

**MINUTES
HERITAGE TRUST ADVISORY BOARD
NOVEMBER 5, 2008
EDISTO BEACH STATE PARK**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Campbell Coxe (Chair)
Julia Krebs
Beth Grace
Sonny King
Jake Rasor
Henry Fair
Rodger Stroup
States Clawson (for Joe Taylor)
Mike McShane
Joel Felder (for Gene Kodama)
Henry Fair
Irvin Pitts (for Chad Prosser)

OTHERS PRESENT

Barry Beasley
Ken Prosser
Kay Daniels
Julie Holling
Herrick Brown
Kathy Boyle
Bert Pittman
Breck Carmichael
Tim Ivey
Scott Phillips
Dean Harrigal
Phil Maier
Marian Brailsford
Deanna Ruth
Tom Mason
Sam Chappellear
Elizabeth Johnson
Harry Shealy
Sean Taylor
Martha Zierdan
Robert Boyles

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Frampton
Steve de Kozlowski (Interim)
Fritz Hamer (for William Calloway)

Call to Order

Campbell Coxe called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and requested they introduce themselves.

Updates from the Director

Barry Beasley announced that Ken Prosser has moved to the Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division as the Assistant Deputy Director. He worked for Heritage Trust for 15 years and was involved in every aspect of land purchasing for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The dedication of Althama Town Heritage Preserve was held on October 21, 2008. It was well attended.

Buford Mabry worked out a protection agreement for the earthworks at Palmetto Fort. We are not holding an easement on this property.

The Conservation Bank has lost all funding due to the State's budget problems. Marvin Davant is working to see if the Bank's commitments will be honored. Mike McShane reported that there was a \$488 million budget cut. He encouraged the Heritage Trust congressional appointees to correspond with the legislators on behalf of the Conservation Bank. The Bank is very important to Heritage Trust. Beth Grace suggested that a list of talking points be sent to the Board members along with a list of large properties.

Dr. Beasley thanked Irvin Pitts for making the arrangements for the meeting and lodging. Mr. Pitts stated that SC Parks Recreation and Tourism was very proud of the Edisto Beach Interpretive Center. The center was built with a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and in cooperation with the DNR.

He also reported that the Harry Hampton Fund had provided the meals for this meeting. He also thanked Julie Holling and Kay Daniels for their help with this meeting and arranging the meals.

SC Forestry Commission's State Forest System

Scott Phillips gave a report on how the Forestry Commission has modified their business processes on the state forest system and implemented new technologies to enhance their management of these state lands. The South Carolina State Forest system was created in 1939 when they began managing their two largest state forests, Manchester State Forest and Sandhills State Forest. The system now includes five forests totaling 91,000 acres. Previously, 75% of their budget came from receipts of forest product sales, and the remaining 25% was from state appropriated funds. In 2002, there was increasing pressure on the state forest system to become self-sustaining. A long range plan was implemented which included three things: 1) an improved inventory program of the state forest system; 2) new utilization of GIS information systems; and 3) harvest scheduling. The forest system is now 100% self sustaining through their efforts of this long range plan.

ACE Basin Task Force Overview

Dean Harrigal reported this year was the 20th anniversary of the ACE Basin. The focus areas program was developed under the umbrella of the North America Waterfowl Management Plan.

The initial idea behind the focus area concept was to get grassroots support for wildlife habitat conservation in a given local area. The emphasis was on waterfowl but the focus soon switched from ducks and wetlands to protecting our natural landscape. More than 180,000 acres of land have been protected from commercial development in the ACE Basin's 20 years. Two of the most significant events happened in the ACE Basin last year. Brosnan Forest which is 12,000 acres has been protected by a conservation easement and Botany Bay at 4,630 acres has become fully available to the DNR and was opened to the public in July. DNR is planning on working with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and private landowners in reintroducing the red-cockaded woodpecker in the ACE Basin. Hopefully, this will begin within the next two years.

National Estuarine Research Reserve Program (NERR)

Phil Maier stated NERR works closely with the DNR. NERR does land protection, research and management of resources, and outreach and education. NERR is a network of protected areas. There are 27 areas nationwide and two of them are in South Carolina: the ACE Basin and the Baruch Lab. The areas are established to protect and improve our coastal lands. NOAA oversees the program.

Approval of August 7, 2008 Minutes

Mike McShane stated there were several changes to be made. He gave his suggested changes to Chairman Coxe. Changes will be made and the amended minutes will be sent to the Board members.

Edisto Island Open Land Trust

Marian Brailsford, Executive Director, gave a brief report on the history of the trust. The trust has been in operation since 1994 and the first conservation easement was signed in 2002. The land trust has protected 16,500 acres of property on Edisto Island. This is the largest amount of acreage protected on any inhabited island on the coast of South Carolina. Over 40% of the available acreage of Edisto Island is preserved and the trust hopes that will climb to 50% within the next two to three years. The passion of the trust is to keep the essence and rural character of Edisto Island. They are seeking a national scenic highway designation for Highway 174. If this designation is achieved it will protect the rural and historic qualities of the island.

Update on Poinsett Bridge

Sean Taylor gave an update on the Poinsett Bridge stabilization and public access project. This property is managed primarily by the Greenville County Recreation District (GCRD). GCRD has been awarded TEA-21 federal grant funds and Parks and Recreation Development (PARAD) state grant funds for development of a parking area and to control the erosion currently damaging the bridge. GCRD, in consultation with the SCDNR and the SC Department of Archives and History State Historic Preservation Office (SCDAH SHPO), have had Arbor Engineering develop plans for a retaining wall and parking lot adjacent to the bridge. The plans have been reviewed and commented on by SCDAH SHPO as required by Section 106, 36 CFR 800.2 of the National Historic Preservation Act and SC Code of Laws Title 60, Chapter 12, Protection of State Owned

or Leased Historic Properties. All parties have agreed that by all the plans will not alter the historic fabric of the bridge, will reduce the effects of erosion, provide public and handicap access, public parking and deter vehicular access to the bridge. Currently the plan is out for bids. Depending on the costs Heritage Trust may need to add some monies to supplement the TEA-21 funds for this construction.

Lighthouse Inlet Management Plan Update

Sean Taylor stated that this management plan had been approved by the DNR Board but it has since been extensively revised. It was presented as information only. A detailed synopsis of the property's history has been added to the plan as well the results of a vegetative communities and animal species survey. Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission (CCPRC) has responsibility for day-to-day management of the property. CCPRC plan to construct an interpretive center and trails as soon as funds become available.

Update on Region 4 Management Activities

Deanna Ruth, Project Manager for DNR Region 4, updated the Board members on the many activities on the 59,154 acres she manages (does not include Hamilton Ridge and Botany Bay). This year there was a record number of wood stork nesting pairs at Dungannon. The bald eagle nest at Lewis Ocean Bay consistently fledges two young. In 1998, mitigation was entered into with the US Fish and Wildlife Service by Burroughs and Chapin for red-cocked woodpeckers on Lewis Ocean Bay. Two active clusters and three inactive clusters, for a total of seven clusters, were found. In the last three years, six birds per year have been released. Seven birds fledged this year and up to 10 clusters were found on the property. All red-cockaded woodpecker trees have been painted with white bands. In Horry County, 42 miles of firebreaks were installed on DNR properties. In 2007, 188 calls concerning black bears were received by her office. A study was completed earlier this year and it is thought that Lewis Ocean Bay may have the largest bear population on the east coast.

Report on Dedicating DNR Properties as Heritage Preserves

Barry Beasley reported that at the Board meeting at Belfast in August, a question was asked about spending Heritage Trust dollars and not dedicating the property. The cap for Heritage Trust properties is 150,000 acres. Any time Heritage Trust dollars are spent, whether the property is dedicated or not, the acreage counts against the cap. Currently there are 82,000 acres in the Heritage Trust system. If Hamilton Ridge, Woodbury, and the Marsh tract are counted, the amount rises to 110,000 acres against the cap. Existing regulations were looked at and some inconsistencies were seen. Dr. Beasley stated that he and Breck Carmichael had reviewed how dedication could be impacted by existing regulations.

Mr. Carmichael stated there were four options: 1) do not dedicate any of the new properties; 2) dedicate all the properties; 3) pick out areas worthy of dedication on each property, or 4) carve out the bottomlands or some other special feature. The easiest thing to do would be to dedicate

all of it. There is an interest in dedicating the newly acquired properties. However, Mr. Carmichael recommended waiting until existing timber contracts expire. There appeared to be consensus on this point. The issue will come back to the Board in the future for further discussion.

Project Updates

Dr. Beasley reported that the addition to Forty-acre Rock, the Cloninger tract, would be closed today. The first phase of the purchase of Belfast was closed in October. Our commitment to the Lighthouse Inlet purchase is \$315,000. The management plan has been rewritten and now we need to get an attorney to do a title opinion. After this we can send the funds to Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission. The Fort Fairlawn project that was presented at the last Board meeting by the Trust for Public Land has had no activity.

Budget Overview

Barry Beasley reported that the current balance in the Heritage Land Trust Fund was \$7.8 million. He stated that approved operational expenses for the current fiscal year were \$2.2 million and current approved project commitments totaled \$927,000. Mr. Beasley noted that one pending commitment totaled \$320,000, and remaining funds after deductions for all expenditures and commitments was \$4.3 million.

Executive Session

At this time, Dr. Krebs made a motion that the Board hold an executive session to discuss contractual and legal matters. Mr. Stroup seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Return to Regular Session

Dr. Krebs made a motion that the Board return to regular session. Mr. Fair seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Dr. King made a motion to increase the budget for a property acquisition in Barnwell County. Mr. Rasor seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

2009 Meeting Dates/Sites

The Board meets quarterly on the first Thursday of each month. The following dates are set for 2009: February 5, May 7, August 6, and November 5. Dr. Beasley suggested if any member had any ideas of where they wanted to meet please feel free to let him know.

Mr. McShane reminded the Board members about the Legislative Reception given by the DNR for the legislators. It will be held on Tuesday, February 17 and he encouraged all members to attend and interact with legislators.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be brought before the Heritage Trust Advisory Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned.

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