

LOCAL PERMITS READY

State Would Set Own Criteria For New Artificial Reef Sites

BY SUSAN USHER
Local fishing clubs are chafing at the bit, eager to begin dropping material on existing and proposed artificial reef sites offshore.

They might as well store that nervous energy until spring, though.

While the first drop in a number of years on the Brunswick County Fishing Club reef off Lockwood's Folly Inlet could occur in the very near future, other proposed drops on six new reef sites and one other existing site may be a while in coming as the state grapples with a new problem, one of abundance: how to allocate 200 boxcars and a \$300,000 from the General Assembly that will help turn them into artificial reefs all along the coast.

"I don't think any (boxcars) will be dropped this year," said Jim Tyler, spokesman for the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. "It looks slim at this point."

Efforts to sort out the reef program at the state level, said Marine Fisheries Chairman John Costlow, should not delay existing projects in Brunswick County.

"No one in his right mind would take a bargeload of reef material out

off Brunswick County in December, January or February," he said. "I don't think it will delay anything."

A status report on the artificial reef program is on the agenda for the Dec. 11 meeting of the Marine Fisheries Commission at the Duke Marine Lab at Beaufort, the commission's chairman, Dr. John Costlow, confirmed Monday.

"The discussion is largely to update us on where we are. We are making an effort to identify criteria to be used in selection of reef sites."

Costlow said he was not aware that there were organizations that already had permits in hand to drop artificial reef material and he isn't certain how they will fit into the discussion.

In any case, he doesn't expect the board to take action at its December meeting.

Once a set of criteria is proposed and the commission has the information it needs to discuss the program, then the matter will go to public hearing, he said.

The board's recreational management committee, led by John Graham of Elizabeth City, is in charge of the Dec. 11 presentation.

Since the mid-1970s, local com-

munities had been on their own when it came to establishing the reefs. However, the donation of boxcars from Seaboard Systems, with the potential of more in the future, and a flurry of filings for permits in the wake of that announcement, prompted the state to take a closer look.

Bids To Come

Brown is working up bid specifications for state contracts to drop the boxcar material either as a package deal statewide or site by site, Tyler said.

Here in Brunswick county Dale McDowell, secretary of the Brunswick County Fishing Club, said the club is inviting marine firms to bid on its own Lockwood Folly Inlet project, with one alternate. Pfizer Chemicals Inc. in Southport has donated two boilers that have been cut into four 30-ton pieces ready for dropping. Each company will be asked to bid one price for providing a barge that the material will be welded to and dropping the whole works on the reef. This preferred method will provide an extra-large profile to attract fish. The alternate bid will be to drop the material off a barge and return the barge to shore.

The U.S. Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point is cooperating in the venture. The boilers will be moved by rail from Pfizer to the Army docks and loaded onto the barge.

The Brunswick County Fishing Club, on behalf of the Long Bay Artificial Reef Association, already had permits for six new reefs in hand at the time the boxcar material was donated to the state. Members had every expectation, said fishing club secretary Dale McDowell, that Brunswick County stood at the head of the line to receive some boxcars. Unlike other areas of the coast, Brunswick County has no "live" reefs. It does have two sanded-over and disintegrating reefs—the club reef and another off Oak Island.

The Long Bay Artificial Reef Association, which includes the county's three fishing clubs, is also trying to obtain a 105-foot vessel owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the superstructures of swing bridges soon to be torn down at Ocean Isle Beach and Holden Beach.

Boxcars Waiting

Approximately 150 of the donated boxcars are piled at the Davis railyard in Navassa, awaiting final clearance from environmental agencies concerned about paint used on the cars and possible chemical leaching of materials hauled in the cars. A team that included state and federal officials inspected the cars several weeks ago to identify potential problems, but has not scheduled the return visit required to sign off approval.

"They have to be satisfied," said Tyler. "To my knowledge they have not resolved it yet. They have nothing scheduled."

"Things never go as fast as you think they should, but the division is trying to do it right. This is a new material that has not been used in mass before as reef material."

DOT To Hear Both Sides

(Continued From Page 1-A)

"A basic concern of the town was that with parked cars along the shoulder, people walking out from behind them would create a potential danger," Lynch said.

Allowing cars to park on the sandy shoulders also causes problems for the state in terms of maintenance, he said, because the pavement tends to crumble.

"But total prohibition from one end to the other creates a hardship for people trying to use the beach," he continued.

Generally towns have the authority to ban parking on state-maintained streets within their limits—unless it

is in violation of a rule the state may have imposed to allow parking. In the end, the state does have the power to overrule the local municipality—a power it doesn't take lightly and doesn't use often.

DOT tries to stay out of in-town parking issues, Lynch said, since its concern is for operations and safety—not enforcement.

"They do have a parking problem down there," said Lynch. "The ideal long-range solution would be to have adequate off- and on-street parking."

"Both sides seem to have some merit to their arguments," he continued. "I feel there should be some middle ground."

Tropical Storm Brings Rain

Area rainfall for the period Nov. 19-24 measured 2.95 inches, said Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Rainfall exceeded the normal half an inch due to Tropical Storm Kate, he explained.

Temperatures averaged 12 degrees above normal, he said. The daily average temperature was 75 degrees and the average morning low was 56

degrees, for an average temperature of 66 degrees.

The period's maximum high was 81 degrees on Nov. 19 and 20. The minimum low was 39 degrees on Nov. 24.

The extended outlook calls for temperatures in the low 50s at night and ranging into the low 70s during the day. The area should receive three quarters of an inch of rainfall.



STAFF PHOTO BY DAWN ELLEN BOYD

Union Students Turkey Around

Kindergarten students in Linda Andrews' and Karen Wilmoth's class presented a Thanksgiving show at Union Primary School Monday morning. Standing are

(from left) Shamaal McNeil, Rachel Cheeny and Roy James. "Pilgrim" Bradley Fullwood sits in a pow-wow with "Indian" Michael Stanley.

Crosswalk And Signs Among Road Improvements Near Leland School

BY SUSAN USHER

A pedestrian crosswalk is one of several steps that the state will take to try to make the Old Fayetteville Road safer for Leland Middle School students to cross, a N.C. Department of Transportation spokesman said Friday.

Flashing lights are not among the recommendations made following an inspection last Tuesday by state and division personnel, said Division Engineer Ted Funderburk, though they have not been ruled out as a future option if needed.

"We're going to do some things right now and then evaluate the results," he said. "We're not ruling out the lights as a possibility."

"The people who looked at it at this time are not recommending it. We're going to see the driving public's reaction."

DOT does plan to create a pedestrian crosswalk in front of the middle school, he said, "in an attempt to confine crossing to one location."

A fifth-grade student, Michelle Spivey, was killed on Nov. 6 when struck by a vehicle while attempting to cross the road more than a block from the school.

Hers was the second death of a

public school student on the road in the past six years.

The state also plans to erect new signs requiring a 35 mph speed limit from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., to erect stop signs where the school driveway exits onto Old Fayetteville Road, to erect no parking signs along both shoulders of the road between Leland Middle School and North Brunswick High School and to mark a right-hand turn lane entering the middle school grounds from the Lanvale Road direction.

The signs and markings are intended to make the slower-speed school zone more visible, particularly to non-local drivers who are unfamiliar with the area, said Funderburk.

Superintendent of Schools Gene Yarbrough had estimated that installation of flashing lights at Leland Middle School, if recommended, could cost as much as \$20,000.

The school system also has had a school bus safety education program underway in the primary elementary schools since the start of the school. It will soon feature "Gus, the Talking Bus," a bus being renovated into a talking teaching tool.

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