

Keeping Bird Island Natural Would Be Best, Study Claims

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Price's filing of permit applications last year spurred a counter-effort to save the island. Last September, Redwine said he was eager to pursue state acquisition of the island, but would need grassroots support. In response to his challenge, the Bird Island Preservation Society was organized under the auspices of the N.C. Coastal Federation, and now has a membership "pushing 1,500" from across North Carolina and the United States, according to Sue Weddle, a society officer who lives at Sunset Beach year-round.

Among the society's first official acts was to ask the N.C. Wildlife Commission to study the feasibility of its managing Bird Island as part of its Colonial Waterbird Nesting Program.

Meanwhile, Redwine asked for the feasibility study to gather information that would be needed to educate the General Assembly and build support among its members should the state have the opportunity to buy the island.

"It's an opportunity to see what the experts say about its value," said Redwine. "It should make an impression on General Assembly members who have never heard of Bird Island and don't have any idea where it is."

For now, supporters of the island's public acquisition must wait. "I can't ask for money or begin

tapping funding sources until we know the value of the island. Usually the owner establishes some sort of price, then decides if an offer is acceptable. If she (Mrs. Price) is interested in somebody making a concrete offer, the only indication we have of its value is that on the tax books. We could go from there, but I hesitate to give them a ridiculous figure. We really don't have anything to discuss now in terms of price."

The permit-seeking process is seen as an effort by the Prices in part to establish the island's market value, which would be greatly enhanced were development permits available.

Family members have indicated they would like to see the island preserved and are not interested in selling it for development. They are willing to consider selling the property to the state, but are not in a position to donate it for public ownership.

However, the study indicates, "if they keep the property, they feel that better supervision of its use is needed to prevent some of the damaging overuse which is now taking place."

The island is currently used by nearby residents and visitors for activities such as bird watching, fishing and beachcombing. The study says heavier weekend usage may result in littering and damage to sensitive areas that make the island unsuitable for "high-intensity recre-

ational activities".

Bird Island, the study noted, "will become increasingly valuable to wildlife as human activities increase on other beaches. Residential construction, vehicular traffic, beach stabilization efforts and other activities can have significant effects on wildlife species which require beach habitats," the study states. "The remaining natural islands in North Carolina will become more and more essential for the survival of beach wildlife such as sea turtles, piping plovers and colonial nesting waterbirds."

Bird Island is home to a number of rare and/or vulnerable species, including seabean amaranth, a plant; the marked goby, a fish; and the knobbed whelk, found in waters around the island.

It is a potential nesting area for sea turtles, colonial nesting waterbirds and the piping plover, a federally-listed threatened species which has been known to winter over and feed there. Endangered wood storks also feed and rest on the island, as do brown pelicans, glossy ibis, little blue heron, snowy egret and tricolored heron.

The state study also indicates that Bird Island provides "significant opportunities" for formal and informal studies of coastal geological processes, natural vegetation, wetlands, coastal wildlife and other topics.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON
DETECTIVE David Crocker of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department examines the wreckage of a 1993 GMC Suburban that was reported stolen in Wilmington Monday morning and was later involved in a chase with local deputies.

Chase Of Stolen Car Ends In Injury For Man, Minor

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the car missing at about 11:45 and reported the theft to police.

Brunswick authorities were notified and the 911 communications center alerted all patrol units to be on the lookout for the stolen vehicle.

At about 1 p.m., the sheriff's department was informed that a cellular telephone call had been made from the stolen car. The phone company had traced its location to the area between Bolivia and Supply.

Hewett was in an unmarked patrol car near the intersection of U.S. 17 and N.C. 211 at Supply when he spotted the white Suburban heading south. He followed the vehicle for about four miles "at speeds of 55 to 60 miles per hour," Davis said in a prepared press release Tuesday.

After ignoring Hewett's blue light for some distance, the Suburban pulled over near the Comprehensive Health Care building about two miles south of Supply.

"The vehicle stopped and when officer Hewett approached, the vehicle started off. Officer Hewett fired four shots from his service revolver at the left rear tire. At least three of the bullets hit the tire," the release said.

Davis said the Suburban headed north, "reaching a speed estimated at 70 miles per hour and passing vehicles by taking to the right hand shoulder." Deputy Randy Robinson trailed the vehicle, but did not attempt to overtake it, Davis said.

"He (Washington) came around two tractor-trailers on the right side, got back onto the pavement and flipped over," Trooper Wilkes of the N.C. Highway Patrol said at the accident scene Monday. "The driver and a passenger were thrown out of the vehicle."

After rolling over several times, the Suburban came to rest on three wheels in the southbound lane with

the contents of its radiator pouring onto the asphalt. The left rear wheel had been torn off as the vehicle tumbled and lay in the grass by the side of the road.

The roof over the passenger area was partially crushed. The windshield was shattered. All the glass along the left side of the vehicle was gone. The cellular telephone, a red cowboy boot and other items lay strewn about in the broken glass. An Atlanta Braves baseball cap—thought to be Washington's—remained wedged in the driver-side door.

Witnesses said Washington was found at the bottom of a grassy embankment on the right side of the highway. He was quickly stabilized and transported to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington. The juvenile was treated as he lay in the center of the road before being taken to The Brunswick Hospital.

Visibly shaken by the incident, Hewett was patted on the back and comforted by a number of officers as the second ambulance drove off. He took a seat in an unmarked patrol car while investigators sealed off the area with yellow tape and combed the accident scene for evidence.

For several hours, traffic was diverted onto the unfinished northbound lanes of U.S. 17 as detectives, state troopers and SBI crime scene analysts collected items from the Suburban, examined the lost tire, measured skid marks and photographed the area.

Davis said that so far the findings of the preliminary investigation have given him no reason to take disciplinary action against Hewett or any other officers involved in the incident. Hewett took the day off Tuesday and was scheduled to return to work Wednesday.

"I don't see any violations of the department's chase policy," Davis

said. "It was not a high-speed chase. He did not try to force them off the road. Randy (Robinson) was behind them when they passed the two tankers and he did not attempt to follow them."

The policy titled "Emergency Operation of Sheriff's Department Vehicles" defines such operation as being any time the vehicle is driven "in excess of the normal speed limit or in disregard of other traffic laws." It allows such operation in "any situation requiring immediate attention due to a present danger to public safety, a need for the immediate apprehension of a violator or a serious crime in progress."

While the preferred method of stopping a violator is to remain behind him until he stops of his own accord, other tactics may be used to stop a pursued vehicle when necessary, the policy states.

If it is "reasonably believed" that a delay in apprehending the suspect "represents an impending threat of grave injury or death to any person," officers are authorized to attempt stopping the vehicle in a roadblock or by use of a firearm.

Davis said he would not release any further details about the incident until the SBI investigation has been completed. Agent Stephens said the bureau's findings will be submitted to District Attorney Rex Gore "as soon as possible" after all the interviews and other information have been analyzed.

Paving Hearing Set Monday

The N.C. Department of Transportation proposes to pave just over 10 miles of Brunswick County's 121 miles of unpaved roads and streets during the fiscal year that begins July 1.

A public hearing on the proposed secondary road construction program for the county will be held by the DOT at the June 21 meeting of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, starting at 6:30 p.m.

Projects are ranked in priority on two lists: one for rural roads and one for roads in subdivisions and other residential areas, according to a release from Division Engineer Doug Bowers and State Board of Transportation member Odell Williamson of Ocean Isle Beach.

The DOT expects secondary road allocations for Brunswick County to total approximately \$1.19 million.

On the rural list, it proposes to pave Cumbee Road (SR 1131), Albright Road (SR 1508), McKay Road (SR 1511) and Ellis Benton Road (SR 1502). Grand River and Rock Creek Roads have high priority ratings, but right of way is not available from property

owners.

On the residential/subdivision list, the state proposes to pave Carter Street (SR), Bo Tuc Road (SR 1809), Charlotte Avenue (SR 1821) from SR 1165 to N.C. 179, Garner Street (SR 1187) from SR 1145 to SR 1188, Burge Drive (SR 1802) from SR 1163 to SR 1804, Dale Street (SR 1466), Shoreline Drive (SR 1288) from SR 1137 to SR 1139) and Evans Circle (SR 1800), from N.C. 130 to the end of the state roadway.

If right of way is not available, DOT would proceed down the priority list to the next project for which right of way is available.

With property owner participation, the state also plans to pave Shepard Road (SR 1534).

The balance of the secondary road budget, approximately \$30,500, will be allocated for road additions, contingencies and paving accessways or aprons for volunteer fire and rescue stations.

A copy of the DOT priority listings and proposed expenditures is posted at the Brunswick County Courthouse in Bolivia.

Smoking Regs Could Include Businesses

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ty to control smoking in public places," said health board member Dr. Bradd Kerr. "The bill proposes that smoking be allowed in at least 50 percent of all public areas. That means no one could have a smoke-free business."

Kerr asked the board to reconsider the proposed county-wide smoking policy that was drafted by another committee in April. The regulations were approved by the health board and passed on to the county commissioners along with another proposal to ban smoking in county buildings.

The commissioners adopted a modified version of the latter set of rules. But they took no action on the proposal to regulate smoking throughout the county. The board felt that only the health department would have the authority to enforce such an ordinance in Brunswick County towns, where most restaurants and retail businesses are located.

Kerr suggested that a committee be formed consisting of two health board members and 10 citizens. Board member Jeff Mintz, a dentist, agreed to join Kerr on the committee. The group will use the previously adopted "Smoking Pollution Control Ordinance" as a starting point in their discussions, Kerr said.

Declaring that its purpose is "to protect and promote the public health and safety of the citizens of Brunswick County," that ordinance sets down what it calls "minimum

standards" for regulating smoking in public places. It would not prevent a business owner "from prohibiting smoking within their establishment altogether."

Under that proposal, smoking would be prohibited throughout the county in all public restrooms, elevators, service lines, polling places and public areas of retail stores. Restaurant owners would be required to designate a non-smoking area "consisting of at least 25 percent of the indoor seating capacity of the restaurant."

All bars would be required to post one of three signs, notifying customers that the establishment is either smoke-free, provides a non-smoking area or allows smoking throughout.

The original proposal also would make employers responsible for providing smoke-free areas for non-smoking employees within their buildings and to separate employees who smoke from those who don't "to the maximum extent possible" without making structural or physical modifications to their businesses.

Dr. Harry Johnson questioned the health board's ability to enforce such an ordinance and wondered if business owners should be made responsible for policing the actions of their customers.

The board agreed that one of the committee's first jobs will be to consider enforcement methods and proposed penalties for violating the smoking regulations.

Kerr plans to seek citizen volun-

teers for the committee this week in hopes that the group can have a smoking ordinance prepared for adoption at the health board's next regular meeting July 12.

In other business, Environmental Health Supervisor Andrew Robinson announced that he will meet Thursday (June 17) with members of the South Brunswick Islands Board of Realtors to discuss the widespread practice of renting vacation cottages to more tenants than the number for which the septic tank was designed.

The meeting will be held in the health department conference room at the county government complex in Bolivia beginning at 6:30 p.m. At least two members of the health board are scheduled to attend.

A second meeting will be scheduled with the Southport/Oak Island Board of Realtors to discuss the problem, Robinson said.

Correction

The source of six scholarships with a combined value of \$4,000 presented to West Brunswick High School seniors last week was incorrectly identified in a June 10 *Beacon* article on the school senior awards program.

The Dr. Kendall H. Suh Civitan Scholarships are given annually by the South Brunswick Isles Civitan Club.

The *Beacon* apologizes for the error.

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Little Rain, Warm Temps Still In Islands Forecast

Daytime highs across the South Brunswick Islands are expected to continue reaching the upper 80s over the next week, with less than one-half inch of rainfall, Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday.

"I don't see anything that will bring us significant rainfall; there may be some scattered showers," said Canady.

Night-time temperatures also will continue near normal, averaging in the upper 60s.

"It looks like the overall trend we've had recently is continuing, particularly the below average precipitation. It should be warming up and getting dry as we approach the weekend."

For the period June 8 through 14, Canady recorded a maximum high of 91 degrees on three consecutive days, June 10-12.

The minimum low of 69 degrees

occurred June 12.

A daily average high of 88 degrees combined with a nightly average low of 72 degrees for a daily average temperature of 80 degrees, which Canady said is about 3 degrees above average.

For the same period he recorded three-quarters of an inch of rainfall.

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