair Phil Prete. Those in attendance introduced themselves and the organization they represent.

Phil Prete made an announcement regarding the upcoming "Operation Medicine Drop" event to be held on Thursday, March 22 at the DENR office on Cardinal Drive Extn. The community is encouraged to drop off unused/unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medication for proper disposal. Operation Medicine Drop helps prevent accidental poisonings and drug abuse while protecting our waters.

Minutes from the previous meeting were circulated to the Coalition – 3 corrections were suggested; Dru Harrison made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected; Kemp Burdette seconded; approval was unanimous.

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

- Rob Moul is working on color-coding aerial maps with features/ideas from the Recreation Committee.
- The committee needs to go back to CAMA regarding permits for paddle trail signage.
- The committee will come back to the full coalition with a draft of maps and ideas before they are finalized and permits are applied for.

**COMMITTEE UPDATES – Education & Outreach – Committee Co-Chair Kemp Burdette**

- Waiting to compile results from the survey that was distributed re: public perception of Eagles Island.
- Committee to work on "generic" presentation for Eagles Island that can be used by coalition members when providing information to the public.

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

- Committee meeting on a monthly basis; have developed list of aspects / targets that will be focus of conservation plan.
- Committee to seek feedback from experts in target areas; Richard Lawrence, Rob Moul, Harry Warren, Scott Pohlman, Andy Wood and Chip Collier. Thank you in advance to experts for providing their feedback, prior to bringing targets to full coalition for discussion and input.
- Presentation on Eagles Island was provided to "Wednesdays in Nature" group at UNCW; information was well received.

**UPDATE – USACE Contact – Chair Phil Prete**

Andy Wood has put Phil in touch with someone from the USACE; may start a small group discussion re: the USACE activities/interest in Eagles Island, and share with the USACE what the EIC is doing. Comment was made that while talking with the USACE, may want to find out more about the status of the proposal to enlarge the turning basin in the Cape Fear River. USACE is working on a dredge material management plan and existing structures on the south end of Eagles Island may be modified to accept more material.

**PANEL DISCUSSION ON COMPATIBLE USES: Hunting and Fishing on and around Eagles Island**

**Fred Gorchess – Senior Law Enforcement Officer for New Hanover County, NC Wildlife Resources Commission**

- Job duties include enforcement of trapping, hunting, boating, and fishing laws in territory
- Additional job duties include facilitating hunter safety courses, investigating boating accidents (NHC is usually at the top of the list for accidents)
- Most hunting activity on Eagles Island will be during duck season



- Previously, local hunters did an annual “deer drive”, but this is no longer done since the nearby Gamelands area has been reduced
- Most hunting will be duck (90%), deer, raccoon; more crab pots popping up in the vicinity of Eagles Island; not much trapping occurring that Gorchess is aware of. True data collection for level of use has not been done...
- Good bit of boating activity occurs around Eagles Island (can run to Castle Hayne); floating debris can be a problem for boat navigation
- If the coalition is looking to bring the public in for hunting activities on Eagles Island, may consider installing a duck blind? Entrances to creeks may be a good location for these structures
- Areas which have the Inland Waters designation – inland fishing laws apply and those that fish need an inland fishing license. Where designation of waters is not posted, it’s the fisherman’s responsibility to know (feeder creeks are typically considered inland waters).
- *Question re: liability issues for property owners if property is not posted?* Gorchess advises hunters - if you do not own the property, or you do not have permission from the landowner, do not hunt these areas. May be a good idea for the EIC to check with an attorney re: liability for landowners. In order to enforce laws re: trespassing, areas must be properly posted
- *Question - should we talk with other agencies re: how they manage user conflicts?* EIC should consider potential conflicts between paddlers and duck hunters. Good spots for duck hunting on the island are limited...
- *Question - examples of places like Eagles Island where there may be restrictions re: uses on certain days?* Gamelands – this would be set up by NCWRC - this would be a way to control activity. WRC is always looking to increase access and Gamelands may be an option... Can establish limits on days when hunting is permitted within gamelands and require permits in certain areas. Keep in mind access to Eagles Island – waters of the state – people would still be able to hunt even when adjacent lands are posted.
- *Leland – can’t discharge a firearm in the city limits, and Town is a bird sanctuary.*

**Chip Collier – Southern District Biological Supervisor, NC Division of Marine Fisheries**

- DMF tries to manage for sustainable harvest and protect critical habitat for anadromous fish species in the Cape Fear River; collect data on fish and fisheries; need to monitor habitat and water quality; analyze data to determine trends (stock assessment to determine sustainability of stock); Eagles Island is associated with critical habitat.
- Three main species discussed - Striped bass (currently no possession in the Cape Fear River); American shad; Atlantic sturgeon (no possession);
- Stock assessment – evaluation of the status/well-being of fish population; from a fisheries management perspective, adequate spawning stock, age structure, and habitat are all key factors.
- Looking at populations since 1889, significant decline in all 3 anadromous fish populations
- Restricted gillnets and other nets in the CFR in 1909 due to by-catch (restrictions have been since lifted).
- Since 1994, have “trip ticket” data that shows the number of fish that have been sold in New Hanover by commercial fisherman
- Will be placing additional restrictions on American shad (consider bag limits) on the recreational/commercial fisheries to allow fish populations to rebuild
- Striped bass... not many are growing large enough to get into the spawning class – likely overfished – no possession of striped bass is permitted in CFR and its tributaries
- American shad... low abundance – likely overfished and overfishing may be occurring
- Atlantic sturgeon... sonically tagging sturgeon – in Brunswick river, have tagged over 50 sturgeon – few have been observed of spawning size (max age is 60) – overfished and will be listed as an Endangered Species as of 4.6.12



- Management – sonic tagging (trying to get spawning individuals and see where they are heading and if they are getting past lock and dams to spawning areas), stocking (conducted by NCWRC – program improved in 2010), lock and dam modifications (improve water quality and habitat)
- *Question re: Atlantic sturgeon listing in April – could this cause the CFR to be shut down to recreational fishing?*  
Not likely – although not being controlled by DMF.
- *Question re: recommendations for management on rice fields to improve fisheries?* These three fish species are not necessarily using the rice field areas... best thing to do is to improve water quality. Flooded hardwoods are good habitat. EIC may also want to consider enhancing habitat for American eels.

#### **COMMITTEE UPDATES – Recreation & Cultural Resources – Committee member Rob Moul**

At last meeting the group reviewed options that the Recreation & Cultural Resources Committee was looking at; trail along Hwy 74/76 was not necessarily the best option (noise, traffic, etc.). Rob shared aerial maps with other ideas from the committee: upland trail 3,600-feet (non-wetland trail) with 1,100-feet to cross from trail to lake feature on the island. Overall mapping shows 18,250-linear feet of blue trails (for paddlers) and 12,700-linear feet of orange trails (can use motorboats). CAMA Major Permit will be required for water trail signage; need to show CAMA what the signs will look like and where they will be placed; USACE will probably exempt the signs from permitting.

Highlighted 5 “mounded” sites on DOT property that may be particularly good areas for overnight camping.

#### **TABLE TOP GREENWAY PLANNING EXERCISE – Sara Burroughs, SageDesign**

- Working to develop a plan for New Hanover County; goal is to provide better connectivity for greenways / blueways
- Objective today is to educate the EIC about the project and to get information for the project; currently in the information gathering stage; lots of plans exist and trying to pull information together into something comprehensive; primary objectives of the plan are to connect “greenspace” to “greenspace” and link parks together
- Project has website (<http://www.wilmingtongreenway.com/>) and Facebook page; please help to distribute information to the community
- *Group provided input/ideas for Ms. Burroughs; additional ideas and feedback can be shared via the website or with her directly at [sara@sagedesign.us](mailto:sara@sagedesign.us)*

**Adjourn - Being** no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:37.