

Researchers Say Island Roads Are Vulnerable

Beachfront roads at Ocean Isle Beach and Oak Island will be susceptible to closures from ocean damage within the next 20 years, according to N.C. State University researchers.

Six sections of barrier island roads in Brunswick County are among 22 along the North Carolina coast that may be vulnerable to wave overwash, sand deposits, flooding or undermining, a recently completed two-year study indicates.

"They're not in danger, but over a period of years they could be," said Dr. John R. Stone, associate professor of civil engineering at N.C. State and a member of the study team.

Stone said researchers concluded that approximately five miles of the beachfront road at Ocean Isle Beach starting at the east end of the island are "vulnerable."

On Oak Island, the team determined that sections of Ocean Drive at Yaupon Beach and Long Beach are susceptible to future damage and closures. Fort Caswell Beach Road near the CP&L pumping station is also considered vulnerable. A portion of that road was relocated in 1990.

The local portions of roads are among 22 sections totaling 35 miles that were pinpointed in the study, which began in 1989. It was designed to help transportation officials predict highway problems between now and 2010.

Ocean Boulevard East at Holden Beach was not identified as one of



ANOTHER SECTION of East First Street at Ocean Isle Beach buckled and crumbled during Hurricane Hugo in 1989. N.C. State University researchers say about five miles of road on the island's east end are susceptible to damage within the next 20 years.

the susceptible areas, though it has sustained damage from erosion in recent years.

In addition to Stone, study team members included associate civil engineering professors Dr. Margery F. Overton and Dr. John S. Fisher.

Pat Strong, highway research engineer for the N.C. Department of Transportation, said the vulnerability of the roads represents the potential for disruption of traffic and inconvenience to the public rather than posing any immediate danger.

In doing the study, the N.C. State researchers developed a computer model that could be used to review coastal highway problems for a 20-year period.

The future position of the shore-

line was projected using computer digitized maps of the barrier islands and erosion rate data, Stone said.

If the shoreline was determined to be within 230 feet of the highways in the 20-year period, the roadways were considered vulnerable to excessive overwash and possible undercutting.

The N.C. DOT has found historically that road repairs are most often necessary in areas where the ocean is within 230 feet of a road.

Most of the highways are relatively close to the beach with a single row of dunes in between. Erosion rates in the vulnerable areas average about three feet per year and go up to 15 feet per year in some locations.

Besides pinpointing vulnerable areas, Stone said the study provides recommendations for correcting the problems and protecting the highways.

Engineering recommendations include relocating roadways either to new locations or existing parallel roads, replacing sand that has been washed away and abandoning some sections near inlets. The estimated cost of the work is \$100 million.

North Carolina's coastal highway system extends 200 miles over a series of barrier islands. Tourists traveling those roads generate an estimated \$1.1 billion in revenue each year.

Strong said most of the highway segments studied are considered vi-

tal. "As a result, the study will be a useful planning document in helping the department protect these highways," he said.

Although the study model focuses on North Carolina, Stone said it can be applied to any roads that run adjacent to ocean shorelines if the appropriate data exists.

"Simply because the highways are next to the shoreline, they are subject to a variety of natural forces and are always being damaged," he said.

"It's imperative to have a reliable means of measuring and planning for the damage if you are going to make cost-effective decisions about repair and protection."

Bus Class Offered

The N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles is offering a three-day driving course for prospective school bus drivers, announced Vicki Jenrette, driver education specialist.

The course is scheduled Wednesday through Friday, Feb. 5-8, at West Brunswick High School, on N.C. 130 west of Shallotte.

Students must have a North Carolina driver's license and have had no moving violations on their driving record within the last 12 months. All three days of the course must be completed as well, she said.

For more information, call Ms. Jenrette at the Traffic Safety Office, 919-754-5098.

Hearing Set For Fishermen

Local fishermen will have a chance to comment on proposals to require a license to sell seafood and abolish the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission at an upcoming public hearing.



REDWINE

The N.C. Joint Legislative Study Commission on Seafood and Aquaculture will conduct the hearing Monday, Feb. 17, at 7:30 p.m. in the Public Assembly Building in Bolivia.

State Rep. David Redwine, who is co-chairman of the commission, said area fishermen will be allowed to speak at the hearing about any other concerns they have about the fishing industry.

The two proposals involving the seafood sales license and the need for the Marine Fisheries Commission were presented in the form of bills during the 1991 legislative session.

Redwine said they were passed to the legislative committee for further study, and the hearing is being held to gauge public opinion.

The legislative commission will meet Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 9 a.m. until noon at the Jones-Byrd Clubhouse at Sea Trail Plantation in Sunset Beach.

Minor Injuries Listed In Two Highway Wrecks

Only minor injuries were reported in two accidents on Brunswick County highways last week.

Two Southport people were injured early Saturday when the car they were in overturned on N.C. 179 about 2.5 miles south of Shallotte.

John Ralph Ladd, 30, was charged with driving while impaired and driving while his license was revoked after the 2 a.m. accident, reported State Trooper B.D. Barnhardt.

According to Barnhardt's report, Ladd was traveling west on N.C. 179 when his 1982 Datsun traveled off the eastbound shoulder, struck a large mailbox, ran into the ditch and overturned.

The car came to rest on its top, Barnhardt stated.

Both Ladd and a passenger, Ricky Dean Ladd, 23, of Southport, received minor injuries and were taken to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply.

Damage was estimated at \$2,000

to the car and \$100 to the mailbox.

Three Injured

Three people were injured Friday afternoon in a wreck on U.S. 17 about 2.6 miles south of Shallotte.

Timothy James Strickland, 33, of Shallotte, was charged with making an unsafe movement following the 5 p.m. accident, State Trooper R.L. Murray reported.

According to Murray's report, Strickland was traveling south on U.S. 17 when he attempted a left turn while another vehicle was passing. Strickland's 1986 Ford pickup struck the right side of a 1989 Ford passenger van driven by John Jackson Kelley Jr., 29, of Conway, S.C., Murray reported.

Both drivers and a passenger in the Strickland pickup, Mark Strickland, 25, of Supply, received minor injuries, but no one was transported to the hospital.

Damage was estimated at \$3,500 to the Strickland pickup and \$4,500 to the Kelley van.

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