



Cape Fear Arch Quarterly Meeting Notes

November 27th 2012

Jones Lake State Park
4117 Hwy 242 N, Elizabethtown, NC 28337

Partner and supporter updates

Dan Ryan – The Nature Conservancy

Pinch Gut project is nearing completion a 2,000 addition to Green Swamp going to be conveyed to WRC. We are raising money in support of a burn crew. Big thanks for John Ann for supporting that last year.

Tom Hancock – Bald Head Island Conservancy

BHIC Barrier Island Study Center open and we have an active monitoring program on coastal habitats. We are expanding our consulting services and can provide input and monitoring to other coastal communities that might be looking for objective input.

Tony Doster – Resource Management Service

We are working on a wetlands mitigation bank that joins the TNC's property in Brunswick Co. Also working through 2013 harvest plan and trying to get markets in place to move the wood.

Tom Charles – US Army Corps of Engineers

Cape Fear River lock and damns just got finished placing all the rock for the dam and have signed an MOU with Cape Fear River Watch to host environmental education programs. The state wildlife has donated a fancy kiosk for lock and damn one and two with state and federal rules and regulations and the other side will have a life jacket loaner. We will build one or two piers for public to use for fishing.

John Ann Shearer – US Fish & Wildlife Service

FWS partners for fish and wildlife program. I want to highlight the task force that Dan Ryan mentioned. They've accomplished an amazing amount of growing season burning. There's more to be done and they are also partnering with the Sandhills so it's benefiting even more areas. NRCS is being forward thinking is asking for long leaf funds. Presuming there will be authorization for funding for long leaf restoration.

Dave Allen – NC Wildlife Resources Commission

The swain track is a piece of property adjacent to Sunny Point has been protected and is important for habitat for gopher frogs. Gopher frogs are probably the rarest amphibian in the state next to river frogs.

Lane Garner – NC Division of Parks and Recreation

Singletary Lake, White Lake and Bay Tree Lake State Parks. We've started on a RCW habitat improvement project.

Shane Freeman – NC Division of Parks and Recreation

I'll talk to outline what's going on at Jones Lake State Park.

Christine Ellis – Winyah river keeper

Waccamaw River Blue Trail Project. In SC we've applied for National Water Trail designation. We are also a pilot project for the blue ways designation. The goal is to try to get the designation for the entire river. We are also trying to get funding for the Waccamaw River.

Phil Prete – City of Wilmington

Update on the lower Cape Fear Sustainable Communities Consortium. Private, nonprofit, and gov't agencies regional sustainability plan. Have hired an executive director and are getting ready to put boots on the ground. Hired Sage Island to do a branding and marketing program. Also want to mention the city will try to do a burn on Halyburton Park in the city (30 acres). It's unique because it's an urban setting. We've had 2 successful burns so far and are looking towards doing a growing-season burn if this winter's burn is successful.

Sara Babin – The Nature Conservancy

We have Cape Fear Arch stickers. The idea is to spread the word. We also want to save some for some public events that TNC is doing. Also the conservation shapefile has been updated with updates from South Carolina. If you have any questions let me know. I'll look into putting it on the web.

Tom Osborn – Cape Fear Museum

I'm standing in for Jameson whose wife is expecting. We've partnered up to share the culture resources. It's called ____ this summer we'll bring in blood sucking insects from the world. Just about finished with people of the past program -- is given to every New Hanover County 4th grader and really focuses on the long leaf pine.

Jamie Sasser – NC Division of Parks and Recreation

We have hired an ecological burn coordinator, Thomas Crate from Florida. Our seasonal burn team will be on the ground end of December/January.

Hans Christian Rohr – Bladen Lakes State Forest

We own land all around the Jones Lake and Singletary Lake state parks system. We are part of state forest service which has moved from DNR to department of Agriculture last year. Big changes at Bladen Lakes SP. We are generating income we are taking over some positions, education positions and foresters. That's a big deal for us we'll see if we can sustain it over the long run.

Lewis Smith – Bladen County Historical Society

I've been collecting pictures over the last 60 years. I was born just down the road. I've got 185 pictures of Elizabethtown including the first bridge across the Cape Fear including the building of the locks. 8,000 postcards donated to the library (http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc_post/). You can pull up this website and it will have postcards from that town.

Scott Pohlman – NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Couple of different things going on: My work with site across from Eagle Island. I would like to give a quick presentation about what we've come up with so far. Management agreements with Tony from RMS throughout the Cape Fear Region. Prescribed fire council annual meeting coming up in or around Wilmington. We will be looking for others to help us with this. Looking for sites for about 200 people in August 2013.

Kemp Burdette – Cape Fear River Watch

Second announcement that the fish passage at lock and damn one is done so we are going to tag 20 more fish working with Division of Marine fisheries on that. 17 out of the fish we tagged last year still have working batteries and we can track them to see how well the fish passages work. We are pretty hopeful that a spawning habitat restoration grant with NOAA is looking good. That would start this year.

Niel Brooks – City of Leland

We've been doing lot of site development. We have some property with wetlands donated by 5 developers. We're looking to do some education on this property.

Cape Fear Arch Executive Committee

We met a month and a half ago. Neil took a resolution to the town of Leland to become a partner with ARCH. Neil has been instrumental to get some water trails in and around Eagle's island, where the battleship is. The town of Leland bought some of the property and put it in Conservation.

Our typical procedure for getting new signatories is to vote on them.

Neil: The council approved the partnership. The town of Leland is trying to be more progressive.

Phil: Motion to welcome the town of Leland into the Arch: **Unanimous vote in favor**

Executive committee nominations:

Christine Elis and Phil are leaving the executive committee this year. We are expanding membership to 7 members.

Confirmed new members will be:

- Tony Doster (RMS)
- Melanie Doyle (NC Aquarium at Ft. Fisher)

Have asked:

Roger Shew with UNCW

Dan Tufford with University of South Carolina at Columbia

We really need to have connections with institutions that have research tools.

Motion by Phil to recommend these folks for the executive committee.

Dan seconds all in favor: **Unanimous**

We'll let you know when we finalize all that. And we'll have a transitional meeting in January. They'll be serving for 2 years. John, Suzanne and Dan will be staying on for the next cycle.

Upcoming meeting dates

- February 12: Dan has already made some arrangements with Onslow Bight group for a joint meeting in Burgaw. We have a shared boundary with them at the NE Cape Fear River. If anybody has agenda ideas we're all ears.
- May 21: Suzanne will take on that meeting in conjunction with UNCW. Topic for discussion will be economic sustainability and how that works with conservation goals
- August 20: in South Carolina hopefully organized by Dan Tufford. A key feature is that the Arch reaches into South Carolina.
- November 12: is the final meeting To Be Determined and coastal sustainability will be the topic.

Please look at the web page: www.capefeararch.org). We need to thank the people who have been handling that: **Joanne Harcke** has been maintaining it for the last year. Sara will be taking the lead in the 2013. We do get a report showing the traffic -- 122 visits last month. 70 or more were new visits.

Presentations

Shane Freeman, Superintendent, Jones Lake State Park gave a presentation on operations at the park.

Jamie Sasser, Coastal Region Biologist, NC DENR Division of Parks and Recreation, gave a presentation on red cockaded woodpecker and longleaf pine management on state park lands that he covers from Jockey's Ridge to the Lumber River.

Scott: This is really great how can we help you? Jamie: Need labor and funds for herbicides

Dave Allen: What about avoiding the herbicide and cut then burn. Jamie: Problem is that we can't always get to the burn because of a backlog. Bay tree state park hasn't been burned in so long I would worry about losing some mature trees. So it all revolves around limitations around controlled burns. WE need help finding ways to get rid of the hardwood.

JohnAnn: when the state parks hired the burn coordinator that made a wonderful difference. Converting these pine plantations is making a huge difference. Prescribed fire awareness week may help promote the good work you are doing. If the public here likes what they're getting from state parks you might get more resources.

Phil: last meeting we had we had some good luck getting media coverage. Maybe we can target local media to trumpet what you are doing. Jamie: That would be great. Sometimes this hardwood has been there for so long people can misinterpret what we're doing. People need to

understand what the longleaf ecosystem looks like and not what it looks like now. We could use the press for that.

Orton is really helping us and that will be highlighted when the long leaf and the fire commission meets.

Dan: is long leaf the bulk of you active restoration? Jamie: Yes and invasive species as well. Privet is a big issue at Carolina Beach SP. The long leaf is a lot of what I'm focusing on.

Hans Rohr, Forester, Bladen Lake State Forest, gave a quick overview of Bladen Lakes State Forest management.

Scott: are you increasing understory by planting wiregrass. Hans: Yes, we used the AmeriCorps group to do long leaf pine understory restoration. We planted about 200 acres of wiregrass and other warm season grass and also did a lot of Timber Stand Improvement--thinning before it became commercially available. Controlling slash pine was a big part of the restoration. We are still very committed to our longleaf restoration.

Lewis Smith, Bladen County Historical Society, gave a personal, pictorial account of the history of the region and its ties to the Cape Fear River.

Bladen is the third largest county in the state getting closest to being one of the poorest. It's called the "mother county" because 55 counties were cut out of it. It originally went to Tennessee and was established in 1773. Elizabethtown is the 17th oldest in NC. It was originally established 4 miles up from where it is now but Isaac Jones gave the land to the current town. Steam Boats couldn't get much further than here so they would come up the river and then took trains out west. It only consisted of about 9 blocks in town.

The Cape Fear Comes from the union of the Deep and the Haw River. It drains 24 counties.

In 1911 Miss Ferguson came to take pictures for postcards. McGirt Bridge built in 1925. The contract was \$75,000 they used 13 teams of mules to bring dirt. Cables strung across the river brought materials back and forth. It was designed as a railroad bridge and it was blown up in 1984. Materials were sent for scrap into Wilmington. This is the dedication of the upper bridge built in 1973. The river flooded annually and in 1954 the river had a major flood. Jordon Lake reservoir was used to control flooding.

The A.P. Hurt was a ferry to and from Wilmington. There were 110 landings between Wilmington and Fayetteville. You could pick up wood--the boat would blow a whistle 1 in it had freight 2 was if they had a pastor and 3 toots if they had a body on board. The steamboat Thelma burned at Elizabethtown. In 1917 they boats froze together when the river was frozen solid. Elizabeth town was landing #70.

There are three locks on the river all of them in Bladen County. In 1885 congress authorized to have a 4 ft. river from Wilmington to Elizabethtown and 3ft above that. Mules moved dirt down to the waterline using a scoop. The dredge would then come in to keep the locks deep. They would use the train tracks to bring in all the material: lumber and cement. Last raft of logs that went down the river in 1957 it took 11 days to get to Wilmington. On the way they caught a 150 lb. sturgeon in the river.

River lock #1 built in 1914, #2 in 1916, and #3 in the twenties.

During the Civil War when Sherman was traveling down they were going to blow up Wilmington. General Bragg blocked the river with logs.

In 1925 the McGurt Bridge was completed and in 1940 they built a pulp wood dock. Prior to then you couldn't do anything with pulpwood. They either had to carry it to a paper mill at Plymouth or SC. Kerosene was brought on barges until the pipeline was built from Selma. In 1955 Regal was built to get the pulpwood along. In the early 80s Jordon Lake damn was built. Hog farms in the 80s and then Smithfield. They've been taking river out of the aquifer and now they are going to take it out of the river. There's been a moratorium on building new hog farms until they could do something with the manure. It's been about 12 years but I think they've got a solution.

If it hadn't of been for a pine tree and the river we might have been French. It wouldn't have taken much for them to take this back then.

Noteworthy links:

http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc_post/

"The Cape Fear River: Road to Bladen County":

<http://bladenroadwork.pbworks.com/w/page/10748525/FrontPage>

Meeting adjourned for lunch and tour of the naval stores exhibit at Turnbull Lakes State Educational Forest led by Chris Meggs, Ranger, Turnbull Creek State Educational Forest.



