

NORTH CAROLINA REGISTRY OF NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS

Letter of Intent and Agreement to Register and Protect Natural Areas

WHEREAS, the National Park Service is the owner of areas known as the Fort Raleigh Maritime Forest natural area, and consisting of approximately 20 acres of primary area and 161 acres of restoration area. [Exhibit A]

WHEREAS, this area possesses the following natural values, justifying its recognition by the State as an outstanding part of the natural heritage of North Carolina:

The primary area of the Fort Raleigh Maritime Forest natural area contains one of the best remaining examples of mature Maritime Evergreen Forest communities in the state. The primary area also supports a population of the giant skipper (*Papilio cresphontes*), a Significantly Rare species in North Carolina. The restoration area contains a large area of successional pine forest that is beginning to recover and convert back to Maritime Evergreen Forest. Restoration of this area, either by active management or by allowing natural succession to occur, would lead to a larger, more viable occurrence of this rare community type.

AGREEMENT

The Registry Agreement is a mutual understanding between the National Park Service and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources to protect outstanding examples of the natural diversity occurring in North Carolina and preserve unique and unusual natural features. In addition to an approach by landowners and managers that follows these principles and strives to maintain natural character and integrity, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program submits the following site-specific management recommendations:

The current uses of the site should continue and no major new facilities should be built in either the primary or restoration area, but additional foot trails would not be harmful. The restoration area could be left to allow natural succession to return it to more natural Maritime Evergreen Forest. To hasten the recovery of the Maritime Evergreen Forest in the primary area, we recommend the removal of some of the pines, particularly selective removal to release young oak trees. If feasible, prescribed burning in the areas of potential longleaf pine communities would aid in their restoration. Ultimately, removal of the loblolly pine and planting of longleaf pine, along with planting of missing herbaceous species, will be needed to fully restore these areas.

THEREFORE, it is agreed between the parties whose names are affixed below that the Fort Raleigh Maritime Forest Natural Area be entered on the official North Carolina Registry of Natural Heritage Areas on the ____ day of _____, 2011.

It is understood that this agreement involves no change of title or loss of ownership rights, but simply expresses the sincere intentions of the landowner to refrain from making or permitting changes that alter the natural values for which this area was registered within the boundaries outlined on the attached maps and/or survey descriptions.

It is further understood that neither the Department nor the National Park Service offers any assurances as to the conditions on the tracts involved or for the safety of persons thereon. Neither party shall incur any liability for any injury to persons or property on the land as a result of this agreement.

These areas are hereby registered for an indefinite period until terminated in writing by either party to the other upon thirty (30) days notice.

By _____
Michael Murray
Park Superintendent
National Parks Service
NPS-Outer Banks Group
Manteo, NC 27954

By _____
Dee Freeman
Secretary
NC Department of Environment & Natural Resources
1601 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1601

Date: _____

Date: _____

Fort Raleigh Maritime Forest

Location: Dare County; Manteo 7.5 minute USGS topographic quad map; within Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on the north end of Roanoke Island. The primary area is immediately south, west, and north of the fort site. The restoration area is to the south and west of the Elizabethan Gardens, on both sides of the park housing, and extends south to highway business 64 (Map A).

Approximation Acreage: 20 acres of primary area; 161 acres of restoration area.

Land Use: The area is used for hiking and enjoyment of the forest. It also serves as a buffer and backdrop for the restored fort area and other park facilities.

Significance:

1. The primary area contains a mature example of a Maritime Evergreen Forest community. Though relatively small, this is one of the best remaining examples of this rare community type in this part of the state.
2. A population of the giant skipper (*Papilio cresphontes*) occurs in the primary area. This species is Significantly Rare in North Carolina.
3. The restoration area contains a large area of successional pine forest that is beginning to recover to Maritime Evergreen Forest. Restoration of this area, either by active management or by allowing natural succession to occur, would lead to a larger, more viable occurrence of this rare community type.

Description: Fort Raleigh Maritime Forest lies at the north end of Roanoke Island, in the area of the earliest English colony in the Americas. The landscape includes both low, gently sloped sandy flats and old, and stabilized sand dunes along the island's shoreline. The dunes and adjacent areas are covered with a Maritime Evergreen Forest community. This forest is dominated by a mix of live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), sand laurel oak (*Quercus hemispherica*), and loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*). Abundant understory species include red bay (*Persea palustris*), wild olive (*Osmanthus americanus*), and American holly (*Ilex opaca*), as well as the canopy oaks. The shrub layer is fairly dense, and is dominated by yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*).

The more extensive flats west and south of the mature forest contain a successional forest dominated by loblolly pine. Most of this area has an understory consisting of the canopy and understory trees of the Maritime Evergreen Forest. This area would succeed to Maritime Evergreen Forest given sufficient time. Some portions of the successional pine forest have a different composition that includes species characteristic of longleaf pine communities, such as dangleberry (*Gaylussacia frondosa*), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), tread-softly (*Cnidioscolus stimulosus*), and ipecac (*Euphorbia ipecacuanhae*).

Management and Recommendations: The current uses of the site should continue. Major new facilities should not be built in the area, but additional foot trails would not be harmful. The restoration area could be left to allow natural succession to return it to more natural Maritime Evergreen Forest. If desired, removal of some of the pines, particularly selective removal to release young oak trees, could hasten succession. If feasible, prescribed burning in the areas of potential longleaf pine communities would aid in their restoration. Ultimately, removal of the loblolly pine and planting of longleaf pine, along with planting of missing herbaceous species, will be needed to fully restore these areas.

Map A
Fort Raleigh Maritime Forest
Registered Natural Heritage Area

- Legend
- Registered
 - Primary
 - Restoration
 - Property Boundary

