

At Teacher Academy

Five Shallotte Middle School teachers are among 3,000 teachers participating in the new Teacher Academy, a training opportunity to give North Carolina public school teachers up-to-date information on successful teaching. Pictured at the academy's East Carolina University site the week of July 10 are (from top down) William Hughes, Jeanette Marshall, Loretta Brown, Deborah Lemon and Shelia Gore. The Teacher Academy was authorized by the N.C. General Assembly.

Draft Report Offers Myriad Recommendations For Improving Management of State's Coast

BY SUSAN USHER
A draft report by a committee appointed to look at ways to improve North Carolina's coastal management program recommends stronger measures to protect the coastal environment, but stops well short of a no-more-growth stance.

Instead it recommends that award of state grants and loans for capital improvements to accommodate growth be tied to effective implementation of local land use plans.

Its more than 150 recommendations range from improving nonpoint source pollution control efforts to a massive public education effort for local officials and coastal residents, fisheries habitat and water supply protection and encouraging expansion of nature-based tourism opportunities.

The Coastal Futures Committee will continue amending and polishing the report at its August meeting. Its final package of recommendations will be presented to Gov. James B. Hunt during the national Innovations in Coastal Management conference in Wilmington Sept. 7-9.

The 15-member panel, chaired by former congressman and federal judge Richardson Preyer Sr., has emphasized throughout a series of public meetings and hearings over the past year its aim of balancing economic and environmental concerns regarding the coast. Eugene Tomlinson of Southport, a coastal engineer and chairman of the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission, is the only Brunswick County representative on the committee.

The draft report, still undergoing revision, contains land use and growth management, the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) regulatory program, land acquisition and management of public trust areas, the CAMA organization, coastal water quality, protection of natural heritage and socioeconomic sections.

Education of local officials and the public are a key element of the recommendations.

The land use and growth management section proposes educating local officials to look at land-use plans as a means of recognizing factors that limit growth and planning accordingly, and educating the public on the possibilities of the planning process and their opportunities to influence the content and use of the plans.

Also recommended is a curriculum that would offer environmental education to all students.

To strengthen the state-local CAMA partnership, the committee recommends the state improve the assistance provided to local governments preparing plans, providing each with a standard package of technical and background data; revise planning guidelines to help communities better address the issues of cumulative and secondary impacts of growth.

The panel advocates expanded public involvement of resident and non-resident property owners throughout the land use planning process, not simply the single public hearing now required, and more involvement by elected public officials.

To improve implementation of local land use plans, the panel recommends amending CAMA to require that local governments submit an implementation package with each land use plan update, including at a minimum a zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance and capital improvement plan and budget, and to require that all local land use ordinances be consistent with the approved local CAMA plan.

Further, it recommends that eligibility for growth-related state and federal grants, including Powell Bill road money, should be tied to the CRC's approval of an adequate local plan implementation program.

To improve coordination of plan-

ning, it recommends that all CAMA plans within a single county—county and town—be updated at the same time, with intergovernmental coordination in addressing issues that impact more than a single local government. It also advocates regional planning cooperation.

The section on the CAMA regulatory program proposes the General Assembly enact a requirement that a disclosure of known coastal hazards, such as erosion rates and flood levels, and regulatory requirements be made to all purchasers of oceanfront property by the seller, broker or developer on a simple form provided by the state.

Also proposed is dedicating civil fines collected for CAMA violations to an environmental education program to reduce future violations.

The committee recommends limiting special orders of consent, which allow sewage treatment plants to exceed effluent limits until treatment systems can be upgraded, and pursuit of central sewer collection by local governments as a first alternative to septic systems in areas with poor soils. It also recommends protection of water supply sources and of fisheries habitat.

It also recommends changes in best management practices for agriculture and forestry, both presently excluded from CAMA, to better control nonpoint source pollution, and strengthening of rules governing land disturbing activities associated with development. It does not specifically address the impact of mining on coastal water and land resources.

The draft plan also advocates more action by state and local governments to improve public beach and estuarine access, and more funding by the state to continue the coastal reserve program and to underwrite acquisition of areas for public trust with consideration given to user-generated revenue, such as bridge tolls or property tax sur-


charges, to finance these programs. The draft plan advocates relocation and retreat over hardening of the beach as the best long-term protection of beaches, dunes, lives and property, and recommends legislation to require relocation or demolition of threatened or uninhabitable properties.

It also recommends that North Carolina follow the example of the federal government and Florida and prohibit use of state funds for development of infrastructure on undeveloped barrier islands.

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