



# CARTERET COUNTY

---

## CROSSROADS

Newsletter # 132 August 2009 [www.carteretcrossroads.org](http://www.carteretcrossroads.org) PO Box 155, Beaufort, NC 28516 252-729-2521

---

### Update on Carteret County Land Use Plan, by Crossroads President Mark Hooper

The 2005 Carteret County CAMA Land Use Plan was submitted to the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) for certification at their June 24-25, 2009 meeting. We at Carteret County Crossroads have been very active and vocal in our opposition to changes that our County Commissioners have made to this plan. In our formal comment letter to the CRC, we addressed a number of issues, the most important being *elimination of effective policies, flawed public participation process, and the use of outdated material*. Please find the full text of our comment letter at our website, [www.carteretcrossroads.org](http://www.carteretcrossroads.org). The County Plan received conditional approval from the CRC, but must address concerns brought forward by one of the members of the CRC, Melvin Shepard. Crossroads' concerns were mentioned at the meeting, but no formal action was taken to address the issues we brought forward.

Our local government has a long history of not embracing the overall concept of the CAMA Land Use Plan process. Required updates are routinely left on the "back burner" for as long as possible. Work on the 2005 update was started in September 2003 and scheduled to be fully complete in September 2005. The public adoption hearing for this plan was held in April 2009. This is a major reason why, when finally presented to the public, the material was seriously out of date. Our local government pays lip service to the idea that one should plan for growth with concern for long range effects and protection of the environment but fails to recognize that a good LUP is one way to achieve this goal.

There is a complex relationship between the private property rights of landowners and stewardship of public trust areas such as the estuarine waters of Carteret County. This relationship is magnified in our county, as nearly half of the area bounded by our county lines are estuarine waters with a rich and long tradition of supporting viable commercial and recreational fisheries and a tremendous tourism industry tied to these waters of the "Crystal Coast." There must be some balance between sound environmental policy and economic expansion.

In summary, our organization, Carteret County Crossroads, lost the battle of the 2005 Land Use Plan. Numerous policies that were praised as being effective in protecting water quality in the previous plan were removed from the 2005 update. We spoke at public hearings, wrote Letters to the Editor, communicated with Division of Coastal Management staff, and stayed engaged in the long drawn out process. But in the end, the policies were eliminated and the 2005 Plan is weaker in terms of protection for our local environment. I apologize, as President, for not being able to keep these effective policies on the books.

---

**In Memoriam** – Carteret County lost two dedicated environmental advocates in recent months with the deaths of John Costlow and Jim Stephenson. **John Costlow**, former Director of the Duke Marine Lab and Mayor of Beaufort, applied his scientific expertise and leadership skills in the service of Carteret County's environment in many ways, and over many decades. It was under his leadership in 1980 that Crossroads first came together as a group to protect our local environment, and with some of his projects—like securing the preservation of what was to become the Rachel Carson National Estuarine Research Reserve—he left a legacy that has come to define the natural beauty of Carteret County.

We, with the rest of the environmental community, were shocked and saddened to hear of **Jim Stephenson's** recent death. As policy director and legislative lobbyist for the North Carolina Coastal Federation, Jim was "a terrific advocate for the conservation community," in the words of Dick Bierly, who remembers Jim as "thorough, bright, analytical and persistent." Jim's method was effective and fascinating to observe. Joe Ramus recalls the pleasure of watching Jim work during the recent Coastal Stormwater Rules Stakeholder Process: "Like a shepherd, he understood the motivations of an individual's movement and intercepted it without threat. His genius was the net movement of the flock in a desired direction, in this case better stormwater rules." Dick Bierly adds, "Jim was not interested in seeing his name in the paper but to educate our public officials on the importance of protecting our natural resources."

Their methods could not have been more different—John, the charismatic leader with a presence and voice that drew attention wherever he went, and Jim, who found advantage in keeping a low profile and preferred to work behind the scenes—but they both made important contributions to our environment. As members of Carteret County Crossroads, our best tribute to Jim and John would be to intensify our efforts and find effective ways to redirect the current trend in local environmental policymaking toward one that better reflects the principles of environmental stewardship.

---

## NC Coastal Wind Energy News, by Steph Miscovich

**UNC Feasibility Study** – In July, a UNC team led by Dr. Harvey Seim completed a 9-month study to assess the feasibility of utility-scale wind turbines in the Sounds and off the coast of North Carolina. In addition to researching legal, economic and regulatory issues, the study assessed the spatial distribution of factors affecting site selection, including the wind resource adequate for utility-scale wind farms and a range of limitations including major ecological, fishery, navigation and military airspace conflicts, sound and ocean bottom suitability and electrical transmission infrastructure. These data were integrated into a geographic information system (GIS) to identify areas that remain viable for wind energy development. The resulting map graphically presents the findings of the study: Large areas in Federal waters off the NC coast—particularly Raleigh Bay and Onslow Bay—appear well-suited and promising for wind energy development. In State waters (the Sounds and offshore within 3-miles of the coast) the area that appears feasible for further study is limited to the eastern portion of Pamlico Sound. North Carolina's 2009-10 Budget includes an appropriation to fund a continuation of this investigation, including a pilot program with three turbines. View the UNC report at [www.climate.unc.edu/coastal-wind](http://www.climate.unc.edu/coastal-wind).

**Local and State Regulatory Framework** – 2008 saw much activity at the local level regarding potential onshore wind energy development, resulting in a comprehensive **Carteret County Tall Structures Ordinance**, ratified in November 2008, that allows utility-scale wind energy facilities in the more remote parts of the county but prohibits them in populated areas. (In contrast to the LUP process Mark describes above, our local government was proactive on this issue and included an extensive public participation process.) In the end, lack of a sufficient wind resource and major military airspace conflicts—not the Tall Structures Ordinance—eliminate Carteret County as a viable location for utility-scale wind development. See particularly the wind resource assessment in the UNC study for clear information on this issue.

At the State level, **Senate Bill 1068—Permitting of Wind Energy Facilities** was recently passed in the Senate and will be considered by the House next spring. The bill establishes a permitting process for wind energy projects with a rated capacity of 3MW or more, to be administered by the CRC in the coastal region and DENR in the rest of the state. The bill as passed by the Senate authorizes local wind ordinances that may set more restrictive requirements and, in a dramatic turn of events, includes an amendment that effectively bans utility-scale wind turbines in the western part of the State.

---

## Your thoughts about Sea Level Rise in NC? NC Division of Coastal Management Wants to Know

The NC Division of Coastal Management invites you to take an online survey designed to assess public perceptions of the impact of sea level rise in NC. Part of a multi-agency effort to address potential responses to sea level rise on a state level, the survey will gauge public perceptions of risk from sea level rise, what stakeholders believe should be done to address the potential impacts and who should be responsible for addressing those impacts. Survey responses will be collected until August 31, and the results will be presented at a future CRC meeting and posted online.

**Take the survey** by visiting [www.nccoastalmanagement.net](http://www.nccoastalmanagement.net) and selecting the first link under "What's New."

---

## Crossroads News

**Joe Ramus** has resigned from our Board of Directors to become more active on the Board of the NC Coastal Federation. We thank Joe for his committed work and his recent service as Secretary, and we're pleased he'll remain an active member of our Advisory Board. At Board elections held in March **Mark Hooper** was reelected President; **John Merriner**, VP; **Nancy Veitch**, Secretary; and **Irv Hooper**, Treasurer. In April we welcomed new Board member **Gabriele Onorato**, VP of Acquisitions at L. Harvey & Son Farm Management, a Kinston-based company that provides equipment and supplies to agricultural producers. Before joining L. Harvey & Son, Gabriele spent 25 years as manager of the 51,000-acre Open Grounds Farm (OGF) in Carteret County. At OGF Gabriele's life-long interest in the environment led him to be proactive in minimizing the agricultural impact on the surrounding ecosystem. He introduced methods such as Integrated Pest Management, the exclusive use of post-emergence herbicides (which have a very short half-life and are applied in much smaller amounts than pre-emergence herbicides) and variable rate fertilizer application based on the analysis of a close grid of GPS-tagged soil samples. During his tenure at OGF, Gabriele also expanded the collaboration begun by his predecessor, Livio Ferruzzi, between OGF and the local scientific community, principally Dr. Bill Kirby-Smith of the Duke Marine Lab. Since 1974, a number of on-farm water-quality assessment projects have provided valuable independent data on the relationship between the farm's agricultural runoff and the water quality of the receiving water bodies. Gabriele also brings to the Crossroads Board many years of experience with the local business and economic development community: he has served on many local Boards, including the Carteret County Economic Development Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Carteret County Steering Committee.

Board member **Irv Hooper**, our indefatigable newsletter editor for most of the past 29 years, has of late become, indeed, fatigued by the role. This issue marks the first under the new editor, Board member **Steph Miscovich**. We thank Irv for his many years of dedication to this organization and his continuing involvement as Treasurer and active Board member.

The Board continues working to improve communications with and inspire involvement by our members and friends. We want to hear from you. The monthly Board meetings (2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday each month) are open to everyone and are the principle venue for communication and collaboration among members. Don't worry, Crossroads Board meetings are characterized by stimulating discussions, not administrative tedium. Join us!