

Officials Hope To Reopen Brunswick Clam Beds

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County shellfishermen could be harvesting clams as soon as Saturday.

Bob Benton, supervisor of the shellfish sanitation program of the N.C. Division of Health Services, said there is a good chance the results of toxicity tests conducted this week will show that local clams have purged themselves of all "red tide" toxins.

"We are very hopeful," he said, "but I can't guarantee anything."

Jim Tyler, spokesman for the state Division of Marine Fisheries, said nothing will be decided about the status of shellfish beds before toxicity test results are available this Friday.

"If the results do look good, I imagine we'll follow the same procedure as last week," he said.

Following the return of toxicity test results last Friday, the state reopened northern clam beds to hand harvest the next day. The 60-mile stretch which was

reopened, from Sealevel to Buxton, represented the northernmost area which had been closed to shellfishing.

Benton added that tests conducted last week on meat samples taken from Brunswick County revealed "very low levels" of toxicity. He said those traces were just enough to prevent a recommendation to the Division of Marine Fisheries to reopen local clam beds.

Environmental officials in both Carolinas reported this week that all remaining traces of *ptychodiscus brevis* had disappeared.

The toxic algae lifted after plaguing the coast for nearly four months and costing North Carolina's commercial fishermen about \$5.5 million. The total economic loss is estimated at more than \$25 million.

Despite the opening of northern clam beds, the state Division of Marine Fisheries has continued to offer its oyster relocation program. The program pays shellfishermen \$1 per bushel and up to \$100 per day to move oysters from waters permanently closed to pollu-

tion to waters temporarily closed because of the algae infestation.

Shellfishermen were not able to move oysters in Brunswick County for part of last week, as low tides did not occur during daylight hours.

Fritz Rohde, biological coordinator with the Division of Marine Fisheries in Wilmington, said the program was expected to start again this Thursday and Friday in Shallotte River.

Benton said meat samples taken from oysters throughout the state continue to show various levels of toxicity. He would not predict when oyster beds could reopen.

"Everything has been going down," he explained. "Oysters just seem to be a lot slower."

Tyler said the state Division of Marine Fisheries has still not decided whether it will extend oyster season this year because of the "red tide."

Brunswick County's oyster season usually ends

March 1, but the state has been considering extending the season to help oystermen recover from the infestation.

Meanwhile, South Carolina health officials also found no traces of "red tide" algae last week and took their first meat samples from waters off Horry County Sunday.

Charles Newell, shellfish program director for the state Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), said shellfish samples were taken from Little River Inlet, Hogg Inlet near Cherry Grove and Murrells Inlet.

DHEC spokesman Thom Berry said test results should be available later this week. He said a shipment of laboratory mice, which are used to test the toxicity of shellfish, have been on order for two weeks but still hadn't arrived as of Tuesday.

Newell said, "Right now, we're viewing it with guarded optimism. When you don't find anything in the water, it's encouraging."

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY
12/31/99
SPRINGPORT MI 49284

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, February 25, 1988

25c Per Copy

32 Pages Plus Insert

Review Of Schools Audit Finds No Criminal Wrongdoing

BY RAHN ADAMS

A preliminary SBI investigation into the Brunswick County school system's finances has determined that a \$553,000 deficit was not the result of any criminal wrongdoing.

Assistant District Attorney Napoleon Barefoot Jr. said he received a letter last Wednesday from Claude Green of the SBI's Audit Division in Raleigh concerning the review.

"He (Green) said that based on what he saw, there was nothing specifically criminal in the audit alone," Barefoot said last Thursday. "He found that it's not a criminal problem, and that's what the investigation was for."

School Superintendent John Kaufhold, who received word from Barefoot on the SBI's findings last Wednesday, told *The Brunswick Beacon*, "It's pretty much as I expected and hoped it would be. They found out that there was no criminal wrongdoing. Beyond that, they don't plan any further investigation."

Brunswick County Commissioners last month requested that the school system seek an SBI investigation into a \$553,242 shortfall that was discovered following the local school board's 1986-87 budget audit.

At a Jan. 19 meeting in Bolivia, commissioners helped cut that deficit by transferring \$290,000 from the half-cent sales tax fund for school construction to the schools' operating budget. However, Commissioner Benny Ludlum asked for the investigation, saying it would "show we're all clear."

On Feb. 3, Kaufhold turned over

the school system's 31-page audit report to Barefoot and Wilmington SBI Agent Fred McKinney. At the time, the district attorney said the audit appeared to be "in order" but sent it to the Raleigh SBI office to check for irregularities.

Barefoot said last week that the SBI found no misappropriations or embezzlement "based on what the audit showed."

"As far as my office is concerned, we can't go any further if there's no criminal activity," Barefoot said. "That terminates it."

Barefoot noted that he would write Kaufhold a letter concerning the SBI's findings. The letter from the SBI, which will remain "confidential," will be on file at the district attorney's office, he said.

Kaufhold said Friday that he would forward Barefoot's letter to the county commissioners to show that school officials complied with the commission's wishes and that the investigation is finished.

"I think the matter will be laid to rest then," Kaufhold commented.

Ludlum told *The Brunswick Beacon* this week that he was satisfied with the investigation. "It satisfies me as far as there being no wrongdoing," Ludlum said Monday, "but I feel they (school officials) should just watch their money closer... so that it doesn't happen again."

Kaufhold said the deficit apparently occurred due to "poor planning" and "under-budgeting of items based on revenue that wasn't there."

"You've got to learn from the past," (See *AUDIT*, Page 2-A)



DR. BOB RUBIN, an extension service consultant from N.C. State University, lifts a spadeful of soil for inspection by four participants who were examining a canal lot at 187 High Point Street in Holden Beach Harbor Friday afternoon. The lot has been classified as unsuitable for a conventional septic

tank. Reluctant to hire an engineer to do tests required before the state will approve any alternative system, Moise recently conducted his own dye-trace experiment.

Brunswick County 'Plowing New Ground' In Wastewater Management Alternatives

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County is "plowing new ground" among coastal counties in its efforts to identify wastewater management alternatives, according

to Dr. Bob Rubin, a N.C. State University extension consultant in agricultural engineering.

Rubin, who is recognized for his extensive knowledge of soils and their capacity for carrying and treating wastewater, visited several sites Friday that had previously been denied permits for conventional wastewater sewer systems and met with local officials to discuss the available alternatives.

At the extension office at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia, participants joined Rubin in discussing alternatives that ranged from continued reliance on

septic tanks—which have proved to be one of the most reliable systems there is when properly installed on a suitable site and properly maintained—to communitywide central sewage collection, treatment and disposal. County Manager John Smith and Commissioners Chris Chappell and Benny Ludlum participated in the field trip, but did not stay for the discussion afterward to the expressed disappointment of a number of other participants.

The visit was arranged in response to local concerns about a recent new interpretation of state septic tank laws. Under the change, a large

number of lots—such as island canal lots created from dredge soil—do not qualify for permits for conventional systems.

Small-size lots platted before recent revisions in the laws complicate the issue, because some are so small they cannot accommodate an alternative system, or the system doesn't leave enough space for an economically feasible structure to be built.

Alternatives included low pressure pipe, mound or elevated, cluster, sand filtration with disinfection, other types of pre-treatment and (See *BRUNSWICK*, Page 2-A)

GOP SHOWS GREATEST INCREASE

Voter Numbers Up 22 Percent

BY SUSAN USHER

Voter registration in Brunswick County has increased 22 percent from March 1984 to March 1988. Eligible to vote in the March 8 "Super Tuesday" presidential primary are 25,823 people, compared to 21,249 registered voters as of March 1, 1984, according to figures from the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

While both the Democratic and Republican parties show gains over the past four years, GOP registration increased by 57 percent, from 5,087 to 7,989. Voters registered as Democrats moved from 15,605 to 17,006. Going into the primary there are 828 unaffiliated voters.

One of the most noticeable changes is the widening gap in the relative numbers of black and white voters, a figure that generally reflects the migration trend of newcomers into the county. Total black registration over the four years increased by less than 100, from 4,574 to 4,634. On the other hand, the number of whites registered to vote increased from 16,657 to 21,151.

While most individual precincts show gains by both parties, Bolivia and Southport II show slight declines in total Democratic Party registration, Bolivia by 38 and Southport II by 59.

Countywide, 13,621 women and 12,202 men are registered to vote. Within each party, the percentages of registered males and females are similar, with women slightly outnumbering the men. By party, the GOP has 4,083 women and 3,906 men, and the Democrats have 9,138 women and 7,868 men.

Of the county's black voters, 4,401 are registered as Democrats, while 204 are registered as Republicans.

VOTER REGISTRATION '88

PRECINCT	TOTAL	DEM	REP	WHITE	BLACK
Hood Creek	689	461	224	384	303
Leland	1,748	1,220	498	1,357	388
Woodburn	936	698	220	648	287
Belville	1,069	777	270	783	284
Towncreek	1,298	831	446	985	302
Bolivia	962	598	341	721	241
Southport I	1,585	990	525	1,399	181
Southport II	1,030	734	252	627	402
Oak Island I	1,261	776	430	1,260	1
Oak Island II	1,617	958	562	1,616	1
Mosquito	473	334	123	335	136
Supply	1,024	798	214	501	523
Secession I	1,007	718	241	1,003	4
Secession II	1,361	1,099	234	1,096	264
Shallotte	1,213	915	279	1,019	192
Frying Pan	1,561	1,149	360	1,284	274
Grissettown	1,982	1,239	647	1,804	177
Shingletree	2,226	1,113	1,014	1,938	287
Longwood	402	312	88	151	251
Freeland	591	384	202	464	127
B. Sp. Lakes	1,034	470	508	1,027	4
TOTALS	25,823	17,006	7,989	21,151	4,634

Sunset Beach Files Lawsuit

BY DOUG RUTTER

The Town of Sunset Beach last week filed a lawsuit against a dozen individuals who withdrew from town dedication last year property targeted for a public access area.

The property in question is a 30-foot wide strip of land from Main Street to Canal Drive platted as 12th Street.

In October, the owners of the four properties which abut on this street withdrew the land from town dedication.

According to the lawsuit filed last Wednesday by Town Attorney Mike Isenberg, the town has asked that the withdrawal be invalidated and that the defendants pay the cost of the legal action.

The defendants, none of whom are permanent residents of Sunset Beach, are Everett L. Wohlbruck, Nancy A. Wohlbruck, John F.

Youngblood III, Nita W. Youngblood, Richard L. Layton, Karen S. Layton, Samuel S. Conly III, Vivian S. Conly, Richard C. Hogg, JoAnne S. Hogg, Larry W. Calhoun and Patricia B. Calhoun.

Prior to the withdrawal, the town had planned to use "12th Street" as a neighborhood beach access site which would have included seven parking spaces and a dune crossover.

Sunset Beach Town Council first learned that the property had been withdrawn in November. At that time, Councilman Ed Gore informed his fellow board members that the town no longer owned the street and would have to refuse state monies which would have funded the beach access facility.

In January, town council voted 3-1 to authorize Isenberg to file the lawsuit. Gore, who developed the

four properties along that street, opposed that action.

According to the lawsuit, Gore deeded the actual street over to the property owners in August. This deed was recorded Oct. 14, when the property owners had the street withdrawn from dedication.

The lawsuit contends that the street was dedicated in 1976 when land at the eastern end of Sunset Beach was platted. However, the street was originally platted and dedicated in 1958.

Isenberg said the town has 15 years from the time of dedication to open and use the street. If it is not opened within that time limit, the developer has the option of withdrawing the property from dedication.

The lawsuit concludes that the town is still legally entitled to accept the offer of dedication and open and improve the street.