N.C. COASTAL RESERVE and NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OPERATING PROCEDURES

Effective February 2012

Updated October 2013

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WELCOME

This document defines the partnership between the N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve and its Local Advisory Committees, which provide input and recommendations to the Reserve to help the Reserve fulfill its mission and provide relevant programming and effective site management.

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESERVE

The N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve) protects more than 42,500 acres of representative coastal lands and waters such as salt marsh, tidal flat, submerged aquatic vegetation, dune and beach habitats, maritime forest, and peatlands for research, education, and compatible traditional public uses. The Reserve is a program of the N.C. Division of Coastal Management (DCM) and is implemented in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS).

A. N.C. Division of Coastal Management

The DCM works to protect, conserve and manage North Carolina's coastal resources through an integrated program of planning, permitting, education and research. A Division of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR), DCM manages the State's coastal resources with funding from both the State of North Carolina and NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM). The DCM carries out the state's Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), the Dredge and Fill Law and the federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 in the 20 coastal counties, using rules and policies of the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission (CRC). In addition, the Division serves as staff to the CRC. The DCM's initiatives are implemented through the following programs: permitting and enforcement, CAMA land-use planning, public beach and waterfront access, the N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve, and grants for marine sewage pumpout. For more information about the DCM, please visit www.nccoastalmanagement.net.

The NCDENR is the lead stewardship agency for the preservation and protection of North Carolina's outstanding natural resources. The organization, which has offices from the mountains to the coast, administers regulatory and environmental programs designed to protect air quality, water quality, and the public's health. The NCDENR also offers technical assistance to businesses, farmers, local governments, and the public and encourages responsible behavior with respect to the environment through education programs provided at NCDENR facilities and through the state's school system.

B. National Estuarine Research Reserve System

The NERRS is a network of 28 areas representing different biogeographic regions of the United States that are protected for long-term research, monitoring, education and coastal stewardship. Established by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, the reserve system is a partnership program between the NOAA's OCRM and the coastal states. NOAA provides funding, national guidance and technical assistance to the coastal

states with Reserves. Each Reserve is managed on a daily basis by a lead state agency or university, with input from local partners.

The Reserves within the NERRS work with local communities and regional groups to address natural resource management issues, such as non-point source pollution, habitat restoration and invasive species management. Through integrated research and education, the Reserves help communities develop strategies to deal successfully with these coastal resource issues. The Reserves provide adult audiences with training on estuarine issues of concern in their local communities. They offer field classes for K-12 students and support teachers through professional development programs in marine education. The Reserves also provide long-term water quality monitoring, as well as opportunities for both scientists and graduate students to conduct research in a "living laboratory."

The primary goals of the NERRS are as follows (2011-2016 NERRS Strategic Plan):

- Estuaries and coastal watersheds are better protected and managed by implementing place-based approaches at Reserves.
- NERRS scientific investigations improve understanding and inform decisions affecting estuaries and coastal watersheds.
- NERRS education and training increases participants' environmental literacy and ability to make science-based decisions related to estuaries and coastal watersheds.

C. N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve

North Carolina is home to the nation's second largest estuarine system which covers more than 2.9 million acres and contains 9,000 miles of shoreline. This unique system represents two biogeographic regions, the Virginian and the Carolinian, which converge just north of Cape Hatteras. These regions and their diverse range of habitats in North Carolina make it an ideal location for a National Estuarine Research Reserve. In order to capture the full breadth of this diversity, a multi-component Reserve was established for the State as part of the NERRS in the early 1980s. This approach afforded protection of representative estuarine ecosystems present in the State. In 1982 the State of North Carolina received its first federal NOAA grant to establish the North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve (NCNERR). Four areas were selected to form the NCNERR. Three of the components were designated in 1985: Currituck Banks (Currituck County), Rachel Carson (Carteret County), and Zeke's Island (New Hanover and Brunswick Counties), and the fourth, Masonboro Island (New Hanover County), was designated six years later in 1991. The four components are owned in fee simple by the State of North Carolina.

The NCNERR's success in protecting coastal and estuarine habitats for research and education inspired the State to protect additional areas and thus, the N.C. Coastal Reserve was created in 1989 as part of the CAMA. North Carolina state law (General Statutes 113A-129.1-.3; Article 7, CAMA) complements and reinforces the federal NERRS regulations and authorization from the Coastal Zone Management Act by declaring that management of the NCNERR, as part of the Coastal Reserve, is state policy. The 1989 statute also establishes the basic N.C. Coastal Reserve purpose:

> *Important public purposes will be served by the preservation of certain areas in an undeveloped state. Such areas would thereafter be available for research, education, and other consistent public uses. These areas would also continue to contribute perpetually to the natural productivity and biological, economic, and aesthetic values of North Carolina's coastal area.*

The N.C. DENR, formerly the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, promulgated rules in 1986 for the N.C. Coastal Reserve within the N.C. Administrative Code (15A NCAC 07O). These rules were established to further define the purpose, responsibilities, functions, components, and use requirements for the N.C. Coastal Reserve and its sites. The Reserve sites are also designated as State Nature Preserves, which are limited use areas that serve to preserve and portray the natural features unique to the region. Some Reserve sites are also subject to county and municipal zoning regulations.

The purposes of the Reserve are further defined in the N.C. Administrative Code (15A NCAC 07O .0101) as follows:

> (1) Preserve coastal ecosystems representative of the various biogeographic regions and typologies in North Carolina and to make them available for continuous future study of the processes, functions, and influences which shape and sustain the coastal ecosystems;
>
> (2) Provide new information on coastal ecosystem processes to decision makers as a basis for the promotion of sound management of coastal resources;
>
> (3) Provide a focal point for educational activities that increase the public awareness and understanding of coastal ecosystems, effects of man on them, and the importance of the coastal systems to the state and the Nation;
>
> (4) Accommodate traditional recreational activities, commercial fishing, and other uses of the Reserve as long as they do not disturb the Reserve environment and are compatible with the research and educational activities taking place there.

Over the years, six sites were added to the Reserve to complement the four sites of the NCNERR. The N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve is currently comprised of ten sites that span the length of the N.C. coastline: Currituck Banks (Currituck County), Kitty Hawk Woods (Dare County), Buxton Woods (Dare County), Emily and Richardson Preyer Buckridge (Tyrrell and Hyde Counties), Rachel Carson (Carteret County), Permuda Island (Onslow County), Masonboro Island (New Hanover County), Zeke’s Island (New Hanover and Brunswick Counties), Bald Head Woods (Brunswick County), and Bird Island (Brunswick County).

1. Vision and Mission

Vision: Healthy estuaries and coastal watersheds where ecological communities thrive and the human community benefits in North Carolina.

Mission: To promote informed management and stewardship of North Carolina's estuarine and coastal habitats through research, education, and example.

2. Programs

This work is accomplished through the Reserve's research, education, and stewardship programs.

Research:
The Research program addresses scientific and technical aspects of coastal management problems through a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and coordinated research program including site-directed research, monitoring, and the Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Research is conducted on the Reserve sites by staff, government agency partners, and university partners and students. Abiotic and biotic parameters are monitored at select sites to assess the long-term variability and short-term change of site conditions. The Graduate Research Fellowship Program, administered by the NERRS, financially supports relevant, high-caliber graduate research at the NCNERR sites.

Education:
The Education program strives to increase understanding and awareness of estuarine systems and improve decision-making among key audiences to promote stewardship of North Carolina's coastal resources. This program targets K-12 students and teachers, coastal decision-makers, and the general public. Content is delivered through field trips, training workshops, curricula, summer camps, and interpretive and hands-on activities.

Stewardship:
The Stewardship program addresses a wide range of activities including land acquisition, ecological restoration, resource inventories, watershed management projects, endangered species protection, visitor use management, regional planning, policy development and more. The goal of the stewardship program is to protect or enhance the natural integrity of each site within the Reserve and ensure a suitable environment for coastal research and education. This is accomplished through coordination and partnerships with multiple federal, state, local, and independent agencies and organizations. Resource protection efforts are supported by stewardship policies regarding recreation, off-road vehicle access, fishing and hunting, disposal of dredge material, habitat restoration, feral horses, and surveillance, enforcement and maintenance.

D. RESERVE SITES

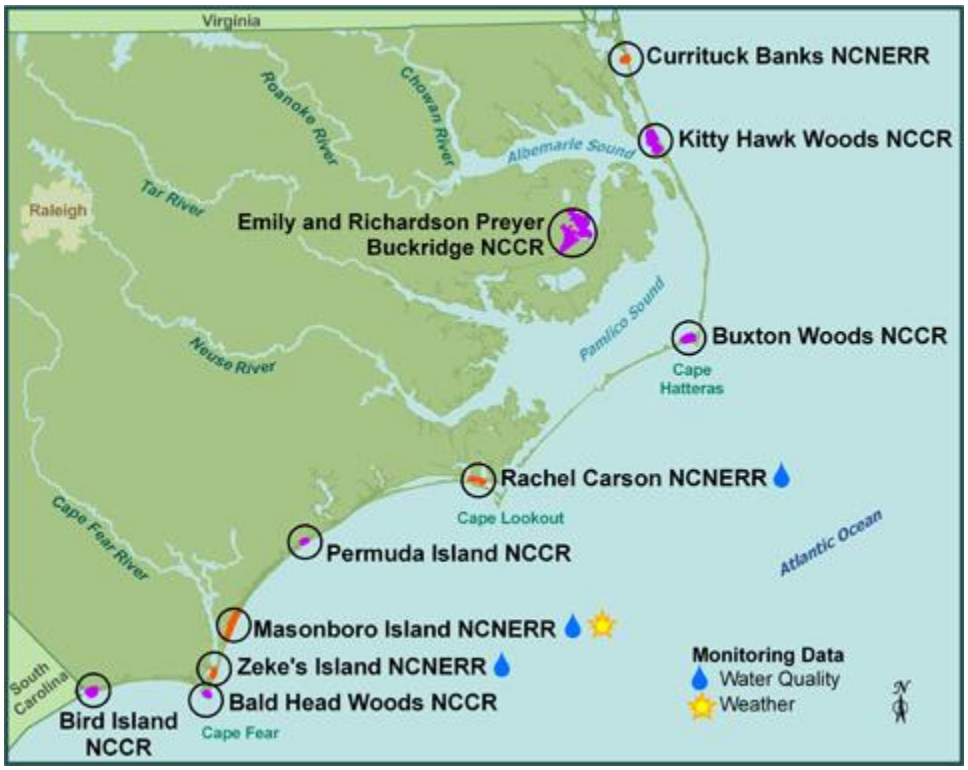
Reserve site specifics are provided in Table 1. A map of the Reserve sites is provided in Figure 1. More detailed information about the sites is available in the NCNERR and individual State site management plans and in the NCNERR Site Profile, all of which are available on the Reserve website.

Table 1. Reserve site specifics.

Reserve Site	Acreage	County(ies)	Component of the NCNERR	Habitats
Currituck Banks	965	Currituck	Yes	Salt marsh, mud and sand flats, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), ocean beach, upland dunes, shrub thickets, maritime forest, interdunal ponds
Kitty Hawk Woods	1,877	Dare	No	Maritime deciduous swamp, maritime forest, salt marsh
Emily and Richardson Preyer Buckridge	27,000	Tyrrell and Hyde	No	Non-riverine swamp forest, peatland Atlantic white cedar, pond pine woodland
Buxton Woods	968	Dare	No	Maritime forest, shrub thicket, dune ridges, permanently flooded freshwater marshes
Rachel Carson	2,315	Carteret	Yes	Salt marsh, mud and sand flats, beach, dune, shrub thicket, maritime forest, SAV, dredge spoil areas
Permuda Island	50	Onslow	No	Shrub thicket, salt marsh
Masonboro Island	5,653	New Hanover	Yes	Salt marsh, mud and sand flats, ocean beach, dune, shrub thicket, dredge spoil areas, grasslands
Zeke's Island	1,635	New Hanover and Brunswick	Yes	Salt marsh, mud and sand flats, shrub thicket, maritime forest, ocean beach, dune
Bald Head Woods	173	Brunswick	No	Maritime forest
Bird Island	1,196	Brunswick	No	Salt marsh, mud and sand flats, ocean beach, dune,

				maritime dry grassland, maritime wet grassland, shrub thicket, maritime shrub swamp

Figure 1. Map of Reserve sites.



E. MANAGEMENT PARTNERS

The Reserve is operated collaboratively with a variety of partners. Please see Section I for a description its primary partners, the DCM and NERRS.

1. NOAA, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

The NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), provides national leadership, strategic direction, and guidance to state and territory coastal programs and National Estuarine Research Reserves. The Office further works with state and territory coastal resource managers to develop a scientifically-based, comprehensive national system of marine protected areas (MPA) and supports effective management and sound science to protect, sustain, and restore coral reef ecosystems. These activities are mandated by the Coastal Zone Management Act, the MPA Executive Order, and the Coral Reef

Conservation Act. The Office is comprised of five divisions: Coastal Programs, Estuarine Reserves, National Policy and Evaluation, MPA Center, and the Coral Program.

2. NOAA, Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research

The Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research (CCFHR) is part of NOAA's National Ocean Service's National Centers for Coast and Ocean Science. Located on Pivers Island in Beaufort, the Reserve is headquartered from this location. The administration building was constructed in 2007 and it houses the NCNERR headquarters and provides quick access to the Rachel Carson site. The building includes office space for 11 Reserve staff, a teaching laboratory, and an auditorium.

3. University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW)

The Reserve has enjoyed a longstanding partnership with the UNCW which has provided administrative and staffing support for the Reserve since 1989. This partnership with UNCW also allows for collaboration with faculty from UNCW's Biology, Marine Biology, and Environmental Studies departments. Faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students conduct research projects on the Reserve's southern sites and Reserve staff consult with faculty on site management and coastal resource issues. The Reserve's southern office is located at UNCW's Center for Marine Science, across the Intracoastal Waterway from Masonboro Island.

4. Friends of the Reserve

Friends of the Reserve (FOR) is a non-profit foundation (501(c)3) that works exclusively to support the N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve, including its sites and programs, for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes. FOR is the authorized 501(c)3 voice to speak on behalf of the Reserve and works to sustain and increase funding for Reserve programs.

For more information about the Reserve's sites and programs, please visit www.nccoastalreserve.net.

II. LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. Purpose and Roles of the Local Advisory Committees

People living along the coast of North Carolina have a variety of interests and perspectives. These various viewpoints play an integral role in shaping the coastal environment. A key component to the success of the Reserve is effective communication and education between the Reserve and the differing perspectives of the local community. To solicit a multitude of perspectives from the general population, as well as from government agencies, the N.C. Administrative Code (15A NCAC 07O.0104) directs DCM to establish a Local Advisory Committee (LAC) for each Reserve site. These committees serve as advisory groups, whereby members work with Reserve staff to

provide input and recommendations on stewardship, research and education activities at the sites, and review policies and implementation strategies.

1. The LACs shall advise and assist the Reserve's stewardship, research, and education programs, including:

    a. Recommend priority site management, research and monitoring, education and interpretive needs that address site and Reserve-wide needs, as well as those that are relevant to local and state issues of concern;

    b. Provide input on acquisition and boundary expansion strategies;

    c. Act as liaisons between the Reserve staff and stakeholders to:

        i. Promote the exchange of perspectives and ideas related to Reserve operations; and
        ii. Inform the general public of program activities within the Reserve and how they relate to Reserve rules, management plans and policies;

    d. Advise Reserve staff on policy matters relating to planning, operation, and use of the Reserve;

    e. Provide input on revisions to the Reserve's rules, management plans and policies; and

    f. Identify opportunities for collaboration.

2. The individual LACs will focus on their respective Reserve site; however, the committees may occasionally address Reserve-wide topics.

3. The LACs may discuss business pertaining to the operation and administration of the committees.

4. Other roles for the committees may be collaboratively developed between Reserve staff and the LACs.

B. <u>Membership</u>

Local advisory committee membership will represent the Reserve program areas, partners and user groups to provide diverse perspectives on management and planning practices and program implementation at the Reserve sites. To accomplish this, membership will be comprised of community members and organizations, and relevant governmental agencies and non-governmental partner organizations. Representation from these groups will vary by committee based on the characteristics and needs of each Reserve site. The Reserve staff shall determine the structure for each committee using the criteria outlined below.

1. Community Members and Organizations

Each committee shall consist of no more than a total of twelve (12) community members and organizations that represent one or more of the following topical areas, as appropriate for the Reserve site.

a. Education (Public, Private or Non-Profit)
b. Research (Public, Private or Non-Profit)
c. Commercial user
d. Recreational user
e. Traditional user (Hunting or Fishing)
f. Adjacent or close proximity property owner
g. Citizen at large
h. Volunteer
i. Non-Profit community organization/interest group

2. Government Agencies

Each committee shall include members from some or all of the following government agencies as appropriate for the Reserve site.

a. N.C. Division of Coastal Management: Permitting and Enforcement and/or Policy and Planning
b. N.C. Division of Aquariums
c. N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries
d. N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
e. N.C. Division of Forest Resources
f. N.C. Division of Water Quality
g. N.C. Department of Cultural Resources
h. N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission: Biological and/or Enforcement Section
i. Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program
j. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
k. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
l. National Park Service, Cape Lookout and Cape Hatteras
m. County or Municipality: Mayor, Council/Commission Member, Town Manager or Planning Department Staff
n. County or Municipality Law Enforcement
o. County or Municipality Parks and Recreation

3. Non-Governmental Partner Organizations

Non-governmental partner organizations either: 1) played an instrumental role in acquisition of the Reserve site and maintain a vested interest in its management; 2) directly support the work of the Reserve through a memorandum of agreement; or 3) conduct approved activities to benefit the Reserve program. Each committee may include members from one or more non-governmental management partner organizations, as appropriate for the Reserve site.

C. Member Selection

Community members and organizations, government agencies, and non-governmental partner organizations shall be appointed by the Secretary of NCDENR. Replacements shall be appointed by the Secretary of NCDENR as needed.

1. Community Membership Selection

a. Candidates for community membership should be able to present and review information and listen to and understand various points of view. Prospective committee members should be familiar with some of the social and economic aspects of the Reserve site communities, be interested in the Reserve's mission and programs, and have some relevant experience with at least one of the interest areas outlined in Section II.B.1 of this document.

b. The membership selection process shall be conducted in a fair and unbiased manner. Each candidate's background, education and relevant experience shall be taken into consideration.

c. The Reserve staff will review committee membership on an annual basis and initiate the application process as needed based on changes in membership. Notice of vacant community member committee seats and solicitation of applications shall be published on the DCM and Reserve websites and press releases will be submitted to local media outlets. Additional notice may be given by such other means as will result in appropriate publicity to interested groups and individuals. Notice of available community member committee seats shall be posted for four (4) calendar weeks.

d. Persons interested in applying for posted openings on committees shall submit a membership application per the directions on the application form.

e. The membership application form can be found on the N.C. Coastal Reserve website at www.nccoastalreserve.net. A copy of the membership application form is also included as Appendix A of this document.

f. Should the Reserve receive multiple applications for a single seat, Reserve staff shall recommend an appropriate representative based on ability to contribute to diverse perspectives on management and planning practices and program implementation based on the characteristics and needs of each Reserve site.

g. Interviews of potential candidates may be conducted as deemed necessary.

h. The Reserve staff will recommend applicants to the Division Director and Secretary of NCDENR for appointment, with the Secretary making appointments from all eligible applicants.

2. Government Agency Membership Selection

a. The agencies identified in Section II.B.2 of this document serving on the committees will be appointed by the Secretary of NCDENR.

b. Appointed government agencies shall designate staff to serve as members of the advisory committees.

3. Non-Governmental Partner Organizations

a. The organizations serving on the committees as defined in Section II.B.3 of this document will be appointed by the Secretary of NCDENR.

b. Appointed non-governmental partner organizations shall designate staff or a representative to serve as members of the advisory committees.

D. Member Responsibilities

Each LAC member shall represent his/her specific topical area, agency, or organization as outlined in the member responsibilities below. The membership responsibilities shall remain consistent with the LACs' Purpose and Roles, as described in Section II.A of this document.

1. Members shall attend LAC meetings.

2. Members shall present and review information, and listen to and understand various points of view.

3. Members shall actively participate in assigned subcommittees, when established.

4. Members shall take the initiative to become educated about issues regarding the Reserve and LAC by reading meeting materials, listening to LAC discussions, and interacting with fellow members and Reserve staff.

5. Members shall report relevant issues of concern to Reserve staff.

6. Members shall make recommendations on issues before the LAC as appropriate.

7. Members shall suggest topics for discussion by the LAC.

8. Members shall inform the public of Reserve activities and programs as opportunities arise and provide referrals to appropriate Reserve staff as requested.

9. Members shall network with stakeholders to help formulate positions on current issues or proposed changes and communicate these positions during appropriate LAC meetings or comment periods.

10. Members shall report innovative and/or outstanding activities of natural resource management as they relate to Reserve management that may be of interest to other LAC members.

11. Members shall provide information, data, and analysis on issues before the LAC based on areas of expertise.

12. Members shall review the meeting minutes and provide comments.

13. Government agency members and non-governmental partner members shall also:

    a. Meet with the appointing body to understand and discuss issues and concerns related to the LAC and Reserve activities and plans. Additionally, members shall agree on the method by which information will be exchanged with the appointing body and the frequency of information exchange.

    b. Review Reserve and LAC policies and proposals to determine how these may affect the appointing agency/organization.

    c. Provide relevant information to the LAC on issues affecting the appointing body.

    d. Maintain ongoing liaison between the appointing body and the LAC.

E. <u>Terms of Service</u>

1. Government agency members will serve at the discretion of their respective agency and will not be subject to a term limit, unless the government agency member is unable to fulfill or complete his/her responsibilities. Vacancies will be filled in accordance with Section II.C.2.b.

2. Non-governmental partner organization members will serve at the discretion of their respective organization and will not be subject to a term limit, unless the

organization member is unable to fulfill or complete his/her responsibilities. Vacancies will be filled in accordance with Section II.C.3.b.

3. Community members and organizations serving on the local advisory committee as of the effective date of this document will serve through December 31, 2014. All new members will begin their term upon appointment by the Secretary and will end their term on December 31, five years after the year of their appointment. Members may apply for consecutive and non-consecutive terms per the established selection process.

4. Reserve staff, in consultation with the Division Director and the NCDENR Secretary, is empowered to notify a member and the committee any time a member has missed three (3) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings and request that a new appointment be made. Member absences approved by Reserve staff for good cause shall not count as missed meetings.

5. Any member of the committee may be removed by the Secretary if it is determined that the member is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities as outlined in Section II.D.

6. Should any community member or organization seat become vacant during an appointment term, that position shall be advertised and posted in accordance with Section II.C.1 of this document. The appointed member shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacancy.

F. Meetings, Operations and Administration

1. Reserve staff shall serve as chairs of the committees.

2. Meetings shall be held at the call of the Reserve staff.

3. The committees shall meet at least annually; however, additional meetings may be called as deemed necessary by Reserve staff.

4. When providing recommendations to the Reserve staff, members are expected to express opinions based on the community, agency, or organization they represent.

5. All committee meetings are open to the public.

6. Members of the public shall be permitted to present oral or written statements on any item on the agenda during a designated public comment period (during the meeting), or present new items relevant to the Reserve. Public comments shall be limited to 5 minutes per person.

7. Notice of each committee meeting, including the time, place and agenda, shall be published at least two weeks prior to the meeting on the DCM and Reserve websites. Press releases regarding upcoming committee meetings shall be

submitted to local media outlets. Additional notice may be given by such other means as will result in appropriate publicity to interested groups and individuals.

8. Meeting minutes shall be prepared by Reserve staff and shall be available to the general public. Copies of the minutes shall be available online at www.nccoastalreserve.net.

9. Members of the committees shall not be reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses by the Reserve or DCM.

10. These Operating Procedures shall be reviewed after they are in effect for one year, and thereafter every five years. The Reserve will solicit comments from the committee members to determine if changes to this document are necessary, and make changes as appropriate.

G. Standard Order of Business

1. Call to Order/Roll Call for Members

2. Reserve-wide Update(s)

3. Site Update(s)

   a. Old Business (Follow-up from previous meetings' action items)

   b. New Business

4. Roundtable

5. Public Input

6. Final Comments, Review of Action Items, and Wrap-up

7. Adjourn

APPENDIX A: Local Advisory Committee Member Application

N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Member Application

The N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve is seeking applicants for published community member and organization vacancies for its Local Advisory Committees who can present and review information impartially, listen to and understand various points of view, and provide a voice for and to the community. The Local Advisory Committee Operating Procedures document, available at www.nccoastalreserve.net, outlines the roles and responsibilities of members and the selection process. If you are interested in applying for a vacancy, please fill out the following information and submit this form along with contact information of two personal references and a resume or CV to the appropriate site manager.

Northern Sites Manager (Currituck Banks, Kitty Hawk Woods, Buxton Woods)
983 West Kitty Hawk Rd., Kitty Hawk, N.C. 27949
Buckridge Site Manager (Buckridge)
2893 Highway 94 South, Columbia, N.C. 27925
Central Sites Manager (Rachel Carson, Permuda Island)
101 Pivers Island Road, Beaufort, N.C. 28516
Southern Sites Manager (Masonboro Island, Zeke's Island, Bald Head Woods, Bird Island)
5600 Marvin K. Moss Lane, Wilmington, N.C. 28409

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