



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

BIRD ISLAND PRESERVATION SOCIETY board members Clete Waldmiller, Frank Nesmith, Minnie Hunt and Sue Weddle pose at the 40th Street access mailbox, a distribution point for news and information about its work.

Mail Boxes Playing Prominent Roles In Bird Island Preservation Effort

BY SUSAN USHER

The Bird Island Preservation Society has the usual post office box for incoming mail and some days it overflows, to the delight of group treasurer Sue Weddle.

But there's also a special BIPS box for outgoing news and information, a standard rural delivery mailbox mounted on a pole at the foot of the 40th Street beach accessway at Sunset Beach.

On its post are tide tables; inside are Society brochures, newsletters, copies of news articles regarding the island, and information about periodic nature walks to Bird Island's public beaches.

It seems only natural that mailboxes are playing such a prominent role in the Society's effort to rescue the island from potential development. Another mailbox on the island itself has helped bring Bird Island frequenters together over the years through the journal writing of

"This island is a jewel and a part of Brunswick County's local heritage."

—Sue Weddle

"Kindred Spirits".

Bird Island sprawls in the middle of Madd Inlet, straddling the North Carolina/South Carolina state line. On low tide, it's only a quick, shallow wade from the western tip of Sunset Beach across the inlet to the public beach of the privately-owned island. Most Calabash and South Carolina residents travel by boat to the island's far side near the Little River Inlet Jetty.

The 1,200-acre complex of marshes and dunes provides valuable habitat for feeding, resting and in some cases nesting, by an array of wildlife that includes several species considered threatened or endangered, or whose numbers are on the decline in North Carolina, such as beach amaranth, a plant, and sea turtles, piping plovers and a variety of colonial nesting waterbirds.

At least one visitor to the privately-owned island, environmental activist Arthur Cartier of Little River, (Continued On Following Page)

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