

ly, stressed that the project will not begin on a home... He said the housing authority sought assurances from the authority had requested more

State Puts Up Money for Bald Head

By JACK CHILDS
Staff Writer

The state put up \$19,826 Tuesday in a display of confidence in its chances of winning its tug-of-war with would-be commercial developers over Bald Head Island.

The sum represents the cost of the initial phase of a study to explore ways to utilize the 12,000-acre, subtropical island within the presupposition that it will be acquired by the state.

Carolina Cape Fear Corp., a High Point-based firm formed recently, has announced plans to develop the uninhabited island into a plush resort area.

But while the firm presently holds an option to buy the island from its present owner, "I see no reason why the state doesn't have as good a chance to get the island as anyone else," Dr. William Turner, director of the State Department of Administration, told newsmen Tuesday.

The study, ordered by Gov. Bob Scott, will be conducted by the Research Triangle Institute, Turner said at a press conference in his office here. It will consider options ranging from complete preservation of the island in a wilderness state, opening it to the public as a natural area or development of it as a state park, he said.

George Herbert, director of the institute, said the study would include the ecology of the island and surrounding area and various methods of access to the island. "It presupposes state ownership," he said.

The study is scheduled for completion within four to six months. It will be submitted to state officials, who will determine whether to endorse one of the possible uses identified in the initial study for submission to the 1971 General Assembly.

If this is the case, a second



Staff Photo by Bill Campbell

George Herbert (left) and Bill Turner announce Bald Head study

study phase is planned. This phase, Turner said, would determine in detail the costs of the chosen plan.

Herbert said that both phases of the study could be completed in time for consideration by the next legislature, which will convene in January 1971.

No cost estimate has been made for the second phase study, reporters were told.

Turner and Herbert were asked whether the study would require visits to the island, and what would happen if either the present owner, Frank Sherrill of Charlotte, or the would-be developers object to the study personnel going onto the island.

"I don't believe a gentleman of Mr. Sherrill's stature would

deny access to the island for a study of this type," Herbert said.

"However, enough is known of the island, enough materials are available, that the study could be conducted to a great extent without having to go there."

The study, he said, will weigh all advantages and disadvantages, including costs, of the various possible uses the state could make of the island, located at the mouth of the Cape Fear River near Southport.

Sherrill has said his price for the island is \$5.5 million, the major stumbling block so far to state ownership. Gov. Bob Scott has said that the money question makes state acquisition of Bald Head a

matter for the 1971 General Assembly to decide.

However, Gil Horton of Wilmington, chairman of the State Board of Conservation and Development, said last Friday that funds for the purchase of Bald Head "may be available (to the state) in the near future." He declined to elaborate, but it is known the state has been looking into financing by foundations and other private groups.

Carolina Cape Fear Corp. says it will exercise its option with Sherrill in the very near future and move ahead with its plans to develop Bald Head into a resort-recreation-residential area that ultimately would accommodate from 50,000 to 60,000 people.

Bald Head Resort Plans Are Disclosed

By JACK CHILDS

plans to exercise its option... single family and multi-family housing, motels, a mile of

Later Sale

Asked whether "under any condition" his group would consider a later sale to the state, Henderson said:

"I haven't discussed this with my colleagues, but personally, I would regret the state making such a request again. But if it is requested,