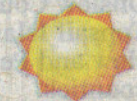


# THE DAILY NEWS



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COVERING COASTAL CAROLINA



## Swansboro's Henderson living the dream

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## Relay dinner honors cancer survivors

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# Beach designation impact on public use 'negligible'

## Feds propose critical habitat designation for 96 miles of N.C.'s coast for sea turtle recovery

By JANNETTE PIPPIN

Daily News Staff

Sea turtle nesting is a common sight along Topsail Island and Bogue Banks each year, and their beaches are among those being identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

as important to the recovery of the threatened Northwest Atlantic population of loggerhead sea turtles.

The proposed critical habitat areas include 90 nesting beaches in coastal counties located in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Mississippi.

The agency recently announced the proposed rule, which was published in the federal register March 25, and is accepting public input through May 24.

The 740 miles of shoreline

identified by the agency as critical habitat account for approximately 84 percent of the documented number of nests in the six states.

In North Carolina the agency is proposing to designate eight units of beach shoreline, a total of 96.1 miles stretching from Carteret County south to Brunswick County.

Three of the units are located in the local area: Bogue Banks in Carteret County; Bear Island, a part of Hammocks

See **Beach** • Page 2

## Critical habitat

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has begun the process of identifying coastal beach habitat important to the recovery of the threatened Northwest Atlantic loggerhead sea turtle. In North Carolina, the agency is proposing to designate 8 units of land as critical habitat, a total of 96.1 miles:



**Beach** Continued from Page 1

Beach State Park in Onslow County; and Topsail Island in Onslow and Pender counties.

The other units are in New Hanover or Brunswick counties.

The areas identified are considered critically important nesting sites with the highest concentration of nests.

Nests counts from 2006 to 2011 were used to calculate density for each beach and those beaches selected were within the top 25 percent for nesting density.

Cape Lookout National Seashore and Cape Hatteras National Seashore were considered but did not meet the criteria, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Under the ESA, the sea turtles and their habitat within the national seashores are protected regardless of the designation.

The loggerhead sea turtles that nest along North Carolina's beaches are already protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Fish and Wildlife of-

ficials consider the impact on individuals' beach use or access to be "negligible." Instead, they explain, the critical habitat designation helps to focus conservation efforts on those areas most important to the recovery of the sea turtles.

"We want to make sure action is compatible with the needs of the loggerhead," said Lilibeth Serrano, a public affairs specialist with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

But little impact doesn't mean no

impact.

Critical habitat designation does not impose restrictions on non-federal lands unless federal funds, permits or activities are involved, the agency said.

In the case of federal funding or permitting, the designation could apply to projects from docks to beach nourishment.

The Endangered Species Act continues to protect the threatened sea turtle regardless of where they nest. The critical habitat designation reinforces that

protection by identifying geographic areas that contain features essential to conservation of the species.

"It kind of raises the bar for the habitat," Serrano said. "The critical habitat areas are considered vital for sustaining the population."

Critical habitat designation does not establish a refuge, reserve or other conservation area.

Written comments on the proposal can be submitted online by going to the Fed-

eral Rulemaking Portal at regulations.gov. Refer to Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2012-0103.

Comments can also be mailed to: Public Comments Processing, Attn. FWS-R4-ES-2012-0103; Division of Policy and Directives Management; US Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

Contact Daily News reporter Jannette Pippin at 910-382-2557 or jannette.pippin@jdnews.com. Visit JDNews.com to comment.

# Surf City council eyes tax increase for beaches

## 10-cent hike plan to be presented to public today

By JULIANE BULLARD

Wilmington StarNews

**SURF CITY** — Surf City is expected to gain an extra 200 feet of beach within the next few years if residents are willing to accept a prop-

into it and we don't feel it's an appropriate thing."

The total cost of the program, according to the corps, would be \$132.65 million.

With federal funding of beach nourishment in question, the town might have to come up with a large share of the money.

"Our judgment is that the town must temporarily but significantly increase beach

would have beach nourishment with tons of sand brought in to make sure that the projected 200 feet of beach keeps," Ravela said.

Without the 10-cent tax rate increase, an additional \$9.2 million dollars would be needed by December 2015 to go forward with the project.

The proposal will be presented to the public today at 2:30 p.m.

# TIRE COUNTRY

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