

NCSU Scientist Says Red Tide Could Invade State Waters Again

The red tide infestation which plagued the Brunswick County coast for a month and a sizeable portion of the state's shellfishing waters for four months could make a return trip, according to one university scientist.

Dr. Leonard Pietrafesa, physical oceanographer at North Carolina State University, said the toxic algae which made its way from Florida to the North Carolina coast could have traveled the same path in six of the past eight years.

According to an NCSU news release, Pietrafesa calculated that during six other years since 1979, wind and current conditions were equal to or more favorable than the conditions that brought the red tide to North Carolina last fall. He attributes the prevailing winds and currents in Florida for preventing the red tide from reaching North Carolina waters before.

In a report prepared for the University of North Carolina Sea Grant Program, Pietrafesa recommends that state officials monitor outbreaks of red tide off Florida's west coast in order to predict other occurrences in North Carolina, the release indicates.

Red tides are high concentrations of single-cell plants called dinoflagellates. The tide which infested the North Carolina coast, known as *ptychodiscus brevis*, contained toxins which made shellfish such as oysters and clams inedible and caused irritated skin, coughing and dizziness to those humans who came in contact with it.

The toxic algae was first discovered in the central part of the state last October and moved into local waters in mid-January. All traces of the tide had disappeared before the end of February, but not before devastating

the state's seafood industry.

The red tide, which cost the state's fishermen an estimated \$5 million, is believed to have sprung from an algae bloom which occurred in the Gulf of Mexico last August.

According to Pietrafesa, a strong current which circles the gulf moved that bloom around the southern tip of Florida where it entered the Gulf Stream, a warm current of water which flows north through the Atlantic Ocean and passes the coast of North Carolina.

Although red tide commonly drifts ashore on the east coast of Florida, he said winds were blowing in such a way as to prevent the algae from moving ashore.

The bloom apparently remained in the Gulf Stream and bypassed the shores of Georgia and South Carolina,

where the Continental Shelf is too wide for winds to have blown it ashore.

Scientists believe the algae broke away from the Gulf Stream in early October as a result of steady northeast winds which blew for about a month. Before last year, there had never been a documented case of red tide in North Carolina.

Pietrafesa, who believes winds play a key role in driving the red tide ashore, suggests that the state monitor currents and winds which could bring toxic algae blooms to the coast from the Gulf Stream.

Despite the benefit of an early warning, however, there is no effective way of killing the organisms without destroying other marine life. Red tide must be left to die on its own.

New Health Committee Is Formed

The Brunswick County Health Department has formed a new committee to review and approve all printed material and visual aides used in the department's Family Planning Clinic.

The primary focus of the Family Planning Consumer Committee is to develop program promotions, community education and awareness through outreach efforts.

The committee is composed of representatives from local high schools, hospitals and churches, as well as from the Family Planning Clinic and Brunswick County Department of Social Services. Residents of the community can direct comments or suggestions to committee members.

They include Chairman Carey Godwin, Bertha Bell, Ginger DeBerry, Patrice Frink, Joyce Haley, Rev. M.C. Herring, Rev. Mark Kasper, Debbie Newman, Kenneth White, Barbara Vaught, Francis Williamson, Earla Parker and Rev. Artie Odem.

Purposes of the Family Planning Clinic include preventing unwanted pregnancies and reducing high-risk pregnancies. The clinic also attempts to improve pregnancy outcomes by providing contraceptive methods and gynecological services.

Developers Seek Boat Ramp Permits

BY DOUG RUTTER

Two local development corporations are expected to receive state permits in the near future for construction or improvement of boat ramps and marina facilities near the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway in Brunswick County.

Sea Trail Corporation and Channel Side Corporation, both involved in golf course and residential development, plan to upgrade or build new marina facilities in conjunction with their respective developments.

According to Ernest Jahnke, permits coordinator for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Wilmington, Sea Trail wishes to repair an existing ramp located on the waterway near Sunset Beach. Channel Side, meanwhile, has plans for a new marina near the waterway at Holden Beach.

He said the Corps of Engineers gathers comments from federal and private organizations or individuals as a preliminary step in the permit process.

Once all comments on the matter have been compiled, he explained, the N.C. Division of Coastal Management decides whether to issue the permit and sets forth any conditions of the permit.

Channel Side Corporation, developer of the Lockwood Folly golf and water community near Varnamtown, plans to excavate a channel and basin and construct 50 boat slips and a bulkhead establishing commercial marina facilities. The proposed location for this marina is at

the mouth of the Lockwood Folly River where it joins the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Jahnke said several federal agencies have studied and commented on the proposed marina, but only the National Marine Fisheries Service expressed any problems with it.

"National Marine Fisheries has certain reservations about the excavation of some bottom lands . . . but that probably won't affect the decision," said Jahnke. "At this point, I don't see any problems with the issuance of a permit."

According to Jahnke, the concerns that have been raised have no legal basis, and therefore, carry very little weight under the permit process. The federal Clean Water Act spells out regulations for use of wetlands such as those in the area proposed for construction.

Referring again to the National Marine Fisheries Service, he said, "They have some reservations about it because of the potential harm to the fishery habitat. That type of concern is not backed by the law so we would just take it as a comment but not act upon it."

Jahnke added that through six months of meetings among the developers and representatives of state agencies such as the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, the plans have been changed with more protection of wildlife in mind.

"The original plans have been extensively modified to where there is minimal adverse impact on the en-

vironment," he said.

Improvements to an existing boat ramp at Seaside Station off N.C. 179 east of Sunset Beach are in the plans of Sea Trail Corporation, which has applied for a CAMA permit for that purpose.

Jahnke explained that the existing ramp was previously maintained by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, but was abandoned several years ago because the area is subject to shoaling and the ramp was hard to maintain.

He said the permit application calls for excavation of a 200-foot long and 60-foot wide channel from the ramp straight out to the waterway.

Like the plans for the marina at Lockwood Folly, Jahnke said the original plans were scaled down to avoid as many harmful effects on marine life as possible. Initial plans, he said, called for much more dredging and potential damage to the area.

"It's sort of a routine project except that the project is located in a primary nursery area," he said, adding that the Corps had received no comments for or against the project as of Tuesday.

Comments on the Sea Trail project will be accepted through June 24, while those concerning the proposed Channel Side marina will be taken through Friday.

Written responses can be mailed to Jahnke at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch, P.O. Box 1890, Wilmington, 28402-1890. He can also be reached at 1-343-4467.

'Barefoot In The Park' Auditions Set June 18-19

The Brunswick Players community theater group will hold auditions for its upcoming production, "Barefoot In The Park," on Saturday and Sunday, June 18 and 19.

Saturday's audition will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Southport Library; Sunday's will be held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at First Step Computer Systems, Village Pines, on N.C. 179, Shallotte.

"Barefoot In The Park" is a three-act comedy by playwright Neil Simon with parts for two women and four men. It will be presented in mid-August at a location to be announced.

Volunteers are also needed to help behind the scenes in areas such as sets, lighting and props, said spokesman Glenda Kotchish. For more information, contact her at 754-9758.

Deaf Male Cat Needs A Home

A deaf, housebroken white male cat with one blue eye and one green eye is among the animals up for adoption this week at the Brunswick County Animal Shelter.

He is approximately nine months old, likes children and is friendly, said Animal Control Supervisor Zelma Babson.

Also recommended for adoption are male mixed collie, black with white on his chest and about 11 months old, and a male terrier/poodle

mix, black and brown with white on chest, more than a year old.

These and other animals can be seen from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at the shelter, which is located off N.C. 211 south of Supply.

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