

Corps Seeking Comment On Bird Island Proposal

BY LYNN CARLSON

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is soliciting public comment on the plans of Bird Island owner Janie Pace Price to construct a 6,100-foot-long system of bridging and causeway to property she says she wants to turn into a family compound.

In a notice issued Friday, the Corps said it will use the comments it receives to evaluate the impacts of the proposed activity and to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for the proposal.

The future of the undeveloped barrier island off Sunset Beach is the subject of a conflict between conservationists and Price, who owns most of the island.

The fledgling Bird Island Preservation Society wants the island preserved in its pristine state and is recruiting members and donations in hopes of buying the property from Price. Leaders of the society say they have been in contact with Price's agents and understand that she would consider an offer; however, no purchase amount has been mentioned.

Meanwhile, Price argued last week on the statewide news broadcast "Stateline", that her property rights are being ignored and that her development plans would be less intrusive to nature than the thousands of residents and tourists who now use Bird Island as if it were a public park.

In its notice the Corps said, "The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest."

It says "all factors which may be relevant" will be considered, including conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural

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—U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, navigation, shore erosion, recreation, water quality and others.

Price proposes to construct 2,330 linear feet of pile-supported bridging and 3,770 linear feet of 46-foot-wide road and shoulder on an old causeway which was destroyed in a storm in the mid-70s.

The plans, drawn for Price by Wilmington engineers Henry Von Oesen & Associates, call for less than a quarter acre of intertidal marsh to be filled at the end of the access road. The access system would lead to 55 or 60 acres of upland in the middle of the island which Price says she will turn into approximately 15 single-family homesites for her relatives.

The Corps notice includes maps of the proposed development and sketches of the proposed bridge and causeway as well as a pier with floating dock, beach access and through ramp. All are attachments to Price's

pending proposal before the state Division of Environmental Management.

The Corps notice says its decision to issue a permit will not be made until the Division of Environmental Management issues, denies or waives state certification of the plans under the Clean Water Act. The DEM plans to take final action on issuance of the Clean Water Act certification on or after Jan. 22, according to the Corps notice.

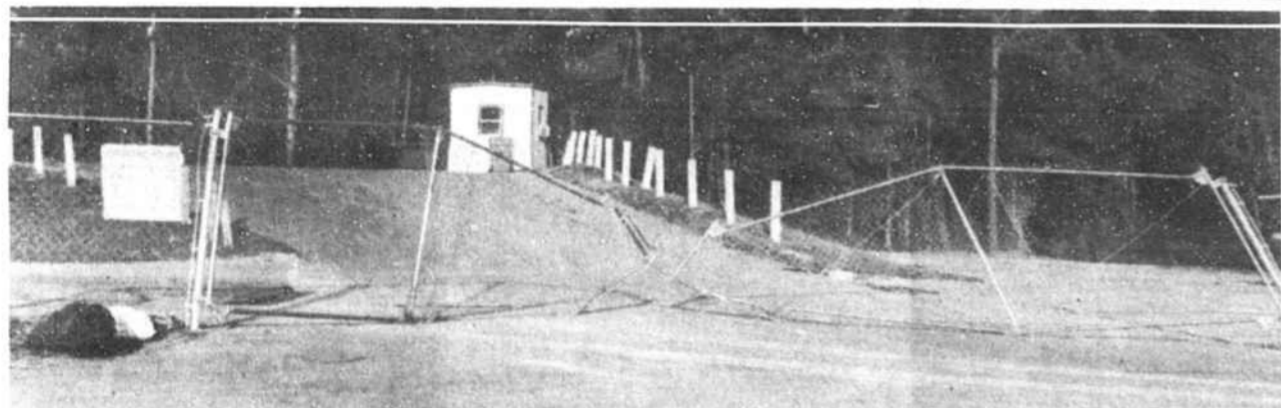
The Bird Island proposal took on new urgency last week for those who wish to see it preserved, when the town boards of Sunset Beach and Calabash approved resolutions to form a joint South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority. Bill Ducker, society president, asked the Sunset Beach Town Council to exclude Bird Island from the sewer proposal, but was told that would be im-

possible because the island is primarily private property.

Ducker said he fears that the potential availability of sewer service to the island would make it more attractive for development or put its purchase price out of reach for conservation groups.

The Corps will accept written or oral comments on the proposal until 4:15 p.m. on Jan. 4. Written materials should be addressed to Rudolf Schiener, Department of the Army, Wilmington District Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 1890, Wilmington NC 28402-1890. Schiener's telephone number is (919)251-4629.

Comments on the application for Clean Water Act certification should be made in writing and must be received by Jan. 18 in the N.C. Division of Environmental Management, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh NC 27611-7687, Attention: John Dorney.



STAFF PHOTO BY EDDIE SWEATT

Dumpsite Vandalism

The chain-link fence outside Brunswick County's Oxpen Road convenience site lies in ruins Tuesday morning. "Apparently someone didn't like the hours," said Randy Gainey, branch manager of Waste Industries Inc., which operates the county-owned dumping and recycling sites. It is third time the fence has been vandalized since the company took over its operation last July. He estimated the damage would cost taxpayers between \$2,000 and \$3,000.

Site Chosen For VIC Basket Distribution

The Schaeffer Buick building in Southport will be the distribution site for the Volunteer & Information Center Christmas food and gift baskets.

"We tried to find a site that is closer to the center of the county, but our primary concern is enough space to accommodate sorting and storing all the food and gifts for almost 600 families," said Angie Fisher, VIC executive assistant. "This proved to be our best option."

The building is beside the Western Sizzlin' Steak House by the N.C. 211 entrance to River Run Shopping Center.

"I know it will require a long drive for some, but I'm sure they'll be happy when they finally pick up their Christmas basket," Fisher said.

For those whose last name begins with the letters A through L, distribution will be Monday, Dec. 21, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. For the remaining families, distribution will be Tues-

day, Dec. 22, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

BCC Trustees Did Not Meet

The regular meeting of the Brunswick Community College Board of Trustees, scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 16, was canceled. Trustees will not meet until Wednesday, Jan. 20, said Anne Marie Bellamy, public information officer.

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