

## **Holden Beach Marshland Walkway**

A meeting was held on Wednesday January 16, 2008 with Jason Walker, Director for Planning and Inspections, Town of Holden Beach, and HBPOA Directors, Ron Skubic and John Lytvinenko, to obtain current facts about the proposed Marshland Walkway (between Greensboro and Scotch Bonnet Sts.) and the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) grant. This report is provided to HBPOA members so they can have the most accurate and timely information to form their own opinions. Information was also supplied by Jack Smith, former town commissioner and Mark Tuttle, Town of Holden Beach, Public Area Improvement Committee (PAIC).

### **Property Description.**

North Carolina State University (NCSU) is the reputed property owner according to current town maps. The area under consideration includes 23.67 acres stretching from Greensboro St. to Scotch Bonnet St. and Lots 210 and 211 (100'x150') on Ocean Blvd. West, plus a lot ("Isolated Lot") approx. 100'x125', located back toward the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) spill area. This lot has a permanent 30' access easement from Scotch Bonnet St. granted by Holden Beach Enterprises (HBE). The 23.67 acres consist of the western edge, which starts at a point on Scotch Bonnet St. 150' back from OBW and runs northerly toward ICW for 974'. The eastern edge starts at a point on Greensboro St. 150' back from OBW (behind sewer pumping station) and runs northerly toward ICW for 785'. Lots 210 and 211 are 2<sup>nd</sup> row lots on OBW where the NCSU sign is located. All remaining 2<sup>nd</sup> row lots on this stretch along OBW are owned by HBE.

It is understood that over the years NCSU has given verbal approval for this project and has shown a definite interest in seeing the project completed. This land is under the local stewardship of the Brunswick County NC Extension Service. Formal agreement will be needed before the project start.

Parking is planned for 9 cars on Lots 210 & 211 OBW, and 9 cars on the Isolated Lot depending on how much dry land is available. Jason would like to make a request to Holden Beach Enterprises to move the 30' access easement approx. 250' closer toward the ICW. The easement would then go through the middle of the area HBE owns, which may eventually have homes built on it, and the access road may potentially be paved by HBE.

### **Grant**

The grant is a CAMA Access Grant, a reimbursement type grant. Town of Holden Beach (HB) would provide upfront construction funding and would be reimbursed for 75% of expenditures. At this time the preliminary estimated amount for the project is approx. \$316,000. The CAMA share is \$238,000 and HB share is \$78,000. Funding is a one-time grant and can be used only for construction. The current grant approval expires on 6/30/08. HB can apply for a one-year extension.

### **Project Variations.**

This report discusses 3 variations that have been discussed over the years. Version 3 is the current tentative plan voted on by the Town of Holden Beach Public Area Improvement Committee.

#### **Version 1)** (no sketch available)

In the 1998-99 timeframe, a group of NCSU graduate students was asked for ideas to improve Holden Beach. One suggestion was an educational walkway through the marshland which had been donated to NCSU by Holden Beach Enterprises, and dedicated to Drew Griffin. Their idea was a simplistic design of a straight walkway starting at the NCSU sign on lots 210 & 211 OBW going in a northerly direction and ending about the center of the marshland, with an observation

area. Educational Stations (signs with Plexiglas, 18"x 24") along the way would describe marshland vegetation and wildlife. NCSU School of Design students would create the signs.

**Version 2)** (As envisioned by Jason Walker, Jan 2008. See Version 2 sketch. No formal plans completed at this time.)

A six foot wide elevated walkway, handicap accessible, made of pressure treated wood, with 2 inch x 6 inch walkway treads. Beginning at Lots 210 & 211 on OBW, meandering northerly along the high ridge lines through the marshland. At a point near the middle of the 23.67 acres, the walkway splits into a "Y" shape. (Please see attached Version 2 sketch) One branch meanders along a high ridgeline westerly connecting to Scotch Bonnet, and the other branch meanders along a high ridgeline easterly connecting to Greensboro St. A northerly spur off the Scotch Bonnet link connects with the parking lot located on the Isolated Lot. (Spur not shown on Version 2 sketch) **Note:** Ed Brooks, CAMA field rep assisted with walkway layout

The Version 2 project idea is for:

- Five (5) "Educational Stations" with marshland/wildlife information plaques, 18 inches x 24 inches approx. and covered by Plexiglas.
- A Gazebo 12 ft. x 12 ft. approx. for sitting/resting.
- Walkway lighting – type to be determined.
- Five (5) trash cans, one located at every access point, plus one on the walkway.
- Height of walkway to be minimal. Support joists will be 3 ft. approx. above the mud line or 18 inches above high tide mark or grass height.
- Minimal maintenance. The life expectancy of the entire walkway would exceed 15-20 years, after which it would need heavier maintenance.

**Version 3)** (As envisioned by Public Area Improvement Committee Feb. 2008. See Version 3 diagram and rendering)

There is currently no *fixed* plan. There could be many alternatives. An initial tentative plan has been developed with CAMA input. Attached Version 3 diagram is an example of a central corridor plan. Starting on lots 210 & 211 OBW, dissecting the marshland connecting with parking area on the rear Isolated Lot. This plan shows two Gazebos 24' x 24' which are scaled down versions of the Jordan Blvd Pavilion. Existing plat shows water in designated rear parking area. A survey is needed to confirm.

PAIC Comment: *"Please note that practical plans can be developed without walkway reaching to Greensboro and Scotch Bonnet."*

**Project history** (re-collections per Jason Walker and former commissioner Jack Smith)

1998-99 – Version 1- NCSU graduate students came up with a simplistic design of a straight walkway starting at the NCSU sign on lots 210 & 211 OBW and ending about the center of the marshland.

2003 – Jason started working at HB. He found an application for a grant for \$50,000 through the NC Rural Trail Grants. This grant was not approved. It is believed this was a 50/50 matching grant. HB's share would have been \$50K. It was believed \$100K was not enough to complete the project.

2005 – The existence of a CAMA Access Grant was discovered and believed to be a good source for receiving funds for town improvement. Jason submitted an application.

2006 – (end) – CAMA approved the current grant and preliminary contracts were signed.

2007 – (early) – Project was transferred to HB Public Area Improvement Committee chaired by

Mark Tuttle. Committee was focused on completing Jordan Blvd project and did not have time to act on Marshland Walkway project.

2007 – (Nov) – Jason discussed Marshland Walkway project with Commissioner-elect Ray Lehr.

2008 – (Jan) – Jason sent email to new town council and discussed project at town meeting. Developed Version 2 sketch.

2008 – (Jan) – Project is re-assigned to HB Public Area Improvement Committee.

2008 – (Feb) – Version 3 – HB Public Area Improvement Committee tentative design.

Sent to Town of Holden Beach Planning and Zoning Committee for review.

### **Miscellaneous.**

Residents have brought up several concerns: walkway maintenance costs, whether HB can afford to spend \$78,000, should it be used for other projects, and concern about walkway becoming local hangout for kids. It was recommended that Jason brief Police Chief Wally Lane and obtain his thoughts.

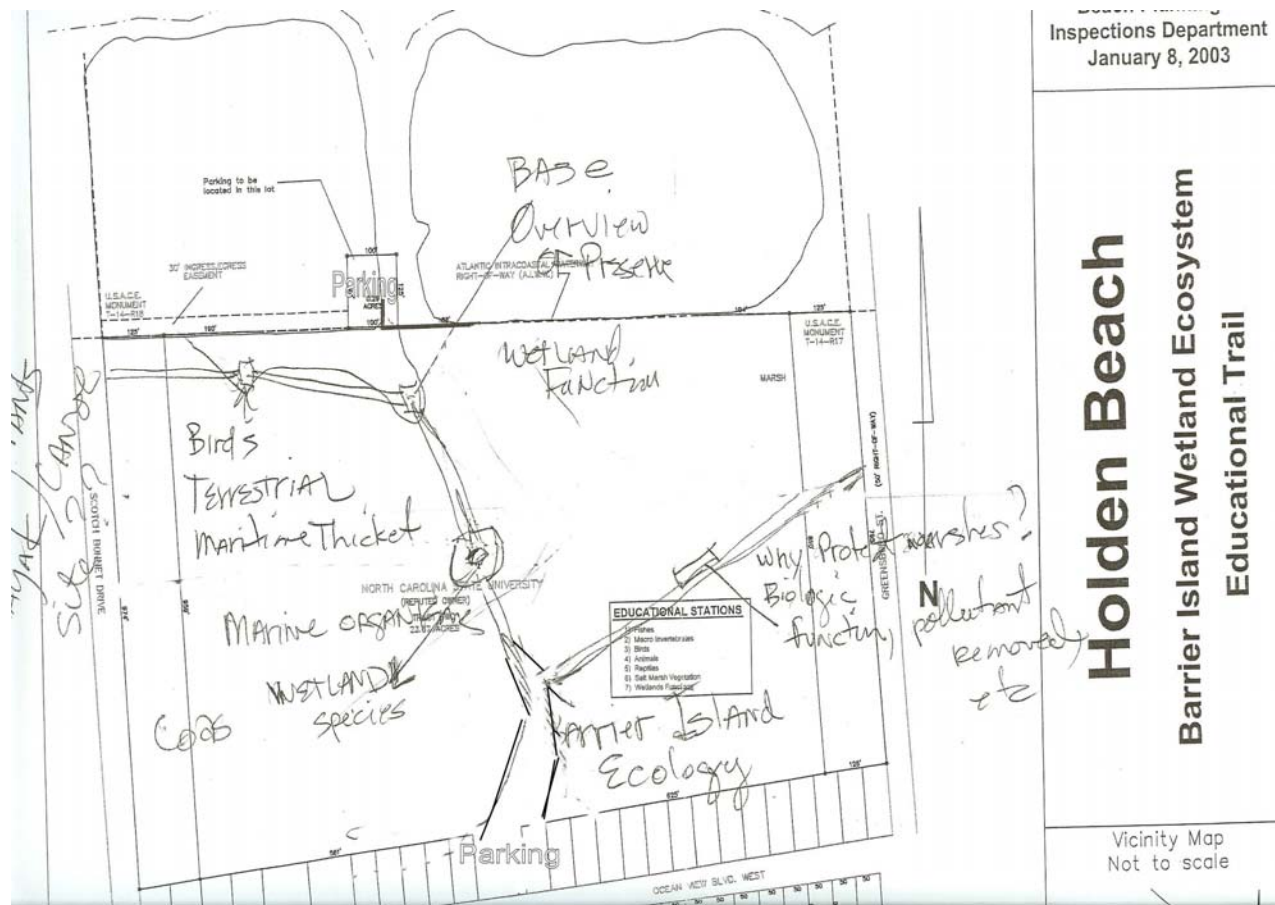
The CAMA grant can be used for a waterway/water related projects only. Funds may not be used for HB bike path project. The walkway is not conducive for bikes.

### **Potential Next Steps.**

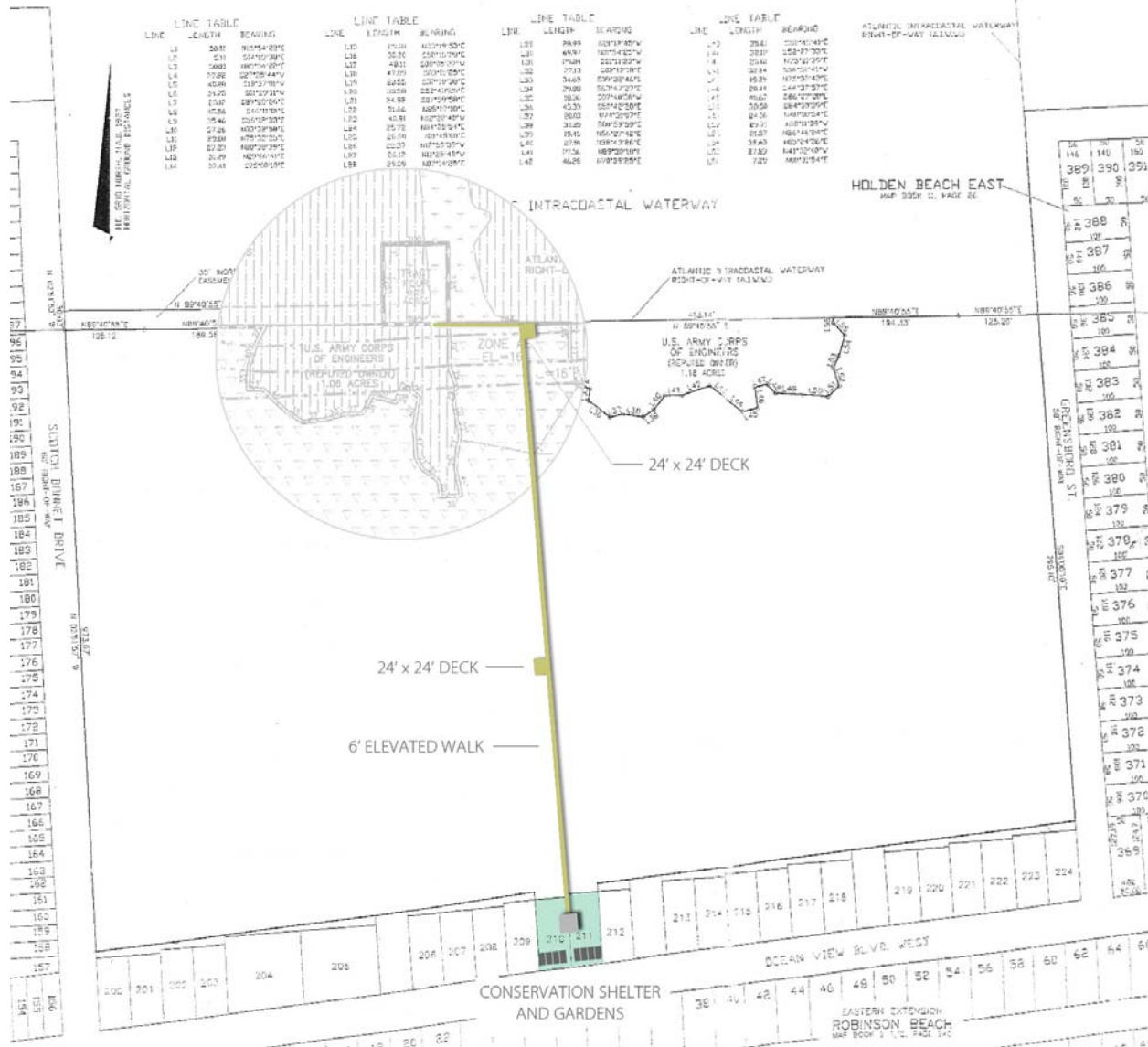
- Determine what must be done by 6/30/08 to meet terms of the grant/apply for extension.
- Decision from HB Town Council on Marshland Walkway project.
- ***If approved:***
  - Move to file extension for CAMA grant.
  - Obtain NCSU formal approval.
  - Develop preliminary design, construction, and maintenance cost estimates.
  - Assign project to Public Area Improvement Committee.
    - Complete design, public safety, trash, and maintenance plan.
  - Decide whether to request that Holden Beach Enterprises grant the 30' access easement to be moved to middle of their property, approx. 250' closer towards ICW.
  - Complete land survey.
  - Obtain CAMA approval of project design.
  - Obtain formal construction bids.
  - Construction start target: fall 2008.
  - Construction duration estimate: 3-5 months.
  - Target opening: summer 2009.

Respectfully submitted by  
John Lytvinenko & Ron Skubic

# Version 2 – Jason Walker Marshland Walkway Preliminary Sketch



### Version 3 – Town of Holden Beach Public Area Improvement Committee



RENDERING OF PROPOSED Wetland Conservation Project  
 Depicts Scaled down version of Jordan Blvd Pavilion