

# Crossroads

The following article is by Crossroads Board member Jess Hawkins, a member of the County Water Access Committee. Jess was recently awarded the Order of the Longleaf Pine for service to the state and was appointed to the Marine Fisheries Commission.

## **Water Access for Carteret County.**

The Carteret County Public Water Access Committee is an advisory committee to the Carteret County Board of Commissioners. The committee is composed of several citizens from different areas and with various occupations or experience. The chairman is Tom Steepy. They advise the commissioners on potential sites to build boat ramps and boat access sites in the county. The county has appropriated \$400,000 - \$500,000 to help acquire sites. The committee usually tries to partner with other municipalities and to help acquire state or federal grants to maximize use of the county taxpayers' monies. The committee meets the first Thursday of each month at 7:00pm at the train depot in Morehead City. The meetings are open to the public and public advice is encouraged.

Some of the projects the committee has been involved in to date are listed. The county has committed monies and acquired a grant to greatly expand the boat ramp near the airport in west Beaufort. Several ramps will be constructed to face the bay and the parking lot will be revamped. The state Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) will partner with the county to build the ramps and upgrade the facility. The project is planned for completion in 2008 or 2009.

The county had also partnered with the town of Morehead City to help construct several boat ramps and expand the current fishing pier at the base of the Morehead City-Radio Island bridge. The town is applying for several sources of state monies to complete the project. The county has committed \$100,000 a year for 5 years towards the project. The WRC is willing to commit \$1 million if the town/county

can secure approximately 200 spaces for parking. Partial monies for dredging have been secured by the town. Plans call for several ramps.

The county has agreed to partner with the Town of Newport to attempt to build a ramp(s) in the vicinity of the town for use of boaters wanting to navigate Newport River and vicinity. The county agreed in principal to support one third of the costs of the ramp facility (will also try to construct docks), The WRC will support one-third with construction and management, and the Town of Newport will support one third of costs. The town will be applying for monies from several potential sources.

The committee has explored several potential sites in western Carteret County. A potential facility near the Emerald Isle bridge was rejected by the Department of Transportation after a hearing held by the WRC and environmental studies and a traffic study funded by the WRC. The committee is still exploring several potential sites in western Carteret County.

The committee has also discussed potential ramps in eastern Carteret County. The Town of Beaufort made a presentation on their public access projects.

The county has a strategic plan documenting public access sites and needs. It is available from the County Parks and Recreation Department.

The committee welcomes your advice and attendance at the meetings.

## **Stormwater Runoff Rules.**

The **good news** is that the Environmental Management Commission has adopted a new set of Stormwater Rules. These call for increased protection from runoff, especially within ½ mile of shellfish waters, where the limit on impervious surface without stormwater controls is decreased from 25% to 12%. With higher densities, rainfall from a one-year, 24 hour event (about 3.5 in. in most of the county) must be controlled. Outside a half-mile of shellfish waters, the low-density threshold is

25%. Greater density must control a 1.5 inch rainfall event.

Other new provisions include increased buffers of 50 feet from the water for new development; a threshold of 10,000 square feet for new commercial development to come under the rules; a one-acre threshold for residential development (between this limit and 10,000 sq. ft. BMPs to control runoff must be installed); and wetlands can not be included in impervious surface calculations.

The **bad news** is that there appears to be a concerted effort underway to gut the new rules by legislative action in the upcoming short session of the Legislature—a move the environmental community will fight. We will keep you informed.

### **Climate change: A guide for the perplexed.**

The following note is from the June 8, 2007 newsletter of the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments:

Our planet's climate is anything but simple. All kinds of factors influence it, from massive events on the Sun to the growth of microscopic creatures in the oceans, and there are subtle interactions between many of these factors. Yet despite all the complexities, a firm and ever-growing body of evidence points to a clear picture: the world is warming, this warming is due to human activity increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and if emissions continue unabated the warming will too, with increasingly serious consequences. Yes, there are still big uncertainties in some predictions, but these swing both ways. For example, the response of clouds could slow the warming or speed it up. With so much at stake, it is right that climate science is subjected to the most intense scrutiny. What does not help is for the real issues to be muddied by discredited arguments or wild theories. So for those who are not sure what to believe, here is a round-up of some common climate myths: <http://environment.newscientist.com/channel/earth/dn11462>.

### **Thoughts for the New Year.**

We all know the importance of reusing and recycling. Here is a suggestion. When

buying paper products, look for recycled paper. We have noticed recently that the Marcal Company is making toilet paper, paper napkins and paper towels from **recycled** paper. Their products are found in many grocery and department stores. Please look for them when buying these paper products.

One important aspect of environmental degradation and global warming is simply our ever-mounting population. We wish that more advocacy groups and opinion-influencing organizations were more concerned about this topic. It is hard to imagine how we can maintain a livable environment or feed everyone as our population continues to explode.

### **2008 Annual Meeting.**

Watch for news of our upcoming Annual Meeting. We are planning an interesting program focusing on what individuals can do to help preserve and enhance our environment. We will be announcing place and program shortly. This is one you won't want to miss.

### **Crossroads News.**

Please take a look at the first line of your address to see where you stand on dues. We depend on our faithful dues-paying members for the funds we need to keep this all-volunteer organization going. Everyone is a vital part of Crossroads and we thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Former President and long-time Board member Don Hoss has retired from the Board. His replacement is John Merriner who recently retired from the NOAA-Beaufort lab where he was a professional fisheries biologist for about 25 years. Earlier he worked for 12 years at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point, VA (as marine scientist in fisheries research and a graduate faculty member at the College of William and Mary). His experiences in Carteret County date to the mid 1960s; since then population growth and housing development/expansion have changed many Carteret communities and inshore/estuarine environments from the more pristine state of his early encounters. His main interests are in habitat and fisheries issues.