



West Craven Highlights

News From Along The Banks Of The Neuse



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Down East Refuges, Parks Allow 'Needed Escape'

Escaping to less civilized worlds from time to time is an idea that appeals to most of us, and in the Down East region there are many such worlds to choose from. The central and northern Coastal Plain is home to over 30 large refuges and natural areas, most of which are easily available for camping, hiking and other respites from the workaday world.

Despite this variety of places to choose from, though, many people are unaware of the location or accessibility of the parks. In order to familiarize more Coastal Plains residents with the natural areas here, this column will briefly describe a few, and will list the

locations of the remaining ones.

— Alligator River Refuge (Dare County): This nearly 200,000-acre tract in mainland Dare represents the state's best remaining coastal swamp forest. Extensive pocosins, vast stands of loblolly pines and white cedar, and miles of blackwater creeks create a true wilderness that serves as the last major habitat in eastern North Carolina for large predators like black bear and red wolves. There are no established camping areas in the refuge and access is basically limited to waterways or old logging roads, so the refuge is not for tenderfeet. In terms of size and diversity, however, this refuge is unques-

tionably one of the most important natural habitats left in the southeastern United States.

— Merchant's Millpond (Gates County): Now a magnificent inland swamp forest, this 2,600-acre park began as a grist mill with a manmade dam over 175 years ago. The pond itself covers some 600 acres and is surrounded by cypress and tupelo gums, with some stands scattered through the open water. Over 160 species of birds and a variety of mid-sized mammals make their home at the millpond. Hiking and canoeing are easily managed at the park, which is among the most beautiful in the Coastal Plain.

— Goose Creek (Beaufort County): Though not as large as other parks (1,300 acres), Goose Creek is an excellent example of an estuarine wetland and upland pine forest. It is one of the few large habitat areas left on the Pamlico River, and is home to such species as osprey and red-cockaded woodpeckers. The park is excellent for day hiking and overnight camping, and, like Merchant's Millpond, is set up for interpretive nature study.

— Cliffs of the Neuse (Wayne County): Located along the fall line where the Piedmont becomes the Coastal Plain, this park features a 100-foot high cliff rising over the Neuse River. The cliff

exposes layers of sedimentary deposits which have formed over millions of years and show the many changes the Coastal Plain has undergone through the ages. Several forest types are scattered over the park's 600 acres, and there are visitor exhibits describing the geologic history of the area.

— Rachel Carson Sanctuary (Carteret County): This park is composed of small islands, shoals and salt marshes straight across the Intracoastal Waterway from Beaufort. Of estuarine character, the sanctuary is filled with over 200 species of birds, including osprey, plovers, terns, hawks, pelicans and loons. Feral horses

also inhabit Carrot Island, and marine and estuarine mammals are frequently seen. The sanctuary is easily accessible by a short boat ride from Beaufort. Research and education are two primary activities which occur in the sanctuary.

Obviously not every park in the Down East region can be detailed in this space. However, the following county-by-county list will show the additional public-access natural areas we have to choose from. The N.C. Department of Parks and Recreation can supply further information about these areas.

(See RIVERS, Page 5)

Jobless Rates Increase

RALEIGH — February unemployment rates decreased in Craven, Jones and Lenoir counties and increased in Pamlico County when compared to unemployment rates in February 1988, according to figures released by the N.C. Employment Security Commission in Raleigh.

Craven County's unemployment rate fell from 4.3 percent in February 1988 to 3.3 percent in February 1989. There were 1,040 people unable to find employment out of a work force totaling 31,470. In February 1988, the labor force numbered 30,310 and 1,300 were without jobs.

Jones County's unemployment rate decreased from 5.2 percent in February 1988 to 3.7 percent in February 1989. The February 1989 work force totaled 4,320 and there were 160 of that labor pool without jobs. There was a labor force of 4,250 in February 1988 and 220 could not find work.

Lenoir County's unemployment rate fell from 5.4 percent in February 1988 to 4.6 percent in February 1989. The county's work force totaled 29,580 in February 1989 and 1,360 were unable to find jobs. The work force a year earlier was 28,130 and 1,520 were unemployed.

Pamlico County saw its unemployment rate increase from 5.8 percent in February 1988 to 9.9 percent in February 1989. The work force in February 1989 totaled 4,950 and 490 of that number could not find work. The work force in February 1988 totaled 4,510 and 260 were unemployed.

Graham County had the highest rate in February 1989 with a 21.4 percent mark, followed by Tyrrell County at 16.9 percent, and Swain County at 14.6 percent. The lowest rate was 1.9 percent in Orange County and the second-lowest rate was 2.1 in Greene County.

(See JOBLESS, Page 5)



Different Twist

At this time of year it is not unusual to see low-flying planes, some that bring back memories of the bi-planes used in World War I, skimming along fields doing a bit of crop dusting. Farmers have relied on cropdusters for years to apply che-

micals and fertilizer to their crops in a fast, easy manner. But this helicopter doing a little dusting recently probably caused a few stares. With their ability to hover, helicopters can get into tighter spaces than a plane could. (Ric Carter photo)

Rep. Perdue Wants Panel Established

Commission Would Study Costs Of Health Insurance

RALEIGH — Rep. Beverly M. Perdue, who represents the Third District in the N.C. House of Representatives, has introduced legislation calling for a health insurance cost study commission.

The bill would establish a commission consisting of 16 members representing the House and Senate, as well as members of the business community, representatives from the insurance and health-care fields, elected officials and citizens.

Rep. Perdue, whose district includes Craven, Pamlico and Lenoir counties, is a second-term legislator and is actively involved in health care issues. Mrs. Perdue said the study commis-

sion is needed to examine escalating costs and methods of providing health care to all North Carolinians, regardless of income. "We have to look at the rising costs of health insurance. This issue affects all segments of society — middle-income families, people on a fixed income and the entire business community," she said.

Mrs. Perdue, who holds a doctorate from the University of Florida, was instrumental in securing the \$6.5 million 1988 appropriation for services for the elderly. She said her work on the Aging, Medicaid and Facility Subcommittee of the Human Re-

(See BILL, Page 5)

Eagle Netters Served 8-1 Defeat By Pack

West Craven's tennis team is still a relative newcomer to tennis in the Class 3-A Coastal Conference and face formidable opponents as the season progresses. A glimpse of what the season may be like was experienced earlier this week.

The team ran into an experienced squad, but that experience of playing a tough opponent could pay off for the Eagles later in the season.

Washington gave up but nine games in six sets of singles and two of doubles in earning its first win of the season,

defeating the Eagles 8-1 at the Craven Community College tennis courts Tuesday afternoon.

Jim Cox and Kevin Williams saved the Eagles from a shut-out by taking an 8-5 win over Jim Boyette and Jonathan Kuhn in a doubles match.

The Pack evened its ledger at 1-1 with a sweep of singles and the first two doubles in playing its second match in as many days. Washington will host Havelock in a pivotal ear-

(See TENNIS, Page 5)

Area Farmers Use New Means To Combat Tobacco Problems

Growing problems with finding enough labor to work their tobacco fields could lead more Craven County farmers to join their neighbors in the county and in Jones County this year to find alternative methods of starting their crops, local agricultural extension officials say.

The two prominent systems in use in the county this spring are the float system and the overhead system, Minton C. Small, director of the extension service in Trenton, said recently in an interview.

Craven County farmers are also using the two systems. The first overhead system was installed at Jack Anderson's farm at Vanceboro, said Jim Holton, Craven County extension agent. The overhead system has been in the county for four or five years and the float system is in its third year, said Holton.

For the third year in the county, farmers have been using the float system to grow tobacco plugs from Florida in vats standing in about 6 inches of water in greenhouses. When they arrive in the county,

Small says, the plugs are not quite the size of a quarter. They are transferred to trays that have drainage holes in the bottom, then placed in the greenhouses.

The plants also are fertilized through the water in which they stand, Small noted.

It takes 8 to 10 people, Small said, about three days to transfer the tobacco into one of the float system greenhouses. But it only takes about 4 people to transfer it to the fields once the tobacco has reached a certain stage of growth.

Under the traditional "bare-root" system, Small pointed out, farmers need 15 to 20 people working over a period of three weeks to transplant tobacco to their fields.

In the overhead system for growing tobacco, Small said, farmers work for about three days to seed the trays of tobacco. The trays are set on nursery pads with rock below for drainage. The plants are fertilized and irrigated by means of a boom situated above the plants.

Holton said three or four more float systems are in use

this year. He expects Craven County farmers to increase their use of the systems in the coming years. Holton said that although their are up-front costs with buying and installing the systems, farmers should end up saving money through lower labor costs.

Phil and Andy Moore of the Beaver Creek area in Jones County, Small said, have about 3,800 trays with 165 tobacco plants per tray in their greenhouse for a total of 627,000 plants — or about 75 acres worth. Under normal conditions, Small noted, a small percentage of the plants grown by the overhead system does not germinate.

The Moores will need only one or two people to transplant the tobacco from their greenhouse to the field, Small said.

The greenhouses in which the overhead system is used, Small said, must maintain a temperature of 90 degrees over a 2-week period for the seeds to germinate. After germination, the temperature

(See TOBACCO, Page 5)

Lady Eagles Slide By Lady Pack

West Craven's softball team "embarrassed" and "upset" an opponent, but came away with a win.

To say Washington High School girls' softball coach Becky Rogers was upset after her team lost its Coastal Conference opener at home to West Craven Tuesday afternoon is an understatement.

"I don't know what I'm going to do," Rogers, who had just watched her Lady Pack fall to 0-2 after a 16-1 thumping by the

Lady Eagles. "We practice drills and I think we're making progress, but... I (feel) totally embarrassed by what happened here today."

West Craven improved to 2-0 overall as the Eagles, which pounded out 16 hits, held Washington to just six.

Lisa Murrell picked up the victory after going the distance on the mound for West Craven. Angela Smith, a transfer from Aurora's Class 1-A state championship squad, was saddled

with the loss.

Defensively, the Lady Pack was hampered by eight errors while West Craven committed two.

Jennifer Peele led the Lady Eagles with a 3-for-4 outing which included a two-run home run. Amy Bizzell doubled in a 2-for-3 outing while four others — Tammy Wolfe, Murrell, Gaskins and Patricia Daughtery — each batted 2-for-4.

(See LADY EAGLES, Page 5)

Washington Rally Downs Eagles

By JIM GREEN
Sports Writer

Washington rallied for seven runs off a total of four West Craven pitchers in the bottom of the fifth inning and got sparkling relief pitching in winning 11-8 in the Coastal Conference baseball opener for both teams Tuesday night at Kugler Field.

Washington improved to 4-1 overall while West Craven emerged 4-2.

The Pack's victory, its third straight, wasted a good pitching effort by Eagle starter John Dizon, who pitched through the third and to two batters in the fourth. He was lifted because of a shoulder injury suffered the previous inning when he was hit by a pitch.

"When you spot your starter a five-run lead like the one we had, and you can't hold the other team down, you're not going to win many games," West Craven coach Tim Hardison said. "And defensively, we played poorly."

Washington coach Steve Coats cited his team's comeback.

"We got down by a few runs and the guys didn't stop playing," he said. "They hung in there and played together as a team."

"We got some good relief pitching from Rod (Gorham) and Tripp (Leggett) and a lot of clutch hitting tonight. The kids battled hard."

passed ball.

Gorham led off the frame with a walk and his courtesy runner, Adam Williams, went to second on a wild pitch. Dizon was relieved by Gene Roach, who allowed an infield hit to Jeremiah Jackson which placed runners on first and third. After Williams was retired in a rundown at the plate, Jackson advanced to third. Leggett followed with an RBI single and pinchrunner Dean Leitschuh stole second. After Charlie Manning was hit by a pitch, Monty Brown relieved Roach for the Eagles.

"We were just trying to find somebody...," Hardison said. "It wasn't shaky relief pitching that

(See EAGLES, Page 5)