

FIRST REPORT TO GOVERNOR TERRY SANFORD  
FROM THE  
NORTH CAROLINA OUTER BANKS SEASHORE PARK COMMISSION

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### Introduction

This Commission was established by you by executive order issued Aug. 3, 1962, with instructions to help develop and coordinate among State, Federal and local agencies plans for protecting and developing that portion of our seacoast from Shackleford Banks to the Virginia line. In December, after a long-lasting and terrific storm had pounded our entire coastline for days, you requested that we consider protective measures for all our coast and this Commission accepted the added responsibility.

To date, we have held three full Commission meetings and numerous committee meetings. At our initial meeting at Nags Head, August 20-21, we organized and began a preliminary exploration of our problem. Representatives of the Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service attended and you addressed the group. By beach buggy and station wagon, our Commission examined that portion of the coast from Nags Head to the Virginia Line.

Our second meeting was held at Morehead City, September 14-15. At this meeting we established five committees: The Executive Committee, composed of the Commission officers and chairmen of the four other committees; the Protection Committee, headed by Mr. Fred Cox of Grifton; the Development Committee, headed by Mr. Ashley Futrell of Washington, N. C.; the Dare-Currituck Committee, headed by Mr. George Cherry of Pictolus; and the Core Banks-Portsmouth Island Committee, headed by Mr. Harvey Hines of Kinston. These committees began functioning immediately. The full Commission also examined Shackleford Banks, Core Banks and Portsmouth Island, flying over this area in helicopters made available by the Marine Corps, and landing at frequent intervals to see at ground level the condition of this portion of the coast.

Our third meeting was held January 19, 1963, at New Bern, where the Commission received certain recommendations from its Protection Committee and conducted a three-hour public hearing attended by approximately 250 delegates representing every coastal county as well as other areas. At the hearing, expressions of support for the proposed protection program came from Congressmen Herbert C. Bonner and David N. Henderson, who spoke to the group, and Alton A. Lennon, who was unable to attend but assured his full support in a letter to the chairman. Those attending the hearing also endorsed the proposals, which will be discussed more fully later in this report.

This report will deal primarily with the protection phase of our activities since we regard this as paramount and of pressing immediacy. The other committees, meanwhile, are in various stages of working on their proposals, which will be contained in a later report. Briefly, the Development Committee is considering numerous suggestions; the Dare-Currituck Committee is participating in discussions with the Currituck County Commissioners and the National Park Service concerning the future of the Currituck Banks; and the Core Banks-Portsmouth Island Committee is discussing with the Carteret County Commissioners proposals for that area. We anticipate that a report carrying their recommendations will be available during the Spring and prior to adjournment of the 1963 General Assembly.

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The Problem

The Outer Banks off the northern half of our coast and the sandy beaches and islands along the southern half represent our first line of defense against the sea. If these defenses crumble, vast changes in environment loom. Currituck Sound, for instance, would become salt where now fresh water fishes abound, and fertile farmlands would be threatened. The western shores of Pamlico and Core sounds would become the ocean's edge, subject to the same erosion which now is slowly taking away the barrier Banks. Towns and cities of the Coastal Plain would feel the impact.

Hurricanes and other severe storms of recent years have made it all too apparent that our first line of defense is fragile and becoming more so. Since 1954, beginning with Hazel, six hurricanes and four severe storms have caused damages in North Carolina, primarily along the coast, estimated to total more than \$386,000,000, of which \$300,000,000 was to private property. Last year alone, our State Highway and Public Works Commission paid out \$641,000 to repair storm damage to roads and other Commission properties on the Outer Banks. The National Park Service, whose dunes probably saved Hatteras Island from near total disaster last year, has spend \$1,900,000 on protective measures since establishing Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area along 65 miles of our coast and is spending an additional \$400,000 this year.

Every one of our famous beach resorts has felt the effect of these storms in varying degree over the past nine years. Core Banks and Portsmouth Island have been virtually flattened and now resemble little more than wide sand bars along most of their 52-mile length. The entire coast is in need of strengthening for the never-ending battle with the sea.

#### The Answers

Our Commission found that much work already has been done on this problem. The State Board of Water Resources, which was established in 1958, has done a thorough job of exploring the problem and in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers has under way studies of the entire coastline, from which will come specific recommendations for each area. Projects already have been recommended for Carolina Beach, Wrightsville Beach, Fort Macon, and Atlantic Beach. Studies are nearing completion for Core Banks, Portsmouth Island and Ocracoke, and are in varying stages for the remainder of the coast. All studies will be finished by 1965.

The State, the Federal government and some localities are in position to begin building protective dunes and other devices immediately, pending favorable consideration by the 1963 General Assembly of the appropriations we are supporting. We feel this must be a partnership enterprise, with all levels of government sharing in the responsibility and the costs of this undertaking, although we must recognize that local sources have limited funds.

We also feel that there must be a varied approach to the problem, that building dunes alone will not suffice. So we are suggesting programs looking toward the grassing of our barren beaches, more adequate building codes in coastal communities, and further experimentation with various methods of anchoring sands and building up the shoreline.

#### Recommendations

Our Commission, therefore, submits the following recommendations for your consideration:

1. That \$500,000 be appropriated annually during the next biennium to the State Board of Water Resources for building sand dunes and other civil works projects. This fund would be used to match Federal and local funds in connection with these projects. It is suggested that on projects involving Federal, State and local participation, the State should pay 75 per cent and the local governments 25 per cent of that portion remaining after the Federal government has assumed its share.
2. That \$25,000 be appropriated annually to State College during the next biennium for research and cooperation in grassing barren sand areas. Work already done has demonstrated that amazing success can be attained with proper fertilization and cultivation; further work needs to be done to produce grasses needed for varying conditions. Part of this project would provide technical supervision for grass plantings by private land owners as well as on public areas.

3. That \$750,000 be appropriated annually during the next biennium for the purpose of buying thin strips along threatened portions of our coastline which are not yet developed. This money should be placed in a non-reverting fund, since the expenditures may well run over a period of several years. It is proposed that up to 15 per cent of these funds may be used for pilot and research projects in beach restoration and protection. Lands purchased with the funds would provide rights-of-way for protective dunes and, at the same time, assure that future building developments would be a safer distance back from the ocean's edge.

4. That funds be provided to the State Insurance Department for additional personnel in its building code division to work with local communities along the coast in developing more adequate building codes especially tailored for the unusual conditions encountered there. Better codes must be developed and enforced if our coast is to achieve its fullest development.

5. That \$239,100 be appropriated to the Parks Division of the Department of Conservation and Development for protective work at Fort Macon State Park. This is to carry out a project recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers after a careful survey of erosion in the Fort Macon area.

With respect to Recommendation Number 3, this Commission suggests that lands to be purchased should be determined by a committee composed of the chairman of the State Board of Water Resources; the State property control officer; the chairman of the board of county commissioners or the mayor of the coastal community, or both, of the areas under consideration; with the Governor or his designated agent sitting as chairman while purchases are being considered. The chairman of the county board or mayor would serve only while land in their respective areas was under consideration but would have a full vote when the committee acted. It should be noted that Federal funds probably will become available on a matching basis for these strip purchases, which were strongly recommended by a conference of governors called by President Kennedy after a storm severely battered the Atlantic coast in March, 1962.

It is also proposed with respect to Recommendation Number 3 that pilot projects and research carried out with the funds designated for this purpose should be under the direction of the State Board of Water Resources.

#### Conclusion

The urgency of this situation cannot be too greatly emphasized. The storms of recent years have left us with our defenses virtually down in many places. A new inlet was cut in the Banks between Avon and Buxton a year ago and has caused much distress in that area; the northern end of Ocracoke Island is steadily eroding away; Core Banks and Portsmouth Island were reduced in height by approximately two feet by the November-December storm last year; engineering studies show there has been a constant receding of the shoreline in many areas.

Our coastal residents who live and work by the sea are greatly alarmed over this situation. We believe they are strongly united behind the program which has been outlined here. Therefore, we submit this report for your consideration.

Woodrow Price, Chairman  
February 1, 1963

FINAL REPORT TO GOVERNOR TERRY SANFORD  
FROM THE  
NORTH CAROLINA OUTER BANKS SEASHORE PARK COMMISSION

Introduction

This Commission was established on August 3, 1962, by executive order of the Governor. It was instructed to help devise plans and coordinate efforts to develop and protect that portion of our coastline from Shackleford Banks northward to the Virginia line. In December, 1962, the Governor instructed this Commission to extend its consideration of protective measures to include the entire coastline of the State. This the Commission did.

We have held numerous meetings, both of the full Commission and of its several committees, and out of these we evolved plans and recommendations, some of which were submitted to the 1963 General Assembly, which acted favorably on them.

One of our recommendations called for creation of a statutory North Carolina Seashore Commission, which would replace both the present Commission and the latent Cape Hatteras Seashore Commission. This was approved by the General Assembly, and on September 13, 1963, the present Commission held its final meeting at Lake Mattamuskeet. At this time we prepared to transfer our activities to the new Commission when it is appointed.

This report will summarize our activities, the actions taken by the General Assembly on recommendations we submitted to the 1963 session, and plans for development which we hope to see come to fruition in the near future.

Our earlier report, filed with your office on February 1, 1963, detailed our efforts and the methods we had followed up until that time. We concentrated our efforts in four major areas, paramounting protection since this appeared to us to be the most pressing problem facing our coastal area. The first report dealt almost entirely with protection. This report will discuss appropriations approved by the

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General Assembly for protective purposes; and also will cover our work in three other fields, namely, development, the future of the Dare-Currituck area and the future of the Core Banks-Portsmouth Island sector.

#### Protection

Our Protection Committee, headed by Mr. Fred Cox of Grifton, worked closely with the State Board of Water Resources and the Army Engineers, and we consulted with people of the coastal area in developing a comprehensive protective program to submit to the General Assembly. Legislators flew over the coast and agreed with our Commission that protective measures were imperative. As a consequence, the General Assembly approved the following appropriations:

1. \$1,000,000 for the construction of sand dunes and other civil works projects, to match Federal and local funds for these purposes. Our Commission suggested that the State should pay 75 per cent and local governments 25 per cent of that portion remaining after the Federal government had assumed its share on projects involving Federal aid. A legislative committee suggested that the State's share be increased to 85 per cent. However, no formula was written into the law and the Advisory Budget Commission has stipulated that the State portion be 80 per cent and the local share 20 per cent.

2. \$25,000 annually for research and cooperation in grassing barren sand areas. This money was appropriated to the State Board of Water Resources, which in turn is making the funds available to N. C. State of the University of North Carolina at Raleigh. This is to report that much work already has been done by Dr. W. W. Woodhouse of N. C. State, who reports a great deal of success in developing new fertilization methods. Grasses will be available in the near future which will serve as an anchor for our shifting sands.

3. \$250,000 for the purchase of thin strips along threatened portions of our coastline which are not yet developed, with the provision that up to 15 per cent of these funds may be used for pilot and research projects in beach restoration and

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protection. The lands purchased with this fund will provide rights-of-way for protective dunes and also assure that future building developments will be a safer distance back from the ocean's edge. While this is substantially less than the \$1,500,000 we had recommended for this purpose, we believe the sum is sufficient for our needs for a few years ahead.

4. \$250,000 to the Parks Division of the Department of Conservation and Development for protective work at Fort Macon State Park. This was to carry out a project recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers.

No action was taken on a recommendation that additional personnel be assigned to the State Insurance Department to help develop better building codes for coastal communities. We feel that this proposal deserves implementing and should once more be brought to the General Assembly's attention at the 1965 legislative session.

#### Development

Our Development Committee, headed by Mr. Ashley Futrell, suggested that the coastland should recognize that its future lies in the developing tourist industry but that efforts also should be made to develop further both commercial and sports fishing.

This Committee recommended, and our Commission concurred, that a permanent Seashore Commission be established to help plan for the future, to serve as liaison between local interests and the State and Federal governments, and to coordinate the activities of agencies interested in coastal development and protection. The General Assembly enacted a bill to create the proposed Commission.

The Committee suggested that development of the coastal area from Shackleford Inlet northward would be greatly aided by a bridge over Hatteras Inlet and a bridge to replace the outmoded structure over Currituck Sound. It also suggested a bridge at Harkers Island or from a point near Beaufort to Shackleford Banks.

We also proposed the development of a scenic Water Highway behind the Outer

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Banks from Shackleford northward, to be established as a by-product when dredges scour the sound bottoms for the sand to build protective dunes on these Outer Banks. Army Engineers concur in the feasibility of this project and we have suggested to the National Park Service that they incorporate it in their planning for the new Cape Lookout National Seashore, which will be discussed later in this report.

We also recommend that the State improve its ferry service at Hatteras Inlet and between Ocracoke and the mainland as rapidly as feasible; and suggest that private enterprise be encouraged to develop tourist accommodations and recreation facilities. We concur in the establishment of the air strip at Wright Memorial and urge airlines to consider flights to Manteo during the summer season. A member of our Commission, Mr. Earl Phillips, was instrumental in persuading an air-taxi service to make regularly scheduled flights to Manteo and Hatteras.

It is our belief that continued development of this playground of the Atlantic will serve to build a greater attraction for industry to locate in North Carolina. The employees of our plants need an abundance of recreational facilities, and the coastland offers a wonderful place for them to spend their leisure time.

#### Core Banks-Portsmouth Island-Shackleford Banks

Since 1959, the State has been acquiring title to property in this area under an Act appropriating \$400,000 for the purchase of all of Core and Portsmouth and as much of Shackleford as needed to protect Barden's Inlet. At present the State owns about 80 per cent of Core and Portsmouth and is purchasing most of the remainder. It plans to buy about two miles of Shackleford, at the eastern end touching on Barden's Inlet.

A Committee headed by Mr. Harvey Hines surveyed this area carefully. It found that probably the worst erosion in the State is occurring on Portsmouth Island, and that Core Banks is in great need of help. The eastern end of Shackleford is so low as to be useless for habitation at the present.

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This Committee and our Commission ultimately concluded that the future of this area lay in the creation of a new national seashore park. Discussions were held with Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and National Park Service officials, headed by Director Conrad Wirth. Governor Sanford attended this meeting in Washington, together with members of our Commission and with local officials. Federal interest was indicated and Mr. Udall suggested that the new park be designated Cape Lookout National Seashore.

Hearings were held in Beaufort and discussions were held with property owners in the area. A majority of the local residents attending the hearings expressed approval of the proposed park and the Carteret County Board of County Commissioners unanimously adopted a resolution favoring the proposal. This resolution was adopted on June 28, 1963.

The Park Service has agreed with suggestions of this Commission that certain property at Cape Lookout, where private cottages now are located, be left outside the park boundaries just as some villages were excluded from Cape Hatteras National Seashore at the time of its establishment. Also, the Park Service has agreed that owners of property at Portsmouth Village should have lifetime tenure and that only a strip of ocean frontage be taken at that section of the beach owned by Core Banks Gun Club, with the stipulation that if the Gun Club ceases to function as a club the Federal Government would have first refusal of the Gun Club property.

Rep. David N. Henderson, Congressman from the Third District, and Senator B. Everett Jordan have introduced measures to create the new Cape Lookout National Seashore, which would extend all the way from Ocracoke Inlet to Beaufort Inlet. We suggest, and our Commission has adopted a resolution to this effect, that the State of North Carolina deed its properties in this area to the National Park Service for inclusion in the National Seashore. Protective measures recommended for this area would cost many millions of dollars and the Park Service, with the experience it has obtained in many years of work on the upper portions of our coast, is in better

position than the State to carry out greatly needed protective measures in this area.

The Park Service's plan for development of the proposed National Seashore includes camping areas, fishing camps and the Water Highway mentioned before in this report. This canal would provide access by small boats to one of the most beautiful sections of our coast and also would provide a safe all-weather channel for sports and commercial craft operating in Core and Pamlico Sounds.

#### Currituck-Dare

A Committee headed by Mr. George Cherry studied that part of the Currituck-Dare coast which is not yet developed. It found that generally this part of the coast is well preserved but in some low areas is in need of protection. The principal barrier to development is lack of an access road. Most of the property is closely held by hunting clubs.

We concluded that this area would make an ideal National Seashore Park which would add immeasurably to the tourist attractions of our coastland and assure that a beautiful stretch of seashore would be preserved for future generations to enjoy. At the same time, we noted that the creation of a park would enable the State to build a highway to the Virginia line which would open this region to motor travel.

Property values already are high in this area and mounting steadily. We found the property owners greatly opposed to public ownership and the county commissioners insistent that the area be reserved for private development. Some interest was expressed in a plan whereby part of the area would be developed privately and part as a National Seashore. Our Commission worked to bring about an agreement along these lines but to date we have been unsuccessful.

At the instance of property owners and county officials, the 1963 General Assembly established a Turnpike Authority which now is exploring the possibility of building a toll road along this stretch of beach. This idea has failed before but may stand a better chance of success now, particularly if agreements can be worked out with Virginia so the toll road has a connection with the new route over Chesapeake Bay.

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Our Commission concluded that we should allow Currituck and Dare an opportunity to thoroughly explore this avenue before renewing efforts to obtain local support for a plan whereby part of the area would become a National Seashore.

#### Conclusion

Because of the storms of recent years and the steady erosion brought about by winds and tides, some parts of our seashore now are in a dangerously vulnerable position. Dunes are badly needed and we urge that the expenditure of the funds which have been made available should get under way as rapidly as possible. We find a great awareness of these problems among the residents of the coast and a high resolve to find solutions for them.

We see the need for State appropriations of additional funds in the future for protective purposes and think North Carolina should move toward the achievement, as a long range goal, of building a bulwark dune such as that being recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers for most of our coastline. We think, also, that some State funds should be made available annually for emergency repair work and the erection of temporary dunes in dangerously low places, where a small amount of work now may save many dollars in the future.

The horizon for development of our coastal area is unlimited. We think there is room on our coast both for public parks and for private enterprise, and that an adequate amount of seashore should be devoted to each. Great possibilities lie ahead for the North Carolina Seashore Commission, which succeeds us, in the encouragement of development by private enterprise and affording the residents of the coastland a channel through which they can voice their hopes, their desires, their fears and their complaints and offer advice to State and Federal agencies which administer their parks, operate their ferries, build their roads and are responsible for protective measures.

The members of this Commission join me in saying that it has been a privilege to serve in this undertaking and we hope we have been helpful in laying the groundwork for much future advancement along our coast.