

State Moving More Rapidly to Acquire Land Far From Reality

Lookout Far From Reality

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State officials are painfully shy about predicting when they will complete land acquisition for the Cape Lookout National Seashore, but Property Officer Carroll Mann said last week: "I feel like we're in the home stretch."

There is general agreement that the state is moving more rapidly now than at any time in the 10 years since it began to acquire the land.

Dan Davis, superintendent of the seashore for the National Park Service, said, "I think they are moving faster

now than they have at any time before."

A spokesman for Second District Congressman David Henderson said, "More progress has been made by the current administration (of Gov. Bob Scott) than was made before."

Dr. William Turner, director of the Department of Administration whose problem with the land acquisition is said to be the most serious, said, "We're pulling all the effort we can possibly devote. We think it should be cleaned up — it's been hanging fire for several years."

"I'm terrifically disappointed at the pace at which it's moving," he said. "I know they have their problems, but I would wish they were further along than they are."

As for predicting when the state will finish acquiring land — or even when it will file the final condemnation suit — no one will. Once burned, twice shy. And the state has been burned repeatedly on Cape Lookout deadlines.

The latest one was May 1. They would have filed the

suit by that time, they said early this year. There are still between 75 and 90 tracts of land involving somewhere between 35 and 60 ownerships to be dealt with, through purchase or condemnation suits.

When will all the condemnation suits be filed? Lehouneur was asked last week. "As soon as possible," he said. "I'm not going to set a deadline."

Mann said: "I cannot and will not estimate the completion date. One of the difficulties is that estimates have been given in the past and when they were not met it caused displeasure on the part of some people."

The Park Service's Dan Davis said, "If everything clicked, it could be maybe two years before the park is established. I think it could be done in two or three years if they really move on it. That may be about the right length for a home stretch on a track that is already 10 years long."

Over 90 Per Cent of Cape's Land Now Has Been Acquired by State

The Cape Lookout National Seashore will be 33 miles of Outer Banks, once the property is acquired, but at this point there seems to be no definitive report on how much has been acquired and how much is still in private hands.

The completed seashore will include:

- Portsmouth Island, 33 miles, 4,863 acres, running from Ocracoke Inlet south to Drum Inlet.
- Core Banks, 35 miles, 14,830 acres, from Drum Inlet south to Cape Lookout and including the book-shaped cape and its black and white diamond-patterned lighthouse.
- Shackleford Banks, 10 miles, 4,683 acres, which swings west between the cape and Beaufort Inlet, just east of Atlantic Beach.
- Except for 250 acres reserved for private use on the cape, the state must acquire all of Portsmouth Island and Core Banks before the National Park Service will acquire Shackleford Banks.
- Of the 24,693-acre total, 16,000 acres are land and marsh and 8,693 acres are waterways, bays, creeks and ditches. All acreage figures are based on briefs prepared for 1965 U. S. Senate committee hearings.
- State Asst. Atty. Gen. Parks Incehour said last week the state has acquired "a little

more than 90 per cent" of the overall land it needs, including "well over 80 per cent" on Portsmouth Island. He said he has no current figures on acreage still to be acquired, but the state has recently been using the figure of about 2,000 acres still to be acquired.

He said he also has no tabulation of the number of owners the state has still to deal with.

Unofficial Check

An unofficial check of records in the Carteret Courthouse in Beaufort showed that 79 private owners are still paying taxes on 87 tracts of land on Core Banks and Portsmouth Island. Based on aerial photos, the tracts include 3,318 acres of land (approximately 16 per cent of the total) — about 2,750 acres on Core Banks and 563 on Portsmouth.

Does the record in Carteret show for the same area between 35 and 60 private ownerships of somewhere around 75 or 80 tracts. Deeds do not carry acreage figures.

The totals differ because of the typically confused condition of Outer Banks land records everywhere, and because the sea giveth and the sea taketh away — some lands erode, others build.

Some owners of record — according to the deeds — are



PLANS SEASHORE—Dan Davis, superintendent of the Cape Lookout National Seashore, stands in front of a painting of the Cape Lookout Lighthouse.

No Roads, Limited Access Planned for Cape Lookout

BEAUFORT — The Cape Lookout National Seashore will be located just south of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, but it will be quite unlike the Hatteras recreation area.

The master plan for the Cape Lookout facility is nearly ready for final draft. It won't be unveiled to the public until the establishment of the seashore is within sight, but Supt. Dan Davis provided some glimpses last week as to what it may be.

First of all, the Carteret County Outer Banks are quite different, physically, from the Hatteras area.

"Cape Hatteras is the Rock of Gibraltar compared to this," Davis said. "These are very narrow islands that are under water half the time, even on a spring tide. There are many miles of them that are less than 1,200 feet wide."

Then, too, Hatteras has a highway its entire length — the Lookout area has none, and Davis wants to keep it that way.

The Carteret Banks "are fast becoming unique because they are roadless. There are plenty of beaches the public can drive to," Davis said. "I don't think we're depriving them of a drive-in beach."

Davis envisions access to the Lookout seashore by boat only, including a passenger ferry that would run between — probably — Harker's Island and Cape Lookout, about two miles across Core Sound.

On the cape there would be a train of passenger-carrying carts for transport to the lighthouse and for a short way north. But for the rest of the seashore's 33 miles, access would be by private boat only — or by air.

Davis, who is actually the second superintendent of this national seashore that exists to date only on paper, came

here in February 1968. He signed the National Park Service in 1947.

He declined to estimate how many visitors a roadless, boat-access seashore might draw (Hatteras has more than a million a year) but said, "We'll attract a type of people that isn't coming into this area now." Densely developed, commercial Atlantic Beach is now the main attraction in Carteret.

Cities Statistics

Davis cited statistics to contrast Atlantic Beach and the Hatteras National Seashore: 75 per cent of those who come to Atlantic Beach motels live within 200 miles and 80 per cent of them are North Carolinians. Of those who visit Hatteras Island motels, 72 per cent live more than 200 miles away and only 25 per cent are North Carolinians or Virginians, according to the statistics.

The national park atmosphere draws people from all over the Eastern Seaboard," Davis said, "and he believes Cape Lookout will be a special attraction. It will have camping areas, picnic areas, protected beaches, rest rooms and boat landing facilities, but probably little else except itself, as he envisions the place.

One thing it won't have, Davis has anything to say about it. It is the giant beach dome originally proposed, which was to be built with sand from a channel dredged the entire length.

In February 1968, 33 officials originally presented that plan and the environmentalists agreed with them entirely.

Out of Picture

"As far as I'm concerned, this is a mirror not of the picture," Davis said. "Even if we were interested, I don't think we'd be allowed in it because of the damage to the estuaries and marsh."

"We are the foremost conservation agency in the federal government and I think we would be competent to trailers to all we stand for to even consider such a thing."

But pollution has already come to the Banks. There are hundreds of abandoned cars out there and hundreds of fishing shacks and camps, some of them built and many on land the state already owns, Davis reported.

"It will cost an estimated \$200,000 (to clean it up) before we put up a sign — we'd be ashamed," he said. "It's a mess."

First Eastest

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