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LUNCH TALK — Senators John Burney (left) and Charles Larkins (right) confer Wednesday with L. P. McLendon Jr., a lobbyist for the Core Banks Gun Club.

Senate Roll Call Passes Seashore Property Bill

Legislation authorizing the state to condemn property on the Outer Banks and transfer it to the federal government for inclusion in Cape Lookout National Seashore was approved Wednesday by a 34-9 roll call vote of the Senate.

The bill, already adopted by the House, will become law if the lower chamber concurs with amendments approved by the Senate.

Final endorsement of the bill came in the Senate after Sen. Herman Moore, D-Mecklenburg, failed in an attempt to amend the legislation so that additional state money could not be appropriated for acquiring more privately-owned land for the national seashore.

Moore added, "Nowhere can I find where money was appropriated by the legislature to buy this land." The amendment, which failed by a 26-13 vote, would bar later land purchases "unless the additional state funds are specifically approved by the General Assembly for this stated purpose."

Moore said land that was included in Cape Hatteras National Seashore north of the Cape Lookout project was appraised originally at \$325,000. However, he said, the state eventually paid more than \$3.2 million — much of it to private land owners.

The state is expected to pay about \$65,000 for the land on Core Banks in Carteret County which is needed to create the Cape Lookout National Seashore.

The state has repeatedly attempted to buy 892 acres of land owned by the Core Banks Gun Club and the club has steadfastly rejected the offers.

The state already has acquired 12,000 acres of the beach land needed for the park on Core Banks. Only about 2,500 additional acres remain to be acquired.

The State Supreme Court ruled recently that specific legislation would be needed authorizing the condemnation of the land. The court said current state law does not empower the state to condemn land and then transfer it to the federal government.

Adopted on voice votes were two amendments offered by Sen. John Burney, D-New Hanover, chairman of the Senate Conservation and Development Committee which initially gave the bill an unfavorable report and later revived it.

Burney told the Senate, "As the (amended) bill stands today, we have satisfied the gun club. We have satisfied the U. S. Department of the Interior. And all members of the C&D committee are satisfied with it, with the exception of Sen. Moore."

Later, Sen. Odell Sapp, R-Rowan, a member of the C&D committee, said he opposed the bill.

The amendments adopted by the chamber calls for the commissioners appointed to appraise the land on Core Banks to be appointed the resident superior court judge "from among persons who are residents of counties adjoining Carteret County."

Retain Land

In addition, the Core Banks Gun Club and other non-commercial developments could retain three acres of land for as long as the owner or his spouse lives or, in the case of non-individual ownership, 25 years.

The property owners would be able to use any aircraft landing strips and boat piers now in existence, although hunting ponds which have been developed by property owners would be under restrictions imposed by the federal government.

Land within 750 feet inland from the mean high water line shall be owned by the state for the benefit of the people of this state. This bill.