

Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area Feasibility Study

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DRAFT



Prepared for:
North Carolina's Northeast Commission
North Carolina's Eastern Region Commission
North Carolina's Southeast Commission

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Executive Summary	2
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Eastern North Carolina – Statement of Significance	4
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Chapter 1 – Introduction	8
The Purpose of the Study	8
Project Background	9
Next Steps	12

Chapter 2 - Eastern North Carolina, Past and Present	13
Settling a New World	13
Living with the Land and the Water	26
Defense of a Nation	50
The Environment	55

Chapter 3 - Feasibility Study Findings	59
Themes and Boundary	59
Management of an Eastern North Carolina Heritage Area	66
Evaluation According to Federal Criteria	74

Appendices	81
Bibliography	81
Project Participants	85
Public Involvement Participants	86
List of Presentations	90
Letters of Commitment	91
Resource Links	92
Acknowledgments	93

Executive Summary

Eastern North Carolina is a place of national significance that should be designated by the United States Congress as a National Heritage Area. This is the conclusion of the following feasibility study examining a 40-county region of North Carolina, including the history and cultural resources of the region, the potential benefits and effects, and the tourism, marketing and economic opportunities for the area.

Eastern North Carolina was first discovered by European settlers in the late 1500s on an expedition led by Sir Walter Raleigh. This expedition landed on Roanoke Island and mysteriously disappeared within three years. This settlement—while existing for a very short period of time—transformed world history, establishing European presence in a new world, leading to the conquest of the North American continent and the establishment of a new nation, the United States of America.

The region is also nationally significant for its natural resources. The landscape of Eastern North Carolina is that of an estuarine system second in size only to the Chesapeake Bay in the United States. This system of waterways—its rivers, sounds and sea—shaped the history and culture of the region from its first inhabitants, Native Americans, to life in the towns and cities of the region today. As a result of this rich and significant natural resource, Eastern North Carolina was a critical locale for many events in our nation’s history, including key Revolutionary War and Civil War battles, the first successful powered flight by humans, and the protection of the east coast of the United States during two world wars. Few places in the United States have witnessed such critical and monumental events as has Eastern North Carolina.

Three regional economic development commissions—the Northeast, Eastern and Southeast – along with partners in tourism, led the project. The project’s scope included developing a feasibility study for a possible National Heritage Area in Eastern North Carolina, creating a unified marketing plan for tourism across the three regions, and building an asset inventory of historic and tourism sites throughout the 40 counties. The fieldwork for the inventory helped to establish the baseline of historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources used to develop common interpretive themes and the proposed boundary for the feasibility study.

The study team conducted stakeholder interviews throughout the region with key partners in tourism, preservation, government and education. As information was collected, a series of public meetings were held with a strategic emphasis on melding a large geographic area into a cohesive heritage partnership. To achieve this desired outcome, public meetings were designed to occur in three distinct phases: first to hold one in each economic development agency’s region to introduce the project and the plan for an national heritage area; second, to hold two public meetings in locations geographically centered to the three regions; and the third meeting held in one central location that merged the outcome of the plan along with the cohesive membership of the heritage partnership that formed over the 18-month planning process. The result is a plan that strongly reflects a common heritage and history of the people

of Eastern North Carolina and one that is supported by the regional economic development commissions, the counties and the communities.

This plan highlights a region of the United States where a strong heritage and a unique way of life have endured for centuries. The plan represents the work of hundreds of people from across all sectors of the region, including government, business, education, tourism, non-profits, foundations, citizens, and military. It reflects their pride and their desire to conserve, promote and protect their history, communities and their state while encouraging new development and economic opportunities through tourism and revitalization.

This feasibility study is a compact between the people of Eastern North Carolina to work together—across 40 counties—to promote their diversity, to celebrate their heritage, to conserve their cultural traditions, and to welcome visitors to a region where America began... the Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area.

Eastern North Carolina

Statement of Significance

Rivers to sounds to sea. The 40 counties of Eastern North Carolina are connected—through their history, their culture and their people—by an elaborate network of water that literally provides life to the land. The systems of rivers flowing through the coastal plain act as arteries and connect geographically distant communities by way of a common heritage. The sounds, the large inland bodies of water, link the complex estuarine system with the coastal communities and the region's abundant natural resources. The sea and the North Carolina shore are the link to the region's maritime history, the establishment of our country, and our defense of our freedom and ideals as a democratic republic. It is this interconnected system of water, history and culture that makes Eastern North Carolina nationally significant and worthy of consideration as a National Heritage Area.

The estuarine ecosystem is second largest in size in the United States, and its protected waters are among the richest and most diverse in the world.

North Carolina estuarine environments formed over many tens of thousands of years as sediment from the erosion of the land and mountains was carried to the coastline by rivers and wind and mixed with soil that was eroded and deposited during rising and falling sea levels. The barrier islands strung along the coast of North Carolina have created an extensive system of estuaries with a surface water area of about 3,000 square miles. The only larger estuarine system in the United States is Chesapeake Bay. These protected waters, with abundant organic material available from the marshland grasses and swamps, are an important resource for the diversity of aquatic life and wildlife that inhabit the region.

An estuary is defined as a partially enclosed coastal body of water having an open connection with the ocean (for example, via a river), where freshwater from inland is mixed with saltwater from the sea. Estuaries typically occupy coastal areas where effects from the ocean are reduced but still influential. Forces like tides, waves, and major storms from the sea play a vital role in an estuary's development and morphology as they provide energy to help mix the fresh and salt waters and distribute sediments. Estuaries contain salt water and fresh water in different proportions over the length of the estuary and over the course of the day, with more salt water during high tide and less at low tide. Because they are shallow—in North Carolina, less than thirty feet deep—sunlight penetrates the water, allowing plants to grow. The rivers that feed the estuaries deposit sediments rich in nutrients that settle onto the sand and mud of the estuary floor. These conditions create unique habitats for both plants and animals, and provide an environment for biological diversity in species (of fish, shrimp, crabs, clams and oysters) that are able to adapt to the brackish conditions. Estuaries are also good nurseries as they provide a place for these species to hatch and grow before they migrate to the sea to live out their adult lives.

Biologists have documented that the estuaries of Eastern North Carolina are also the food production area for more than 65 percent of the seafood harvest taken along the North Carolina coast. About 30 commercial fishing species live in North Carolina estuaries. Three quarters of the fish caught commercially in the United States live in estuaries, meaning on average, estuaries produce more food per acre than the most productive farmland.

North Carolina's estuaries are categorized into three distinctive categories: back-barrier sounds, trunk estuaries, and tributary estuaries. Back barrier sounds lie parallel to the coast, between the mainland shore and the barrier islands. Trunk estuaries run perpendicular to the coast in line with the rivers that feed them. Tributary estuaries flow into trunk estuaries.

Back-barrier Sounds

- Core Sound
- Pamlico Sound
- Roanoke Sound
- Croatan Sound
- Currituck Sound
- Back Sound
- Bogue Sound
- Stump Sound
- Topsail Sound
- Middle Sound
- Myrtle Sound

Trunk Estuaries

- Albemarle Sound estuary
- Pamlico River estuary
- Neuse River estuary
- North estuary
- Newport estuary
- White Oak River estuary
- New River estuary
- Cape Fear River estuary

Tributary Estuaries

- Trent River estuary
- Bath Creek estuary
- Scuppernong River estuary
- South River estuary
- Bay River estuary
- Pungo River estuary
- Alligator River estuary
- Pasquotank River estuary
- North River estuary

The largest North Carolina estuary is Pamlico Sound. Water drains into this system from eastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia from the Chowan, Roanoke, Pasquotank, Pamlico, and Neuse Rivers and from marshes, swamps, forests, and grasslands.

The natural history of the environments of the region has played a major role in the development of North Carolina and the United States.

The complex ecosystem of Eastern North Carolina has contributed to changes to the land bordering and surrounding the estuaries, the rivers and ocean. Although the North Carolina estuaries contain 3,000 square miles of surface water, 30,000 square miles of land drains into the Albemarle-Pamlico system. As land was developed for human habitation and use, roads, bridges, culverts, sewage systems, pipelines, and dams changed the flow of water through the ecosystem. The abundant wetlands soak up water like a sponge and settle contaminants in the ground, but development of communities and the draining of marshes and swamplands have caused wetlands to disappear with contaminants now draining directly into the waterway system and eventually into the Atlantic Ocean. It was estimated in 1967 that 80 to 90 percent of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts had estuaries. This number has drastically declined over the years due to human development and population growth along the coast, and farming, for example.

Wetlands were drained for logging and farming before current restrictions on wetland development were enacted. Since European colonization, nearly half North Carolina's wetlands have been lost, and coastal development continues to impact wetlands. Logging eliminated the old-growth longleaf pines that originally covered the coast of North Carolina. The loblolly pines environs are greatly reduced compared to the early 1700s.

Today, nautical industries remain critical to the economies of Eastern North Carolina and the dredging of channels to allow boats to pass through or dock is an important activity. This constant movement causes change to the environment and damages plants and oyster beds and stirs up sediment that clouds the estuary water and increases sediment deposits in the estuary, creating a situation where more dredging has to occur to remove the accumulation. When sediment is suspended throughout the water, fishes' gills can become clogged, contaminants previously settled in the soil are taken in by fish, and predators have a difficulty seeing their prey. Fishing gear that digs into the floor of the estuary or channels cut for irrigation or flood control also increase water turbidity.

Global warming is causing sea levels to rise. Rising sea levels threaten the swamp forests, which can withstand only temporary flooding. Hurricanes also cause high water levels, eroding the shoreline and flooding habitats of organisms with sea water that have adapted to freshwater. Together, sea level rise and storms cause North Carolina wetlands to erode at a rate of about 800 acres per year.

Despite these threats, Eastern North Carolinians have adapted their work habits and their recreations and developed ways to protect the environments of the region so they may be sustained and continue to contribute the livelihoods and economy of the region and the protection of our nation's shore.

A unique pattern of human interaction with the land and its most dominant feature, water, has shaped the rich heritage and culture of the region.

A natural and a human environment co-exist in Eastern North Carolina that has both protected and developed the land and waters of the region. Eastern North Carolina is one of the oldest inhabited areas in the United States—an area that had profound implications for the settlement of North America and the development of the United States as a nation. Throughout its history, Eastern North Carolina has been the scene of events that have changed the course of human history, while also being a place of ordinary, day-to-day life of small, rural towns and villages. Over centuries, people have changed it, leaving an indelible mark on the landscape. The land has been altered for the growth of nation, but it has never been broken. A 300-plus-mile string of beaches are still free and scenic, the estuaries remain productive, and the forests and wetlands continue to exist.

The Eastern North Carolina region was never planned or decreed; instead it has been shaped by the accidental intersection of historic events on a unique geographic landscape. Its coastal areas were never developed like other states' coastlines, for the region was seen to be too remote, its waters too shallow and dangerous, and the interior lands too wet and swampy for development. The de-emphasis of Eastern North Carolina has led it to become a place that reflects a tradition of life in America that has been lost due to rapid development of cities and towns and the erasure of heritage and culture.

Today, while a more modern culture and life is transforming Eastern North Carolina—new industries are moving into the region to take advantage of the water resources of the region; coastal development has led to a booming tourism trade along the beaches; and new technologies in farming have transformed much of the region's agriculture industry into a modern, large-scale corporate enterprise—Eastern North Carolina still reflects and maintains its strong traditions and heritage that have shaped it over centuries.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Purpose of the Study

This feasibility study was created to determine whether an area in the eastern portion of the state of North Carolina meets the criteria for designation as a National Heritage Area (NHA). The study was sponsored by three regional economic development commissions—North Carolina’s Northeast Commission, North Carolina’s Eastern Region and North Carolina’s Southeast—with funding from the Golden LEAF Foundation.

What is a National Heritage Area?

According to the National Park Service, National Heritage Areas are places “designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape. Through their resources, NHAs tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation’s diverse heritage. NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Consequently, NHA entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.”

The National Park Service’s explanation of NHAs continues, “NHAs are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. Through public-private partnerships, NHA entities support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects. Leveraging funds and long-term support for projects, NHA partnerships foster pride of place and an enduring stewardship ethic” (www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/FAQ, accessed 16 March 2012).

What a National Heritage Area is Not

A National Heritage Area is not a National Park. There is no new federal ownership or control of private property with NHA designation. The National Park Service and its units may act in an advisory capacity but they do not manage the area. Participation in NHA programs by private entities is voluntary.

According to a Government Accountability Office Report of March 3, 2004, “National Heritage Areas do not appear to have directly affected the rights of property owners. To address property concerns the designating legislation of 13 of the 24 heritage areas and management plans of at least six provide explicit assurances that the areas will not affect property owners’ rights.” In the 8 years since that report was published, no issues regarding private property rights have arisen, and all emerging National Heritage Areas’ legislation include explicit assurances precluding interference with private property rights. National Heritage Area coordinating entities may not use the federal funds they receive through appropriations authorized by their enabling legislation to purchase property.

Project Background

In May 2010, North Carolina's Northeast Commission, North Carolina's Eastern Region and North Carolina's Southeast, three economic development commissions created by the North Carolina General Assembly to implement programs and to support and stimulate business and tourism development, issued a Request for Proposals for a heritage tourism consultant. With funding and assistance from the Golden LEAF Foundation, they developed a scope of work that included creation of an inventory and database of historic sites, creating a marketing message and image, an assessment of heritage tourism assets and a feasibility study for a potential National Heritage Area. A consulting team (hereinafter "study team") including Hanbury Preservation Consulting, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Point Heritage Development Consulting, August Carlino, planning consultant, and Black Orchid Design Associates was selected for the project.

While the database, Heritage Assets Report and marketing message are technically separate from this feasibility study, they greatly informed it by providing the resources for additional intensive work to study and analyze heritage assets and heritage tourism marketing efforts in the region. The database provided the basis for an asset inventory for the feasibility study. The fieldwork for the Heritage Assets Report, conducted from the summer of 2010 to the spring of 2011, provided the study team with an in depth look at over 80 resources throughout the study area. Through the fieldwork the team got an intimate look at many of the resources that tell the region's stories and were able to have conversations with staff, volunteers and site managers about the challenges and opportunities they face. The preparation of marketing reports that support a proposed message and image for the region gave the study team the capacity to look carefully at the many heritage tourism messages being used throughout the area and to examine possibilities for a new unifying message, opportunities for collaboration and new delivery systems - all of which can be used to support early implementation projects for a fledgling heritage area.

The project was supervised not only by staff of the three economic development commissions, but also by a tri-regional task force including representatives from tourism authorities in each region. Commission representatives and the task force met regularly to vet draft documents and to review the study team's findings. Copies of documents and meeting minutes were accessible to project participants through an Internet storage site.

A website for the public was also part of the project. This site contained meeting announcements, draft documents, and links to public presentations and media reports. Through existing email lists and a sign up function on the website, an email list of 1,385 people was developed to send notices about meetings and documents available for review.

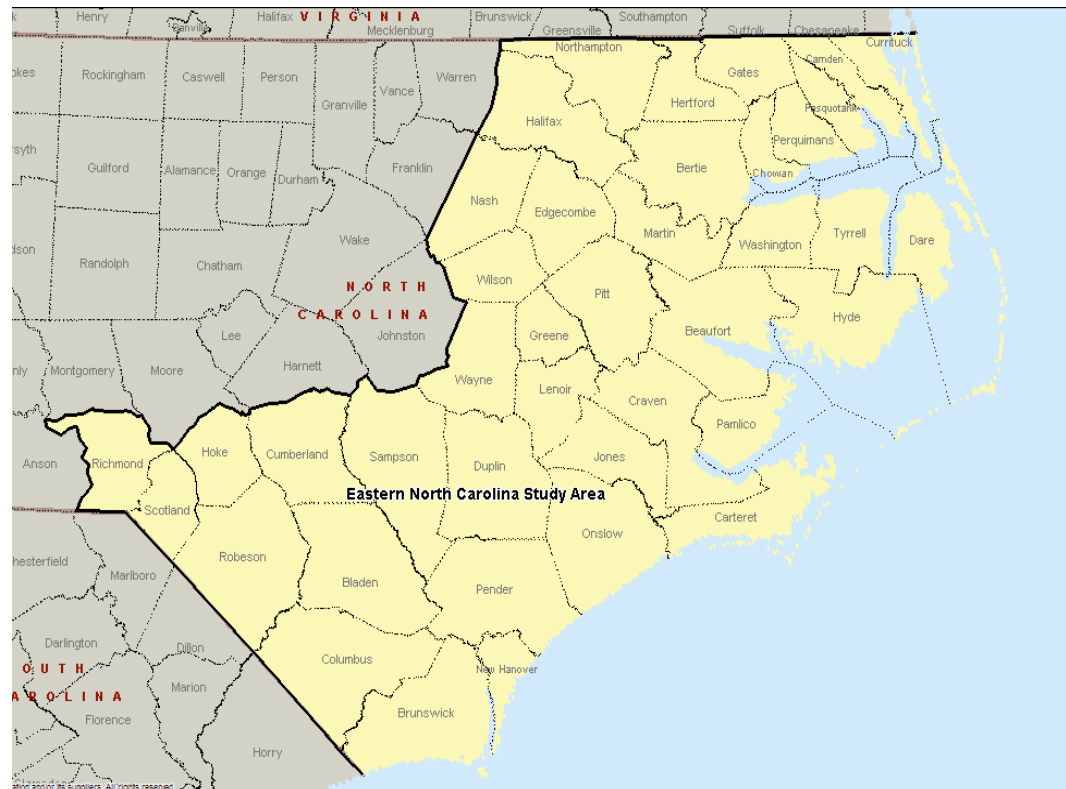
From the summer of 2010 to the spring of 2012 the study team worked concurrently on the feasibility study. The study follows guidelines developed by the National Park Service. Components of the plan and their development will be discussed in this document. At key points in the study period, public meetings were held. In March 2010 a kick off meeting was held at three locations to introduce the project and the concept of a National Heritage Area.

This meeting also provided participants an opportunity to begin to tell their stories about the history and culture of the region. Meetings in September 2011 introduced initial concepts for interpretive themes and an overarching theme of “From Rivers to Sounds to Sea,” recognizing the role of waterways in binding and connecting the region thematically and geographically. The final public meeting in January 2012 examined options of management and administration and explained the process for designation while soliciting public support. A preferred alternative was selected by the public at that meeting—designation of a National Heritage Area with state and local involvement. More information on the analysis and selection of alternatives is found in the chapter entitled “Feasibility Study Findings” at the end of this report.

The Study Area

The study area includes the 40 counties encompassing the three economic development commissions’ regions: Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne, and Wilson. The area encompasses the Coastal Plain, and is roughly the portion of North Carolina east of Interstate 95.

*Project study area,
40 counties in
Eastern North Carolina
(left)*



Public Involvement

Public involvement and engagement is vital to the process of developing a feasibility study, designating a heritage area, developing a management plan, implementing actions and managing the heritage area. A successful heritage area depends on the continued participation and partnership of individuals and organizations within the region. The feasibility study process was governed by the three commissions and the tri-regional task force. A website with presentations and documents for review was established and promoted. The study team conducted three rounds of public meetings, a total of six meetings, in venues throughout the 40-county study area. The project was presented and promoted at other regional workshops and conferences, and the study team and staff members of the three economic development commissions met with interested parties including individuals, members of the business community and representatives of state agencies among others to explain the feasibility study and the designation process. An email distribution list of 1,385 people was assembled and will be available to be augmented and used throughout the designation and management planning process. Interviews were conducted with the commissions and with partners at heritage sites throughout the region.

Inventory

As part of the project, the study team, with assistance from the tri-regional task force, assembled a database of heritage sites. Some of these sites are specifically heritage tourism sites and additional information was collected on those to compile data to support a heritage tourism website. Other sites in the database are places that contribute to the region's heritage but are not necessarily places for visitors (for example: private homes, archaeological sites). The database is intended to be a work in progress as data will continue to be updated and added after the end of this study period. The database provides the inventory for the feasibility study and will be expanded for the future management plan.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

This feasibility study complies with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), which mandates analysis of the impacts of major federal actions that have a significant effect on the environment. One possible outcome of this study is the designation of a National Heritage Area, which would constitute a major federal action. Based on precedent and emerging NPS policy, the appropriate NEPA pathway for this study is a Categorical Exclusion (CE).

The NPS guidance for addressing NEPA is set forth in NPS Director's Order 12: *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*, which outlines several options for meeting the requirements of the act, depending on the severity of the environmental impacts of the alternatives. In 2011, the NPS Office of the Solicitor and Environmental Quality Division (EQD) determined that Categorical Exclusion (CE) 3.3R was the appropriate pathway for the Gullah Geechee Cultural Corridor Management Plan because the actions described in the plan would not result in immediate ground disturbance or measurable environmental

impacts. An NPS work group set up to establish procedure for NEPA within National Heritage Areas currently is examining whether CE 3.3R—"adoption or approval of surveys, studies, reports, plans and similar documents which will result in recommendations or proposed actions which would cause no or only minimal environmental impact"—is the appropriate pathway for all National Heritage Area planning with no measurable environmental impacts.

A "categorical exclusion for which no formal documentation is necessary" was selected as the most appropriate NEPA pathway for this feasibility study. The study is excluded from requiring an environmental assessment, as no federal funds were used in the production of the feasibility study. Furthermore, the effects of establishing a National Heritage Area would be primarily economic in nature. If Congress designates the Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area, a comprehensive management plan will be developed. At that time, and based on the direction set in the emerging policy, public scoping and environmental screening may be used to determine which pathway (CE, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement) is appropriate.

The categorical exclusion selected for this study requires no formal documentation; however, the study still contains several key NEPA components. The study relied on significant public input to support its findings—the result of a comprehensive public involvement strategy. Outreach efforts gauged local support for the potential designation and provided information on a proposed local coordinating entity. The study also evaluates management alternatives for the potential National Heritage Area, as well as a "no-action" alternative that looks at the effects of no formal designation. Finally, the study provides a description of the region's environment, socio-economic conditions, and historic resources. This description of the area of potential effects would provide the basis for an environmental assessment if one were deemed necessary for a future National Heritage Area management plan.

Next Steps

The draft feasibility study will be made available for public review and comment. Revisions and comments may be incorporated into a final document that will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for review. Should legislation be introduced in Congress for the designation of a National Heritage Area based on this study, the comments and recommendations of the Secretary will be forwarded to Congress for review and incorporation into the legislative process.

In the interim, the task force and agencies responsible for this study may opt to implement strategies and plans to support an eventual designation and development of a management plan.

Chapter 2

Eastern North Carolina, Past and Present

The past and the present are linked through the landscape upon which history is played out. The people who chose to settle the lands among the rivers, sounds and sea in Eastern North Carolina have left an indelible imprint on the region. The living traditions of how people work, worship, and play have deep roots in the places their ancestors inhabited. The following pages contain a synopsis of the region's environment, history, settlement, ethnic groups, and of the important cultural traditions that survive in Eastern North Carolina today.

Settling a New World

Facing untold hardship with equal determination, early habitants capitalized on eastern North Carolina's prominence on the Atlantic coast to create a home and livelihoods and eventually to influence the establishment of a new nation, one which encompassed the region's inherent struggle between freedom and enslavement.

In July 1587, an expedition led by John White landed on Roanoke, an island located in the sound between North Carolina's Outer Banks and the mainland. This expedition, sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh, was the first European settlement of the New World. The mystery surrounding the fate of this "lost colony" may never be solved, but the establishment of a base of 150 white men, women and children set off a race to conquer and tame the North American continent and gave rise to a new nation. Eastern North Carolina was now on the map of the Old World powers in Europe, vastly different cultures from two hemispheres collided, and the settlement of a continent and birth of a new nation was soon to occur.

Europeans and the New World

Exploration of the New World along North Carolina's coast occurred many years prior to the landing at Roanoke. The "discovery" of the Western Hemisphere by Christopher Columbus in 1492 set off a series of voyages sponsored by the European powers of France, Spain, England and Portugal. Their quest for a new route to Asia was fueled by an economic demand to seize the riches of the world and to colonize other lands in the names of their monarchs. Giovanni da Verrazano, an Italian navigator under the service of France, discovered the North Carolina coast in the 1520s. Spain sent explorers into the Western Hemisphere, including Don Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, who attempted a settlement on the Cape Fear River. Some historians believe that Norse explorers passed by and even landed on the coast of Eastern North Carolina in the 11th century.

But these were not unpopulated lands. Habitation of Native Americans in the region can be traced back 12,000 years, and when Europeans arrived in what would become Eastern North Carolina, three distinct cultural groups occupied the region. The Algonkians, whose homeland was along the coast, the inner banks, and the rivers of the northern portion of the study area,

were the first of the three groups to encounter White's expedition. Although initial relations were mostly positive, the consequences of previously unknown European diseases and an aggressive push by European powers to explore and colonize the New World eventually led to the Algonkians' loss of land and their disappearance. The results of cultural contact between Europeans and Native Americans played out similarly throughout Eastern North Carolina, and, indeed, throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The waters off the coast of North America, and those off the land that would become North Carolina became critical in European exploration and the establishment of trade routes between the Caribbean and with Asia. Earlier expeditions discovered routes to the Pacific across the lands that separated the Gulf of Mexico from the Pacific in Central America, and around the tip of South America; however, a shorter, more direct route was hoped to be discovered through North America. Verrazano wrote of his discovery of a new land during his travels along the coast, probably near Cape Fear. His expedition turned north in an attempt to avoid contact with the Spanish fleets and to find a safe harbor. The great "Oriental Sea" he discovered was probably Pamlico Sound near Ocracoke on the Outer Banks. Nonetheless, Verrazano was convinced he had found a way to the East. Verrazano's continued exploration of the coast, and the other explorers who came after, turned up no North American passage to Asia, increasing skepticism of the credibility of its very existence.

Little interest was shown in the North Carolina coast by the Europeans through the mid-1500s, but after Spain attempted two settlements in the area in the 1560s – both around the region of the Chesapeake Bay – England's interest grew as they were determined not to allow Spanish colonization to go unchecked in eastern North America. This, too, was fueled by worsening relations between the two crowns. Suddenly, North Carolina's coast was seen by the English as a strategic point to establish a military post from which privateers could interfere with Spanish ships returning from the Indies using the Gulf Stream currents off of Cape Hatteras to sail home. North Carolina's coast became a strategic and critical point of defense in the development of the colonies and the United States and in naval actions in the Atlantic Ocean for the next 500 years.

Sir Walter Raleigh and the Lost Colony

Sir Walter Raleigh's "Roanoke Voyages" were a patent from Queen Elizabeth I to establish a colony on the coast of North America. Two explorers of Raleigh's, Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe, were granted permission to explore and settle the "remote heathen and barbarous lands." In 1584 the men set sail on two ships and explored the Outer Banks and sounds of Eastern North Carolina, mingling and trading with the local Indians. Barlowe's report of the expedition and the land was so encouraging that Raleigh decided to attempt a settlement the following year.

In 1585, Sir Richard Grenville was dispatched by Raleigh to establish an English colony in this new world. Grenville sailed for North America with seven ships and explored North Carolina's inland waters – the Pamlico Sound – before he selected Roanoke Island as the location to establish a settlement. This outpost lasted for almost 11 months, with a fort and small huts

from which explorations were launched north towards the Chesapeake Bay and up the Roanoke and Chowan Rivers.

When John White and the English settlers stepped onto Roanoke Island in 1587, there was great hope of a rendezvous with Grenville's men. Much to their disappointment, there were no signs of any people. White ordered the settlers to establish a base in the abandoned huts and fort. A few weeks later Virginia Dare was born, the first European child to be born in the New World and the granddaughter of White. It was clear to White that if the settlement were to succeed, it needed considerably more supplies than were available. A few days after Dare's birth, White set sail back to England for more provisions and people to help develop the colony.

For the next two years, White was blocked from returning to the settlement, beset by many troubles, including those on the seas by the Spanish Armada and privateers interfering with ships sailing for North America. A year later, in 1590, with the help of Raleigh, White was able to secure finances to convene a fleet and sailed for the North Carolina colony. White landed on Roanoke Island on August 18, the third birthday of Virginia Dare. After a search for the settlers, he found the colony deserted and the houses dismantled. The only clue of their possible whereabouts was the word "CROATOAN" carved into a tree. White assumed this to be a sign the settlers went to live with the Croatoan Indians, led by Chief Manteo, on nearby Hatteras Island. Despite his pleas, the captain of the fleet refused to look for the colonists and White returned to England. The mystery of the Lost Colony remains unsolved today.

*Interpreter at Roanoke
Island Festival Park
(left)*



*St. Thomas Church,
Historic Bath
(right)*



Settlement of the Frontier

During the 17th century, settlement in North Carolina proceeded from Virginia migration, first into the Albemarle region, then into the Pamlico district. Settlers followed the river valleys from the interior lands and then headed east back toward the sounds and the Atlantic Ocean. Normal routes of settlement, from the coast inland, were almost impossible to travel due to the extent of swamps and nearly impenetrable maritime forests protecting the mainland. The first people to arrive this way came in the mid-1600s from Jamestown, Virginia, the first successful English settlement. By 1710, the new sparsely settled province had a capital at Edenton, and the colonial towns Bath, New Bern and Beaufort were established. But the European migration caused growing alarm among the Indian populations.

The Tuscarora Wars

The Tuscarora Indians occupied much of the inner coastal plain at the time of the Roanoke Island settlement. Some fighting occurred between white settlers and the Tuscarora in the mid-1600s, but it was the surveying and exploration by two white men, the Englishman John Lawson and the Swiss patrician Christoph von Graffenried, that caused the battles to rage into war. The two men were taken hostage by the Tuscarora in 1711 after Lawson parceled off more than 18,000 acres of land at the confluence of the Neuse and Trent Rivers for von Graffenried to develop a German Palatine colony, New Bern. The Tuscarora were able to rally support from other coastal tribes against European encroachment. Von Graffenried, through an impassioned plea, was spared but Lawson was executed.

The Indian alliance then set out and attacked the scattered settlements throughout the region, killing hundreds of men, women and children. The English response was brutal and sparked a three-year war between the Tuscarora and the English for control of Eastern North Carolina. The war culminated in March 1713, when John Moore, from South Carolina, led an expedition of European men and Indian allies into battle against the Tuscarora Indians. Over three days, Moore's men fought the Indians in bloody hand-to-hand combat, destroying the Tuscarora and effectively ending their war-making capabilities. Eastern North Carolina land was now opened for white settlement.

The Lord Proprietors

The key event that affected the colony's development until the time of the American Revolution was King George II's takeover of North Carolina from the heirs of the Lords Proprietors in 1729. The Lords – eight Englishmen who were granted ownership charters of "Carolina" in 1663 – had extensive powers of taxes, duties and civil order in the colony. Many problems confronted the Proprietors, including poor leadership, Indian unrest, and coastal trade and shipping constantly disrupted by pirates. In 1712, the vast land of Carolina was divided into two parts in hopes of improving settlement and civic conditions. But the problems continued and in 1719, South Carolina was set apart as a new royal colony.

Ten years later King George II bought out the rights of most of the Proprietors to Carolina. The change generated a land bonanza in the colony as the Crown eased land purchase requirements and sent out the equivalent of real estate agents to drum up business. Their work, and the encouragement of royal governors, touched off a boom in North Carolina that lasted from 1730 to the American Revolution. Forests along the Coastal Plain were leveled for farms and the naval stores industry, settlers poured into the backcountry, and the line of settlement extended to western North Carolina.

Piracy and Privateers

The waters of Eastern North Carolina helped develop a unique and significant history for the region, the state and the nation. The size and reach of the sounds and rivers provided for many small ports and harbors that dotted the Inner and Outer Banks. These same waters also contributed to the isolation and slow development of the region. The coastal shoals of the Atlantic and the shallow waters of the sounds and rivers made for treacherous shipping, limiting the sizes of vessels and their reach into the sounds and up the rivers. While this slowed the growth of towns, causing North Carolina to be without a major port city, it contributed to harboring privateers and pirates.

Privateers were privately owned and operated ships authorized by their governments to carry out attacks on enemy shipping vessels during wartime. Pirates, on the other hand, were considered more nefarious and their illegal activities of capturing the cargo of any seafaring vessel made them widely feared. Two of the most famous pirates, Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard, and Stede Bonnet, visited the North Carolina coast during 1717 and 1718. As short as their visits were, they made lasting impressions.

Teach and Bonnet terrorized shipping from North America to the Caribbean. They joined forces for a short time, wreaking havoc on shipping off the coast of the Carolinas, but their partnership did not last. Teach found safe harbor in the rivers and sounds of North Carolina, paying off the political leadership of the colony for his protection and using the town of Bath as his home. Bonnet pillaged coastal towns in Virginia and then settled in along the Cape Fear River, causing the Governor of South Carolina to send out troops to capture him and return him for trial to Charlestown. Teach's apparent immunity from the law caused great concern for the merchants of Eastern North Carolina. Their appeals to the governor, Alexander Spotswood, eventually were heeded. The governor sent Lieutenant Robert Maynard and two sloops to bring in Blackbeard. Blackbeard scuttled his flagship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, near Beaufort Inlet and set forth in a smaller ship, the *Adventure*. On November 21, 1718, Maynard's troops attacked Blackbeard and the *Adventure* off the island of Ocracoke. During the ferocious battle, most of Blackbeard's men were either killed or captured, and Teach was beheaded. Not long after Blackbeard's execution, just down the coast in Charlestown, Bonnet was convicted and hung in a public square. In 1996, the *Queen Anne's Revenge* was found. The following year, a collaborative research program began under the management of North Carolina Division of Archives and History's Office of State Archaeology.

The killing of Teach and Bonnet brought a sudden end to the Golden Age of Piracy in North Carolina. Privateering, on the other hand, existed into the early 1900s, taking on more of a role of coastal defense in the United States in the mid-1800s due to the lack of a sufficient and capable navy.

Early political power

Before Raleigh was established as the permanent capital of North Carolina in 1794, the eastern region was the center of political power in the state. For 20 years, from 1692 to 1712, the province of Carolina included both North and South Carolina and its seat of government was located in Charles Town (Charleston, South Carolina). Regional differences made it difficult to

agree on a permanent site for a capitol as the seat of government was moved around depending on wherever the governor resided. Edenton became the capital in 1712, and then it moved again to various places. After the colonies were separated, Edenton again claimed the capital in the 1720s and 1730s, followed by New Bern, Wilmington, Bath and an area near present-day Kinston. In 1766, New Bern became the seat of political power again.

In the wake of the American Revolution, as the former colony embraced statehood in a new nation, westward expansion of the state's population contributed to a debate over where to locate a permanent capital. A more central location was sought, and in 1788, the legislature of North Carolina decided on an "unalterable seat of government" in a planned capital city that they called Raleigh, after Sir Walter Raleigh.

This shift of political power from the east to the piedmont carried with it long-term socio-economic consequences for both regions of the state. Growth slowed in the east and burgeoned in the piedmont, which has dominated economic, political, and educational power in the state for over 150 years.

This divide is still felt in the east, and Eastern North Carolinians share a cultural identity very different from their neighbors in the piedmont and the mountains. Since the late 1950s, Interstate 95 has reinforced an east-west distinction. For Eastern North Carolinians, the 1960s and 1970s expansion of East Carolina University in Greenville was an important answer to piedmont dominance—the school's success changed the state's administration of all higher education, reinvigorated sectionalism in state politics, and renewed pride in the eastern portion of the state.

The third colonial Chowan County Courthouse (built in 1767 on the site of the 1724 structure), Edenton (left)



Tryon Palace, New Bern (right)



The People: Settlement Patterns and Population Trends

Native Americans

The earliest residents of the region were Native Americans. The first evidence of human occupation dates to the Paleo-Indian era approximately 12,000 years ago. The groups that were here when Europeans arrived in the late 1500s included Algonkian tribes along the coast, Iroquoian tribes on the inner Coastal Plain, and a small group of Siouan tribes in the Cape Fear region.

Algonkian tribes

People who spoke an Algonkian language occupied the Atlantic edge, the outer Coastal Plain, and the Tidewater from southeastern Virginia to where present-day Onslow County lies. Evidence of settlement dates from about 800 CE (Current Era). Archaeologically, this society is known as “Colington” culture. The Colington peoples were organized into chiefdoms united by a formal religion. They settled in capital villages, smaller common villages, and seasonal camps; permanent villages were usually located at the edges of sounds or estuaries or along the high banks of rivers. Farmers, fishers, hunters, and gatherers, they took advantage of all the soils, the waters, and the forests produced to sustain them. Chowanoac, Roanoac, Moratoc, Pamlico, Secotan, Hatteras, Coree, and Eno were among the Algonkian chiefdoms in the region. The first European settlers encountered these groups in the late 1500s. Throughout the Americas, native populations were decimated by European diseases to which they had no immunity. In coastal North Carolina, the small population that remained was put on a reservation in 1675, and by the middle of the 1700s they disappeared entirely from colonial records.

Iroquoian tribes

The Iroquoian-speaking Tuscarora, Meherrin, and Nottaway tribes comprised a confederacy that occupied the inner Coastal Plain. Like the Algonkian speakers to the east, they are present in the region after 800 CE, known in the archaeological record as “Cashie” culture. The Tuscarora inhabited the area from just south of the Neuse River to where the Virginia border is today. The Meherrin and Nottaway lived between the Roanoke and Chowan Rivers. Unlike the Algonkian chiefdoms, the Iroquoian villages were autonomous. Villages were located on loamy uplands along rivers and streams, sustained by agriculture and exploitation of the area’s plentiful nuts, plants, fish, and game.

Siouan tribes

The Waccamaw and Cape Fear tribes are among those from the Siouan language group, which inhabited the southernmost region of what is North Carolina today. Archaeologically labeled as “Oak Island” culture, these small tribes lived below the Cape Fear River.

Native Americans in Eastern North Carolina today

European contact permanently altered the cultures and territories of tribes living in Eastern North Carolina. Within 50 years, smallpox and other diseases decimated the native population, and tribes were forced off of their native lands by European settlement. The significant cultural displacement resulting from major population loss and forced migration generally meant the reorganization of native groups in new areas. Today, there are eight state-recognized tribes in North Carolina, including five that reside in the study area. The majority of the modern tribes trace their ancestry to multiple historic tribes. Many continue to seek federal recognition, an ongoing process stretching back to the late 1800s in some cases.

The Haliwa-Saponi of Halifax and Warren counties trace their roots to Siouxan and Iroquoian groups, including the Tuscarora. They number 3,800 today and have been lauded for their focus on education.

The Lumbee are the largest tribe in North Carolina today; they are the largest tribe east of the Mississippi and the ninth largest in the nation. Concentrated in Robeson County along the Lumber River, from which their name is derived, there are about 55,000 Lumbee. Their name dates to the 1950s, but an Indian population is evident in this area from the 1700s. Their mixed ancestry includes Cheraw Sioux and Tuscarora and may also include descendants of Algonkian speakers, Africans, and white settlers.

There are approximately 2,000 Waccamaw Siouan living on the edge of the Green Swamp near Lake Waccamaw in Bladen and Columbus counties.

The Coharie tribe is comprised of just over 2,500 members, most of whom reside in Sampson and Harnett counties (the latter is not in the study area). The Coharie have lived in the vicinity of the Little Coharie River since the 1730s, and trace their ancestry to an Algonkian group.

The Meherrin trace their ancestry to an Iroquoian group located in Virginia along the Meherrin River, documented in the historical record from the 1650s. European settlement forced them south on the Meherrin into Hertford County, where they number just under 1,000 today.

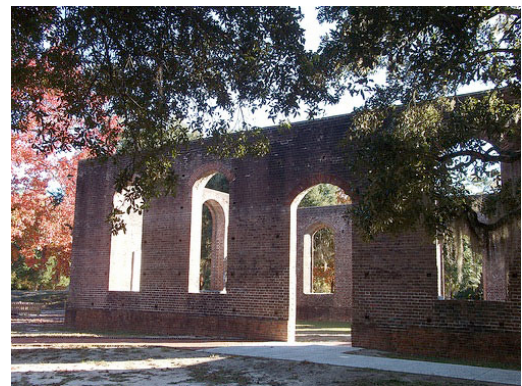
Europeans

Europeans and settlers of European descent colonized Eastern North Carolina, with first attempts beginning in the 1580s. The fate of English colonists under Sir Walter Raleigh's charter at Roanoke Island gave rise to one of our nation's most enduring unsolved mysteries.

Following the failure of the Roanoke colony, the estuarine environment of the outer Coastal Plain discouraged further attempts at settlement until the mid-to late 1600s. At that time, English colonists from Virginia braved the Great Dismal Swamp to come first to the Albemarle region and then to Pamlico region. Merchants, traders, farmers and Quakers seeking better opportunities and freedom from taxation and religious persecution arrived by water and settled along the sounds, the rivers, and the creeks that comprised the Tidewater. The majority of settlers in communities such as Edenton were English, but Lowland Scots and Welsh were present as well. The English settlement of Bath and the upper Neuse River was the focus of French Huguenot migration beginning in the 1690s. Another group of French Huguenots came to the Trent River in the early 1700s. German Palatines and Swiss founded New Bern in 1710. To the south, English settlers from South Carolina migrated north to mouth of the Cape Fear River, founding Brunswick and Wilmington between 1725 and 1733.

The Newbold-White House, Hertford (left)

St. Philips Church, Brunswick Town/Ft. Anderson State Historic Site (right)



Three distinct ethnic groups from Scotland settled in North Carolina. Beginning in the 1730s, a large migration of Highland Scots followed the Cape Fear River to settle the flat sandhills of the Cape Fear River Valley near what would become Fayetteville. With settlements in Anson, Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, and Scotland counties, this would become the largest concentration of Highland Scots on the continent. Lowland Scots generally settled along the coast and the Coastal Plain, many entering the region from Charleston and Wilmington. The Scots Irish arrived in the region on the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania; although most settled in the mountains, some settled in a region that included parts of what would become Pender, Duplin, Sampson, Wayne and Johnston counties. Pender, Duplin, and Sampson counties also saw Welsh, Irish, and Swiss immigration.

Today, the outer coastal plain, the Inner and Outer Banks, have the highest proportion of people of European descent, including the ethnic groups described above.

Africans and African Americans

People of African descent were present from the earliest days of the colony, as the Lords Proprietors included incentives for the use of slave labor in the Fundamental Constitutions drafted in 1669. The lack of a large port limited the trans-Atlantic slave trade in North Carolina, and the landscape was not as easy to develop for large-scale agriculture as in other Southern colonies. Both of these factors resulted in a slower growth of slavery than in neighboring Virginia and South Carolina.

The importation of enslaved people by ship from Africa was legal until the international slave trade was banned in 1808. The number of slaves brought directly to North Carolina was small in comparison to other southern ports. In North Carolina, the port of Wilmington saw the importation of the largest number of slaves. Most enslaved people had origins in the other American colonies or the West Indies and were brought to North Carolina along inland water routes from Virginia and South Carolina.

Initially, the largest concentration of people of African descent was in the Cape Fear region, as settlers from South Carolina brought plantation culture with them. Plantations that harvested rice, indigo, and naval stores in that area all were built on the backs of enslaved people. New Hanover and Brunswick counties are notable for the presence of Gullah-Geechee culture along the coast. This culture, including the language that combines English and various African languages, began in the Sea Islands of South Carolina and thrived in rice-growing areas on the Atlantic seaboard. In 2006, the coastal region of southern North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and northern Florida was designated as the Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor for the purposes of preserving the culture and history of that region.

The rough coast and Great Dismal Swamp made it more difficult for slavery to take hold in northeastern North Carolina. By the end of the antebellum era, however, swamplands were drained, leaving fertile soils behind, and the pressure for land resulted in a sharp rise in tobacco, grains, and cotton agriculture. In 1860, eight counties in northeastern and eastern

North Carolina had an enslaved population that comprised over 50% of the total population—Warren, Halifax, Northampton, Bertie, Edgecombe, Chowan, Pitt, and Jones.

Most North Carolinians did not own slaves. Through time, the percentage of slaveholding households never exceeded about 31%. Of those households that owned slaves, they did not own many—95% of slaveholding households had less than 50 slaves, and about 70% had less than 10. This reflects the nature of agriculture in the region, in which small, subsistence-based farms comprised the majority of agricultural lands.

While the majority of people of African descent were enslaved until the Civil War, the state also had one of the largest free black populations in the nation. Many free blacks lived in towns and pursued skilled occupations such as carpentry. Others farmed their own land, and in a few notable exceptions even held slaves of their own. In recent years, significant attention has been paid to the artisanal legacy of African Americans in Eastern North Carolina prior to the Civil War. This legacy includes renowned individuals, like cabinetmaker Thomas Day of Edenton, as well as free and enslaved carpenters and architects whose names may be lost to history but whose creations endure. Preservation North Carolina created a traveling panel exhibit to interpret the history of “African American Builders and Architects” at museums throughout the state, and the National Endowment for the Humanities developed a teacher training workshop entitled “Crafting Freedom: Black Artisans, Entrepreneurs, and Abolitionists in the Antebellum Upper South.”

About 10% of the African American population in North Carolina was free just prior to the Civil War. This population resulted from various sources. Some free blacks had been manumitted or allowed to purchase their freedom. A greater number migrated from Virginia in the late 1700s, especially to Halifax, Bertie, and Northampton counties. One draw to the Albemarle region may have been the liberal views of the Quaker religion, which strongly supported equality and the abolition of slavery. The port city of Wilmington in southeastern North Carolina also had a large free black population. Work aboard ships did not follow a rigid racial hierarchy, and port cities often shared that less rigid construct, consequently providing broader opportunities for both free and enslaved people of color.

The legacy of the free African American middle class in northeastern North Carolina and the Wilmington area is evident in the historical trajectory of both places during the Reconstruction era. After the Civil War, the struggle to rebuild the Southern states and reintegrate them into the nation was difficult for the United States government, and the states themselves. The 15th Amendment to the Constitution was passed granting suffrage to African Americans. Eastern North Carolina saw the rise of Republicans who were sympathetic to blacks and their struggles for freedom and equal rights. After a political power struggle, however, conservative Democrats opposed to reforms took control of the state. This power struggle led to two significant events in Eastern North Carolina.

One effort to neutralize African American influence in North Carolina politics was the creation in 1872 of the “Black Second,” a wildly gerrymandered congressional district in the northeast made up of counties with large majorities of black voters. For almost three decades, this

congressional district overwhelmingly elected African Americans to Congress and wielded considerable influence in successfully seating blacks in state legislative elections. The Black Second was dismantled in 1902, as Jim Crow segregationist policy swept the nation, and the majority of African Americans in the region were disenfranchised as voters with the passage of a state constitutional amendment prohibiting illiterates from voting. White illiterates with ancestors who had voted prior to 1868 were grandfathered in and allowed to vote, but this exception did not apply to African Americans. Although the population remained majority black, the dismantling of the Black Second and the discriminatory law effectively eliminated any black American from holding Congressional office in the region for the next 90 years.

The second major event was the 1898 riot that occurred in Wilmington, a city with a large African American middle class and a population that was two-thirds African American. At the state level, the conservative Democrats lost power in the 1896 election to a Republican coalition that included African Americans. This led to a hotly contested election in 1898, as many white conservatives held strong negative feelings about leadership by African Americans. In response to racist propaganda published in a white Wilmington newspaper, Alex Manly, an African American newspaper publisher in the city, wrote a sarcastic and inflammatory editorial that exacerbated racial tension. Although conservative Democrats won the statewide election, aided by widespread fraud, tensions in Wilmington did not subside. Manly's newspaper office was burned and a riot erupted. A white mob targeted African Americans, killing at least 25 people and driving scores of others from the city. In reality, the number of fatalities likely was significantly higher, and the event influenced race relations in the state for decades afterwards. In 2000, the state created the Wilmington Race Riot Commission to examine conditions leading up to and consequences of this event. The commission released a 600 page report with conclusions and recommendations in 2006. In 2008, the City of Wilmington erected a monument to memorialize the 1898 riot and honor those whose lives were lost or forever altered.

*1898 Memorial,
Wilmington
(left)*



*Historic Jarvisburg
Colored School
(right)*



From the colonial era through the Civil War, the population of people of African descent in North Carolina steadily increased. In 1712, only 800 people of African descent were recorded in the colony. That number exploded to 41,000 by 1767 and to 100,000 by the first U.S. census in 1790, about one-quarter of the total population at that time. By 1850, over one-third of North Carolina's population was African American, where it more or less stabilized. Today, African Americans comprise between one-quarter and one-third of the state's total population.

Following the settlement patterns described above, the highest concentration of African American residents today is in the northeastern counties.

Hispanics

Spanish exploration of the coast and the interior of North Carolina dates to the 1500s, although no significant settlements resulted from that early association. In the present, a small but growing segment of the population of Eastern North Carolina is people of Hispanic ethnicity. Present in small numbers for generations, the Hispanic population in the state experienced a boom in the 1990s. By the turn of the new century, North Carolina boasted the fifth largest growth rate in the nation at approximately 400% since the previous census. More than half of the people of Hispanic ethnicity in North Carolina trace their ancestry to Mexico, but the population has ties throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America. The recent boom is attributable in large part to agricultural labor. In Eastern North Carolina, the largest Hispanic populations are in the central inland counties of Eastern North Carolina, where agriculture is one of the largest industries. Hispanic culture is generally associated with a connection to the Spanish language and Catholicism and a strong family orientation.

Population through time

From 1663 to 1729, the Proprietary Era, the colony was under the rule of the Lords Proprietors and their heirs. During this time period, the population grew from about 500 to 36,000 people. The latter population estimate includes approximately 6,000 people of African descent, most of whom were brought to the region as slaves. Despite the dramatic increase in population, North Carolina remained the most sparsely settled English colony in North America at the time.

By the end of the 1720s, piracy had been largely suppressed, the Indian wars were over, and the Crown had taken the colony back from the heirs of the Lords Proprietors. This confluence of events resulted in the real estate boom described previously. From the 1730s to the American Revolution, many people of European descent took advantage of the relative ease by which land could be acquired in the colony. By 1775, the population of the colony would reach 265,000, and settlement was scattered from the coast to the mountains.

Through much of its history, North Carolina has remained a rural state with small towns. In the first half of the 19th century, North Carolina's largest cities were clustered in the east—New Bern, Wilmington, Edenton, and Fayetteville. By the turn of the 20th century, westward expansion in the United States led to great demographic change. In North Carolina, political power and population shifted west toward the Piedmont. In 1900, Wilmington was the largest city in North Carolina, but it was followed in size by a host of Piedmont cities. One hundred years later, North Carolina's five most populous cities all were in the Piedmont, with Fayetteville ranking 6th in size, and Wilmington ranking 9th.

North Carolina has seen a growth in population over the last 60 years, primarily driven by gains in the financial, education and research industries. This population growth has been witnessed in the Eastern North Carolina counties as well as the other two regions. In the 2010 U.S. Census, North Carolina's population was 9,535,483 with 2,504,184 living in the 40 counties of the study region (26 percent). Of the 40 counties, all but six—Halifax, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir,

Martin, and Washington—saw population gains, with the largest increases (over 25 percent increase from 2000) in Brunswick, Camden, Currituck, Hoke, New Hanover, Pender, and Pitt counties. Today, North Carolina ranks 9th in overall population in the United States. While the Piedmont remains the most populous region, the coast bears a thin line of dense population.

Towns and cities

For much of Eastern North Carolina’s history, small towns and villages have dominated the life of the people of this region. At the time of the 1820 Census, only 2 percent of the state’s population lived in an urban area, and New Bern was North Carolina’s largest city with a population of 3,663. In the 1800s North Carolina, as for much of the South, a rural agrarian lifestyle was by choice, rejecting the trend toward rapid, industrialized development taking root in other parts of the nation. Wilmington was Eastern North Carolina’s largest city and port during much of the 19th century, never developing as rapidly as its southern neighbor, Charleston. In 1900, while many parts of the nation were moving toward a more urbanized population, North Carolina was overwhelmingly rural. Only 9.9% of its population lived in an urban area, and its largest city was Wilmington, with only 20,976 people, or a little over 1.1% of the entire population of the state. After 1900, the population center of North Carolina shifted westward, briefly to Winston-Salem, and then to Charlotte. Despite Wilmington, and the larger towns and cities of Fayetteville, Greenville, Goldsboro and Jacksonville, Eastern North Carolina would retain a more rural, small-town atmosphere. Major interstate highways are mostly devoid in the region, with I-95 forming the western edge, and I-40 bisecting the southeastern portion. While this slower-paced, almost isolated, development has restricted much of Eastern North Carolina’s economic and population growth when compared to the Piedmont region, it has greatly assisted the region to maintain much of its cultural heritage, working traditions, and history with roots dating back to the 1700s.

*Downtown Raeford
(left)*

*Downtown Wilmington
(right)*



Living with the Land and Water

Eastern North Carolina’s distinctive landscape of coastal plain, piney woods, banks and waters gave rise to all manner of livelihood, from those who scratched out a living to those who amassed prosperity from maritime and agricultural enterprises, shaping daily life and impacting regional and national historical events.

The unique geographic features of Eastern North Carolina—its Outer Banks, Inner Banks, extensive estuaries, vast and often impenetrable swamplands, and river bottomlands along the coastal plain—give considerable insight as to how and why North Carolina developed as a colony and a state in a fashion very different from neighboring South Carolina and Virginia. The lives of those who have lived in Eastern North Carolina—and who live there today—have been shaped by the physical traits of the land and water. The geography of the region dictated the location of settlements, as well as which ones could grow into modern-day towns and cities. The land and water determined the occupational pursuits and social relationships of the people of the region and continue to shape these today.

The livelihoods of Eastern North Carolina’s settlers and their descendants are closely tied to the land and to the rivers, sounds and sea that define it. Agriculture and the exploitation of maritime resources were important to the Native American population in the region long before European settlers arrived. In the 18th century, North Carolina was settled as an agricultural and maritime colony, and farming and maritime activities have diversified and continued to the present. Forests are another economic mainstay, from the naval stores of the 18th and 19th centuries to 20th and 21st century timbering. Eastern North Carolina’s prominence on the eastern seaboard has given it strategic importance for militaries from initial settlement to today. The coastal location also spurred a tourism industry that began more than a century ago; in recent decades, this industry has expanded as the interest in the region’s heritage resources has grown. Finally, the creative economy—based, in part, on arts and the region’s artistic traditions—has proven to be a source of regional pride and sustainable income. The following sections include an examination of the historical contexts and contemporary importance of these Eastern North Carolina industries.

The Maritime Economy

From pre-colonial times to the present, individuals and communities in Eastern North Carolina have maintained a strong cultural connection to the estuarine environment. Before European contact, American Indians plied the region’s waterways in dugout canoes and built their lives around the abundant waterfowl, fish, and shellfish. From the colonial era to today, Eastern North Carolinians have been involved in every aspect of maritime economy, including shipbuilding, whaling, commercial fishing, shipping trades, coastal protection, and tourism.

Fishing

Commercial fishing is one of the longest-standing working traditions in the region. The estuarine and coastal environments are home to more than 730 marine species, the second-most diverse marine ecosystem in the East or Gulf coasts. The estuaries are an important

fishing ground for the state's seafood industry, which harvests 39 major fish stocks. Ninety-five percent of the commercial fish caught in North Carolina spend at least a portion of their life cycle sheltered in the rivers and sounds.

The earliest commercial fishing industry was whaling, which was brought to the region in the 1720s by whalers from New England. Hunting right whales for their oil, conducted from shore in North Carolina, continued through the 1800s and into the early 20th century. Both whales and porpoises were a source of lamp oil, and North Carolina also had porpoise factories in the 19th century.

In the days before refrigeration, mullet was an important commercial catch, especially in the autumn. Using seine nets 150 to 200 feet long, crews would haul in the catch, clean it, salt it, and pack it in barrels for transport to market. In the spring, commercial fishing focused on shad and menhaden herring runs. For about two months, men and women were needed to run nets, and haul, clean, and pack the catch. In many places, crews were given shares of the catch and other incentives to encourage their efforts. Chantey singing, discussed below, is often associated with the hard work of hauling in the menhaden nets.

Other fishing traditions include gathering oysters, clams, shrimp, and scallops; netting mullet, spot, sea trout, flounder and bluefish in the sounds; and netting shad, herring, striped bass, and sturgeon in the rivers. Setting nets, raking clams, and poling skiffs were important skills for all coastal residents.

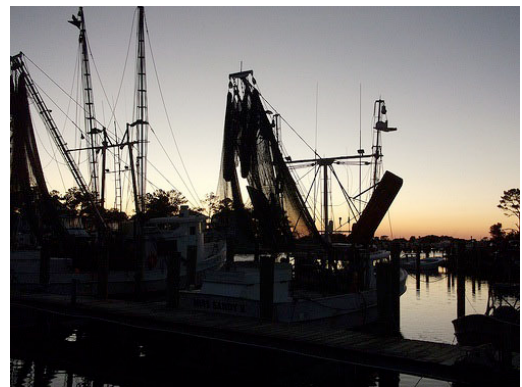
In the middle of the 20th century, mechanization changed the industry. Crews hauling seine nets by hand were replaced by hydraulic lifts.

Fishing remains an economic mainstay in coastal communities. North Carolina's marine fisheries contribute more than a billion dollars annually to the state's economy, and 100 million pounds of seafood is harvested each year. From rivers to sounds to sea, families throughout the region still depend on the state's fisheries for their livelihoods.

*Sunset on Cape Lookout
(left)*



*Working boats at dusk,
Brunswick County
(right)*



Sportfishing

Whether putting dinner on the table or earning a living, fishing has always been important to area residents. As more and more people came to the coastal region for leisure and recreation in the 20th century, sportfishing grew in popularity. By the late 1930s, a market for guide services had grown up. Charter fishing and guide services thrive today, and communities with deep tourism roots, like Hatteras Village, have guides whose businesses and knowledge of area waters has been handed down from previous generations. In addition, surf fishing is a popular pastime for beach goers. Today, North Carolina is one of the top 10 states in the nation in both recreational and commercial annual marine fish landings. Drum, sea bass, mackerel, snapper, grouper, amberjack, tuna, and marlin are among the most common.

The fresh and brackish rivers and sounds also provide anglers plenty of opportunities. The eastern region of the state provides good fishing for striped bass, American and hickory shad, largemouth bass, crappie, a wide variety of sunfish, white and yellow perch, and channel, blue, white flathead and bullhead catfish.

Shipping/trade

From the colonial era forward, trade and shipping have played a role in North Carolina's economy. The coastline of the region, however, was not conducive to the development of a deep draft port. No major cities grew up on the North Carolina coast, while port cities immediately to the north (Norfolk) and south (Charleston) thrived in natural harbors. Historically and in the present, Wilmington is North Carolina's most important port city.

A shipping corridor from the northern colonies to the West Indies stretched along the North Carolina coast from earliest colonial times. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, pirates were known to use the nearly impenetrable estuarine environment as a base from which to strike at the rich cargo passing north and south along the coast. Diamond Shoals, which extends miles out into the Atlantic where two major ocean currents come together, made the corridor difficult to traverse, and ships were often lost. As such, salvaging shipwrecks became another important economic activity for residents of the isolated Outer Banks.

Many residents of coastal communities made a living "lightering," transferring cargo from ocean going vessels to shallow draft boats that could navigate the inlets and reach the small port cities lining the sounds. This practice continued from earliest colonial times into the 20th century.

British imports included cloth, as well as a wide variety of manufactured items for agricultural and household use. Imports from the West Indies included rum, molasses, sugar, and salt. Goods commonly were shipped to the northern colonies or Charleston prior to making their way to the North Carolina coast. Important exports from North Carolina included tobacco, lumber, shingles, staves, and agricultural provisions, especially corn. Naval stores were North Carolina's most important export from the colonial era through the Civil War.

Naval stores

In the early 1700s in North Carolina, the dense, rich forests of the coastal plain and maritime landscape gave rise to naval stores – an industry based on the collection, processing, and sale of forest products created from the oleoresin of the longleaf pine. The pine provided the pitch, tar, and turpentine necessary for caulking and waterproofing the wooden ships upon which nearly all trade and military pursuits depended for the American colonists and their British masters. The ubiquitous use of tar for ship maintenance gave rise to sailors being called “tars,” and the importance and prevalence of the industry in the state is one source of North Carolinians’ identification as “tar heels.”

The Cape Fear Valley was the region of the greatest naval store production. Naval stores were the catalyst for development of the North Carolina ports of Brunswick Town and Wilmington along the Cape Fear River, and by the 1750s Wilmington had become a center for trade and shipbuilding. Naval store production was very labor intensive and added to the demand for slave labor as working conditions were harsh.

In the mid-1700s, North Carolina accounted for more than 60 percent of all the naval stores in the colonies. Demand continued to grow and by the 1840s, North Carolina accounted for almost 96% of all naval stores in the United States.

The Graveyard of the Atlantic

The waters off North Carolina’s coast have been called the “Graveyard of the Atlantic” because of the great number of ships wrecked there — nearly 2,000 since the 16th century. Geography, climate, and human activity have all played roles in making this region unusually treacherous for shipping. It is the convergence of two powerful ocean currents -- the warm tropical current of the Gulf Stream, and the cold, arctic waters of the Labrador Current flowing south – off the coast at Cape Hatteras at Diamond Shoals. The entire coast of North Carolina is an area of shifting sands, shallow bays, and inlets that appear and disappear sometimes overnight. Many buildings on the Outer Banks were constructed from the salvaged materials of wrecked vessels, and many families on the Outer Banks made a decent living from shipwreck salvage.

Among the ships meeting their fate along the coast, some of the more famous include the ironclad Monitor, which was being towed south after its battle with the Merrimac; the Huron, a U.S. gunboat with a crew of 103 men who were killed; and a fleet of ships carrying treasure back to Spain after a series of successful raids throughout the Caribbean in 1750. In the 1940s, German U-boats lay in wait off the coast and took aim at tankers and other vessels whose cargo was critical to the war effort in Europe. It is even said that the future use of airpower in fighting wars was demonstrated here when two battleships were sunk off Cape Hatteras.

Saving ships, saving lives

In colonial times, mariners were left to fend for themselves, relying on hand-drawn maps, descriptions of the coastline, and their own experience. Although mariners along the North Carolina coast were clearly in need of navigational assistance, lighthouses and lightships did not appear in the region until the latter part of the 18th century and the early 19th century,

respectively. While lighthouses are stationary buildings on the land, lightships are anchored off the coast and were manned by crews that remained moored off the coast.

The first lighthouse was built in 1795 at Bald Head on Smith’s Island, aiding navigation around Frying Pan Shoals and into the Cape Fear River. Federal law in 1794 authorized the construction of other lighthouses including one on Ocracoke Island and Hatteras Island. Both of the original lighthouses built here were either destroyed or rebuilt to provide more adequate navigation. The mid-1800s saw a number of lighthouses built along the coast, including Ocracoke Channel, Beaufort and Currituck. The cost of building and maintaining lighthouses caused the federal government to look at lightships as alternatives. The coast also saw “screw-pile” lights, a directional beam mounted on pilings over the water, which proved to be better at withstanding the harsh elements of the sea. Of the dozens of lighthouses built along North Carolina’s coast, only seven remain today. Currituck, Bodie Island, Hatteras, Ocracoke, Cape Lookout, and Oak Island are owned and operated by the U.S. Coast Guard, with Bald Head Light privately owned.

In 1848, the U.S. Life-Saving Service was created, with stations along the shoreline to protect life and property from shipwrecks. Initially, seven stations – Jones Hill, Caffey’s Inlet, Kitty Hawk, Nags Head, Bodie Island, Chicamacomico, and Little Kinnakeet – were established, all with full-time keepers and seasonal crews. Over time, 29 stations dotted the North Carolina coast. The surfmen, whose employment eventually became full-time, were responsible for patrolling the beach and searching for threatened vessels off the coast.

One of the most famous lifesaving operations was the Pea Island Station commanded by Captain Richard Etheridge. Pea Island Station was manned by an all-black crew, the only one in the nation. Despite the racial prejudice and segregation they encountered, the crew served heroically in a number of rescues. Along with the lighthouses mentioned above, eventually lifesaving became the responsibility of the U.S. Coast Guard, which maintains a strong presence in North Carolina to the present day.

*The lighthouse at
Ocracoke
(left)*



*North Carolina’s ferries
serve residents and
tourists all year long
(right)*



North Carolina’s wild horses

Shipwrecks in the Graveyard of the Atlantic, perhaps along with failed colonial settlements, are also the source of one of Eastern North Carolina’s most beloved resources, the herds of wild horses found at Shackleford Banks, on Ocracoke, and near Corolla. Referred to as “ponies” because of their small size, clear ties to Spanish bloodlines have been established for the hearty

wild horses that have inhabited the Outer Banks for 400 years. Although annual pennings and sales were once a common tradition in the Outer Banks, today the animals are protected and managed through the coordinated efforts of private foundations, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of North Carolina, and existing and pending federal legislation specific to the herds.

Diving the wrecks

The deadly history of shipwrecks in the region has led to the establishment of the recreational scuba diving industry in the region. Wrecks from exploration and colonial settlement all the way through World War II provide an underwater continuum that includes all eras of North Carolina history. The wrecks also sustain abundant marine life as artificial reefs have developed around many sunken vessels in the region.

Shipbuilding/boatbuilding

The construction of ships and boats has a lengthy history in Eastern North Carolina. Despite the presence of an abundance of raw materials in the region's forests, shipbuilding never became a major industry. Nevertheless, it has contributed to the economy along the coast since the colonial era. The focus in North Carolina shipyards has almost always remained on relatively small vessels. Washington, on the Pamlico River, led shipbuilding efforts from the 1780s to the 1850s, after which Beaufort topped the industry in the state. Other 19th century shipyards were located at Elizabeth City, New Bern, Southport, and Wilmington. Some communities were known for specialized vessels—small yards in Smith Island and Bald Head built pilot boats, and Confederate rams were built in Plymouth and Whiteboro.

During World War II, Wilmington was one of several cities in the nation tasked with building "Liberty Ships" for the war effort. Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia created a subsidiary based in Wilmington—the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company—for the express purpose of serving as an emergency shipyard for the war. In 1942, 40 ships for the Liberty Fleet were built in Wilmington, and by the end of the war, 243 ships had come off the line. At peak production during the war, more than 20,000 people were employed in the shipyard, resulting in a huge increase in local population. The Liberty Fleet, consisting of more than 2,500 vessels, played an important role in the Allied victory in the war.

Alongside the construction of larger vessels, a long tradition of boat-building exists in Eastern North Carolina. Smaller boats have always been critical for transportation in the watery region. Early colonists observed the dugout canoes of the region's native peoples and adapted that concept into the periauger, a dugout with two masts and sails. This boat led to the creation of other shallow-draft vessels well suited for life in watery Eastern North Carolina. The shad boat and the sharpie are two of the best-known types, both of which have influenced custom boat-building down to the present in North Carolina. Harker's Island and Wanchese are among the coastal communities that maintain strong boat-building traditions today.

Hunting

The sounds are situated on the Atlantic Flyway, one of the four major migratory paths followed by birds each spring and fall. Waterfowl hunting was an important source of food for residents of the region from prehistoric times down to the 20th century. In the 1850s, waterfowl hunting began a shift from subsistence to recreation. The Currituck Shooting Club (built in 1857, destroyed by fire in 2003) and the Whalehead Club (built as a residence in 1925), both in Currituck, exemplify this history. They are among 100 gunning clubs and lodges built within 100 miles of Back Bay, Currituck Sound, and the adjoining marshes by wealthy northern businessmen between the 1850s and 1920s. Such illustrious figures as J.P. Morgan, the Vanderbilts, and even Babe Ruth came to hunt along the flyway. As hunting grew in recreational importance, decoy carving (*described below*) made the shift from a utilitarian craft to an art form.

During this same time period, hunting gained notoriety as well as commercial success. Feathered hats and accessories for women were fashionable in the Victorian Era. From then until a ban was imposed in 1917, millions of birds were killed for their plumage, eventually depleting the state's waterfowl. Populations of white egrets, herons, and small terns were especially hard-hit. North Carolina was the first state to impose a ban on commercial hunting to protect its waterfowl.

Hurricanes

Hurricanes, a meteorological phenomenon, can also be considered a maritime tradition in Eastern North Carolina. Hurricanes regularly strike the region because of the prominence of North Carolina's coast. Cape Hatteras is most often in the crosshairs of storms, followed by Cape Lookout and Cape Fear. Official storm records were not kept until 1851, but other sources have filled in much of the historical record to about 1700. From that time to the present, more than 400 storms have hit North Carolina. These storms have taken more than 1,000 lives and have been responsible for \$11 billion in damage (2008 dollars).

In addition to the devastating flooding and wind damage storms bring, hurricanes regularly shift the sandy coastline, rolling it backwards at a faster pace. Shoreline erosion made necessary the movement of the Cape Hatteras lighthouse by more than half a mile in 1999. Through time, erosion exacerbated by storms has had major consequences for transportation, especially in the Outer Banks. Historically, some of these shifts caused new inlets from the sea to the sounds to open and old ones to close. For communities dependent on lightering, such as Portsmouth, these changes had long-lasting economic consequences. In the modern era, big storms regularly wash out roads and bridges, disrupting transportation for months at a time.

Architecture along the coast accommodates storms to a certain extent. Buildings on the shore frequently are built on stilts to avoid first level flooding, and designed to take higher wind loads than structures built further inland. Following the destruction of several late 20th century hurricanes, regulations for the building code for new construction in coastal communities have undergone significant changes in an effort to prevent flooding. Nationally, however, more than 50% of Americans live within 50 miles of the coast. As this trend increases, the cost of storms inevitably will continue to rise.

Agriculture

Agriculture is another traditional component in North Carolina's economy from precolonial times to the present. What was once a subsistence activity with few extra goods for sale and a small number of plantations, today agriculture is overwhelmingly a cash crop industry that competes in a global market.

Agriculture through time

Long before Europeans arrived, Native Americans throughout the region grew varied crops that included corn, sunflowers, squash, pumpkins, potatoes, peas, and beans.

Despite the watery terrain, most immigrants to the New World survived as farmers. From the colonial through the antebellum era, about 90% of the region's inhabitants depended on an agrarian economy.

As Virginia's soils began to be depleted in the mid to late 1600s, farmers migrated to northeastern North Carolina to take advantage of productive organic soils. This area became an important source of grain for the entire east coast. Throughout the 18th century, the population and the amount of land under cultivation continued to increase until most of the easily cultivable land was in use. After the Revolutionary War, attention began to turn to the remaining land—the mountainous region to the west and the swamplands in the east. In Eastern North Carolina, swamplands were timbered, drained, and put into cultivation.

From the colonial era to the early 20th century, the vast majority of agriculturalists were yeoman farmers practicing subsistence agriculture. Free people who owned their own farms, yeomen cultivated a wide range of crops in small amounts in order to ensure their families' survival. Many of the cultural traditions described below developed in conjunction with subsistence agriculture. Quilting, basket-making, and pottery are among the activities that produced necessary items for daily use and have been handed down as arts long after their utility has past.

*Aycock Birthplace State
Historic Site, Fremont
(left)*



*Liberty Hall Planation,
Kenansville
(right)*



Farm sizes were limited by the availability of labor, and often that labor was derived from the farm family. Larger farms were able to “employ” indentured servants, but as the agricultural economy grew its progress was limited by these labor shortages. Indentured servitude, while used, was a limited commodity as the number of white servants was insufficient in the region.

A small, wealthy class of planters also developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. Planters raised cash crops with profits based on cheap, readily available labor and the ability to easily transport crops to market. Locating plantations along navigable rivers and, in the mid 19th century, near rail lines made it possible to transport crops efficiently. The majority of farmers looking to increase their labor supply preferred enslaved African Americans over free blacks or white laborers. Slavery was more prevalent in the eastern part of North Carolina than in other parts of the state because there was more flat, fertile soil to be farmed. In several of the eastern counties, the slave population grew to outnumber the white population. Although planters could afford more luxury goods than yeomen, their families and the families of those who provided their labor still practiced the utilitarian activities that became the cultural arts described below.

Throughout the 19th century, North Carolina remained an agricultural state based on small farms. On the eve of the Civil War, the state boasted 69,000 farms, only 300 of which were over 1,000 acres. In the 1860 census, over 85,000 farmers were listed, in comparison with only 121 people whose occupation was listed as “planter.”

The Civil War brought emancipation of the enslaved people who lived and worked on large and small farms, but it did not result in large-scale changes in agriculture. Instead, slavery was replaced by other repressive human labor systems, including tenant farming and sharecropping. These practices resulted in maintaining and even increasing the focus on small-scale agriculture. Furthermore, in the wake of the Civil War, the Southern economy was in a shambles and productive land had become depleted by more than a century of use.

A lack of agricultural prosperity continued up to World War I, which temporarily catalyzed agricultural expansion in order to meet an increased demand for food, as well as the early introduction of fertilizers. This growth stalled again with the Great Depression, a time characterized by soil erosion, soil depletion, low yields, and poverty. To aid farmers and families during this crisis, homestead and resettlement farms such as Tillery and Penderlea were established under President Roosevelt’s New Deal economic policy.

*Penderlea Homestead
Museum
(left)*



*The History House, Tillery
Resettlement Farms
(right)*



Throughout history up to this time, all agriculture depended on the labor of people and livestock. From the 1930s to the 1960s, powered farm equipment replaced human and animal labor across the nation, introducing what would become the most significant change in agriculture—mechanization. This shift resulted not only in changes in how farm work was accomplished, but also in major demographic changes.

World War II marked a turning point in agriculture in Eastern North Carolina. Mechanization was steadily replacing human and animal labor, putting laborers out of work and reducing the cultivation of feed for livestock. The war effort absorbed much of the excess population—many men went off to fight, other people migrated to urban areas to seek jobs in manufacturing. In addition to removing people from the farm, the war created a strong market for farm products, thereby increasing prosperity and pressure toward mechanization.

Veterans returned home to a healthy economy and easily obtainable loans, and in 1950 the state boasted its highest number of farms—over 300,000. Advances in fertilizers and machinery continued, and the yield per acre climbed even as the number of farms began a decline that continues today. Agricultural production in swamplands experienced another boom in the 1970s and 1980s. This led to a trend of declining production in the western portion of the state and increasing production in Eastern North Carolina. Swampland development has ended, and increased production in the east is expected to level off as agriculture comes into competition with other land uses that carry higher economic values.

Crops, past and present

Historically and in the present, flue-cured tobacco is one of the most important cash crops in the region. Sir Walter Raleigh’s colonists encountered the “holy herb” in cultivation by Native Americans—tobacco use was an integral part of the ritual life of many tribes. As tobacco’s popularity skyrocketed in England and across Europe, the establishment of tobacco farms stretched through the Albemarle Sound region and up through the northeast counties into the Roanoke River valley. Nearly 50% of the nation’s flue-cured tobacco is grown in North Carolina, and the eastern counties contribute to North Carolina being a leading state in the crop’s production. Tobacco production also created a demand for sales warehouses and processing plants in Eastern North Carolina.

Other traditional cash crops in Eastern North Carolina include cotton and peanuts. Along with tobacco, these products were highly labor intensive prior to the mechanization of agriculture. In addition, vast pine plantations provided naval stores and other timber products.

Today, all of these crops still provide important harvests in the region. In the latter half of the 20th century, animal agriculture replaced row crops as the leading source of income. Overall, agricultural production remains highly varied. North Carolina ranks in the top 10 states in production of more than 30 different crops or livestock. Some of today’s important products are as diverse as sweet potatoes, Christmas trees, cucumbers, poultry, and pigs.

Today, several counties in Eastern North Carolina lead the state in agricultural production, notably Sampson, Duplin, Wayne, Bladen, Greene, and Robeson. Eighteen of the 40 counties in the project area have more than 25% of their land surface in agricultural production.

The cotton harvest (left)



Hauling timber (right)



Timbering

The story of the timber industry in Eastern North Carolina is tied closely to the region's agricultural past. Before European contact, North Carolina was mostly forested. Hardwoods grew in the floodplains and riverine swamps in the east, longleaf pine were prevalent in the upland soils in the southeast, and mixed pine-hardwood forests covered most of the northeast. Native Americans used fire for some forest management, but the impacts of those efforts were fairly localized.

Clearing of the primary forests began in earnest with the arrival of European agricultural practices during the colonial era. Opening fields and the cutting of trees for fence rails contributed to deforestation.

As described above, the naval stores industry was one of the region's defining economic pursuits, beginning in the 1700s. The longleaf pine provided the tar and turpentine necessary for building ships and keeping them seaworthy. Pine stands in the Cape Fear region attracted Welsh and Pennsylvania Dutch immigrants in the 1730s, and by the 1770s, activity was present throughout the Coastal Plain. Most production came from small farmers, but some large plantations were built around the industry. North Carolina was responsible for 95 percent of the nation's naval stores. From the 1840s to the 1860s, the industry expanded with the repeal of British importation duties and growing transportation systems in the U.S. North Carolina's market dominance continued for more than a century until depletion of longleaf stands caused production to shift south by 1890.

The last large stands of virgin timber in Eastern North Carolina were harvested in the period between the Civil War and 1900, during a rise in large-scale mechanized timber harvesting. The economic crisis that followed the war caused the state to sell off much of the remaining lowlands where virgin timber reigned. Cutover land was considered worthless, although some of it was promoted for agricultural development.

Also during this time period, John Roper, who owned the Roper Company, one of the biggest timber companies in the state, perfected a kiln drying process for second growth pine, thereby increasing market opportunities for timber and giving rise to thoughts of reforestation.

Planned reforestation was advocated as early as the 1890s, but didn't take hold until the 1930s. At that time, conservation programs for soil and forestland were beginning to form as worn out cropland and cutover forestland contributed to the poverty of the Great Depression.

Timber companies that understood the need for sustained tree production dominated the industry in Eastern North Carolina from the 1930s on. For example, North Carolina Pulp Company came to the Albemarle region in the late 1930s and merged with Weyerhaeuser in the 1950s; today Weyerhaeuser is the largest private landowner in North Carolina. This and other companies have large operations, some of which occupy former farmland. The amount of forestland in the state as a whole has remained fairly stable since the 1930s, and forestry remains an important industry in the region today.

Canals

Dating to the 17th century, canals and canal building have had a long history in Eastern North Carolina, particularly in the northeast counties. In the 18th and 19th centuries, political and business leaders of the region viewed canals as a way to overcome the shipping hazards along the coast and as a necessity for commerce and the growth of the state. The pocosins, the thick swamplands and dismals west of the sounds, proved to be as impassable and dangerous for transportation as was the shoals at sea. Canals were seen as a way to overcome this barrier to the frontier and to drain the extensive bogs and wetlands of the region and open the fertile land to farm production. One of the earliest shipping canals proposed in North America was the Great Dismal Swamp Canal. Conceived in 1728 to connect the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia with the Albemarle Sound in North Carolina, construction began in 1794 and was completed 11 years later.

Several other canals were built during the 18th and 19th centuries—many using slave labor in the construction – opening access to land in the coastal plain. The Roanoke Canal circumnavigated the falls on the Roanoke River between Weldon and Rock Landing, and the Harlowe and Clubfoot Creek Canal was built to connect Beaufort with New Bern. Others included the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal, built to take away business from the Great Dismal Swamp Canal, connecting the Hampton Roads area of southeastern Virginia with the Currituck Sound. Further south along the Cape Fear Rivers, canals were built connecting Avera'sboro with Fayetteville.

Canals continued to be built into the 20th century, and the completion of the Intracoastal Waterway cut through all of Eastern North Carolina and connected the Great Dismal Swamp Canal with the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal, along with other connections on the Alligator and Pungo Rivers, Adams Creek to Core Creek, the Neuse River to Newport and Bogue Sound, and Myrtle Grove Sound and the Cape Fear River. The final decades of the 1900s saw canals built in Eastern North Carolina to drain hundreds of thousands of acres of pocosins in the region, opening the lands to massive farming and agricultural industries.

*Roanoke Rapids Canal
Museum and Trail,
Roanoke Rapids (left)*

*Visitor at Wright Brothers
National Memorial, Kitty
Hawk (left)*



First In Flight

Few events in history have had as much effect in progress of human activity as the one which occurred in Kill Devil Hills on the Outer Banks of North Carolina on December 17, 1903. On that cold, windy day on a high dune overlooking the Albemarle Sound and Atlantic Ocean, Orville Wright flew the first powered aircraft. He and his brother, Wilbur, had been experimenting with heavier-than-air flight for many years in their bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio. Observing birds – specifically pigeons – the Wright Brothers came to notice the birds’ ability to manipulate its wings, allowing air to pass over and under in different ways in order to fly and steer. After experimenting with several kites, the Wrights set out to find the perfect environment to conduct their grand test of powered manned flight.

The brothers contacted the U.S. Weather Service in Washington, D.C. requesting their assistance in identifying a place of ideal conditions – steady wind, hills, a soft ground and few trees and bushes. Given a list of places that met this description, the Wrights wrote to two stations. Only one replied. In September 1899, Wilbur Wright set foot in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, with Orville following shortly after.

The Wrights selected Kill Devil Hills as it had the tallest dune on the Outer Banks. With their glider that was built in Dayton, the Wrights experimented over the next three years, tinkering and adjusting the aircraft’s design, each time lengthening the time and distance of flights. Assisted by residents of the beach area, a small workshop and living quarters were constructed, and locals provided helpful hands in guiding the planes during takeoffs and landings.

With a 12-horsepower engine the Wright Brothers attempted a manned-flight on December 14, 1903, but the flight was considered a failure although it flew a distance of 60 feet. Encouraged by this test, the Wrights reconvened at the base of the tall dune three days later. With the plane grounded and its wheels connected to a wooden monorail, Orville was prone in the seat of the plane. Tacking into a stiff 27-mile-per-hour wind, Orville struggled to control the plane. As it picked up speed, it lifted off the ground and flew for 12 seconds and a distance of 120 feet. The locals helping the Wrights were unimpressed, for the previous flights of the gliders flew farther than this one had. But that short flight, which occurred at 10:35 A.M., resulted in one of the most spectacular historic advancements in the history of man. Aviation, specifically man’s ability to fly, would forever change the world.

Manufacturing

In the 20th century, manufacturing rose to prominence in Eastern North Carolina. This rise has roots in the 1880s, when the first mills were built in the state, competing against those in New England with the South's cheaper labor and modernized mills. North Carolina became an attractive base for textiles and apparel, tobacco products, and furniture manufacturing, and by the end of World War II, manufacturing had become one of the pillars of the state's economy. This peaked in the 1970s and 1980s, but recent years have seen a steady decline as manufacturing, once again, has gone in search of cheaper labor, this time to locations in Latin America and offshore.

Although manufacturing has been strongest in the cities and towns of the Piedmont, the sector also has been important in Eastern North Carolina. Approximately one-quarter of all employment in Edgecombe and Duplin counties is tied to the manufacturing sector, and many counties in the southeast and inner coastal plain maintain a significant manufacturing presence. Company housing built for mill workers still stands in several industrial towns, testament to the industrial past in Kinston and Roanoke Rapids, among other places. Finally, as discussed below, several of the products manufactured across the region have correlates in the traditional arts of the region.

Tourism

Tourism is another mainstay of the economy in Eastern North Carolina with roots that extend far into the past. In some of the coastal counties, the beach and leisure activities such as hunting have drawn visitors for over 150 years. In the latter half of the 20th century, tourism led to a dramatic increase in coastal development, and the entire region experienced rising interest in recreational and heritage tourism. Today, North Carolina is the sixth most-visited state in the nation, reflecting tourism's importance as a major industry.

The Outer Banks community of Nags Head saw the development of the first tourist colony in the state. A Perquimans county planter built a summer home in Nags Head in 1830 in order to escape malaria and other diseases exacerbated by summer's heat and humidity. By 1838, the community had a hotel, and by the 1850s tourist amenities abounded. Oceanfront cottages built in 1885 still grace the coastline here. Wealthy families who lived within a day's boat ride were among the first to build seasonal dwellings on the island. They established what has become a North Carolinian tradition of heading to the coast in the summertime.

Tourism remained localized throughout the antebellum period and up through the early 20th century. 2012 is the 75th anniversary of two important occurrences that signaled a new era of tourism in the region. In 1937, the *Lost Colony*, the story of Sir Walter Raleigh's failed attempts to establish a permanent settlement in the 1580s, was performed for the first time on Roanoke Island. The outdoor drama is still performed every summer. That same year, Cape Hatteras National Seashore was established in order to protect the "primitive wilderness" of the Outer Banks. The park's authorization also directed the National Park Service to provide amenities for beach-goers and to allow the continuation of hunting and commercial and sport fishing.

The enabling legislation encompasses the challenging balance between conservation and recreation that the park still faces today.

After World War II, development spurred by tourism picked up pace. Tourism spread to other parts of the shore, and coastal communities began to shift from a reliance on products from local lands and waters to a more diverse economy that included tourism. Population rose steadily, as first vacationers and then retirees discovered the region. Cape Lookout National Seashore was established in 1966, and by the 1980s, many communities had become tourism-dependent. The northern coast developed a little later; Corolla had 400 homes in the 1980s, witnessing an explosion to nearly 3,000—most of them second homes—by the end of the century.

Tourism on the interior of the coastal plain has always been tied to preservation of Eastern North Carolina's historic places. North Carolinians were early to recognize the importance of significant places on the landscape; battlefields, military forts, and grand plantation homes

were the focus of some of the earliest efforts to provide public access to historic sites. The earliest efforts to protect the Revolutionary War battlefield at Moores Creek date to 1850s, and in 1926 the site was named a National Military Park. Fort Macon, a Federal era fort and Civil War battleground, was restored by the Civilian Conservation Corps and opened as a park in 1936. In 1937, the same year that marked important tourism achievements on the coast, the state chapter of The National Society of The Colonial Dames acquired the Burgwin-Wright House, Wilmington's first historic house museum. In the mid 1940s, planning for the restoration of Tryon Palace in New Bern began. Tryon Palace—the first permanent capital of North Carolina and the residence of Governor William Tryon—burned to the ground in 1798. A state-appointed commission led reconstruction of the property, following practices from Colonial Williamsburg, and the property was opened to the public in 1959.

The 1960s brought a wave of interest in historic places. Fort Anderson, the CSS Neuse, Hope Plantation, Historic Bath, and Somerset Plantation all were opened to the public in that decade. By 1975, as the nation turned its attention to the United States Bicentennial, visitation to historic places garnered enough interest to warrant the establishment of the Historic Albemarle Tour. The self-guided heritage tour is still in existence today, linking dozens of historic sites and communities in the region surrounding Albemarle Sound. From the 1970s to the present, Eastern North Carolina has witnessed a continued expansion in heritage tourism, reflecting national trends.

Today, North Carolina's tourism industry is built on its "natural scenic beauty, rich history and culture, vibrant cities, and quaint small towns" (as described by the North Carolina Department of Commerce, www.nccommerce.com/tourism/, accessed 16 March 2012). From the coastal plain to the ocean's edge, the tourism economy encompasses a wide variety of businesses in the food, lodging, recreation, service, retail, and transportation sectors. The 40 counties of Eastern North Carolina accounted for more than a quarter of the \$17 billion in direct tourism spending in the state in 2010. In addition, the region brought in \$236 million in state taxes and \$170 million in local tax receipts.

The Creative Economy

A final segment of the economy worthy of note in this document is not a traditional industry, but rather an industry built at least in part upon traditional and modern arts—the “creative economy.” Creative industries include the arts (artists, artisans, crafters, and the museums and fine arts schools through which their products are distributed); design, (architects, designers, fashion apparel, advertising, and associated manufacturers); and entertainment and new media (theater, movies, video, film, music industry, software and Internet publishers, archives and their suppliers).

As the number of jobs in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing decreases, rural communities have explored alternate ways to create employment opportunities while maintaining their cultural heritage and natural resources. Many communities across the state utilize craft, music, and other arts to develop sustainable, place-based economic development projects. This has brought positive recognition; enhanced the preservation of important cultural and natural resources; and resulted in the creation of new community festivals, events, and places that celebrate and promote the arts. Artists, art venues, farmers, and local businesses dependent on increased tourism are among those whose livelihoods have been positively impacted through a focus on creative industries.

Since 2000, the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources, has measured the market value of goods and services produced and sustained by creative industries. In 2009, the creative economy was responsible for nearly 300,000 jobs, and the value of goods and services was over \$41 billion dollars, almost 6% of the state’s total production. Although the numbers above are not broken down regionally, the creative economy is important in Eastern North Carolina. The creative economy demonstrates strong correlations with increased visitor spending, rising household incomes, and the retention of residents and attraction of newcomers.

*Pocosin Arts Folk School
and Gallery, Columbia
(left)*



*The Blount-Bridgers
House, Tarboro
(right)*



Cultural Traditions

Eastern North Carolina is truly a living landscape. In addition to the working traditions that have shaped the region's economy from the colonial era to the present, the region retains and celebrates many cultural practices handed down through generations. Religion, foodways, and the cultural arts practiced in Eastern North Carolina today trace their roots to the region's settlement patterns and to the timeless interplay between people and the unique landscape of water and earth in which they live.

Religion

Religion plays an important role in both the history and the modern-day cultural life of communities in Eastern North Carolina. In public meetings held in conjunction with the feasibility study, residents of the region identified religion as significant in their daily lives and as an important part of their cultural identity as Eastern North Carolinians. Today, almost 90 different faiths are practiced across the state, including Christian and non-Christian traditions. As the purpose of this study is to characterize major historical and contemporary trends in the region, descriptions of the selected traditions in these pages build specifically upon the discussions from the public meetings.

The current demography of religious denominations often reflects historic settlement patterns. Settlers carried their religion with them to the region and those traditions were handed down from generation to generation. Historically, the official religion of the colony was the Church of England, whose followers were called Anglicans (today known as Episcopalians in the U.S.) Although few Anglican congregations were established in North Carolina until the 1700s, the majority of English settlers who came to North Carolina over the course of the colonial era were Anglicans. Many came overland from Virginia, others settled near Wilmington. Today, the highest concentrations of Episcopalians in the state remain in the northeastern counties and in the Wilmington area.

Another important early group was the Quakers, who came to North Carolina from England seeking the religious freedom legalized in the colony in 1672. Most Quaker communities were established in the northeast near the Great Dismal Swamp. Their early presence gave them an opportunity to become engrained in the political life of the young colony. As emigration to the region continued, Quakers became a minority. This, combined with their continued adherence to pacifism throughout a century marked by the French and Indian War and the American Revolution, served to minimize their political influence by the late 1700s.

The southwestern Coastal Plain was settled by Highland Scots and Scots-Irish, the majority of whom were Presbyterians. Presbyterianism remains strong in the southwestern counties of Eastern North Carolina, especially those that adjoin the Piedmont.

Today, the two largest denominations in Eastern North Carolina, and indeed the state, include the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Methodist Church. The region's Baptist roots date to the first half of the 18th century, as Baptists—like Quakers—sought religious freedom in the New World. Individual Baptist congregations agreed to autonomous association through

the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in 1830 in Greenville. With Baptist adherents making up more than half of the region's religious population, the Southern Baptist Convention is strongest in the northeastern and southeastern counties. The Southern Baptist Convention is least concentrated, but still the largest denomination overall, in the central part of Eastern North Carolina.

The United Methodist Church is based in a reformation movement that broke from the Church of England around the time of the American Revolution. The Methodist movement, primarily a lay movement, came to the American colonies in the mid-1700s. Past and present, the Methodist movement is strongest in the coastal counties of northeastern and central eastern North Carolina and on the western edge of the inner Coastal Plain.

Catholicism is one of the state's largest denominations and has been present since the colonial era. Its strength in numbers in Eastern North Carolina, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon associated with immigration of people from the northeastern United States and with a growing Hispanic population in the state, including a sizeable migrant farm labor population.

The state has a Jewish tradition that dates to the colonial era. North Carolina boasts the first Jewish settler in a British colony in North America, a metallurgist who arrived in the year 1585. A small number of Jewish settlers followed inland and coastal trade routes from Virginia and South Carolina in the colonial era. More settled in coastal ports, along rail lines, and in mill and market towns in the 19th century, and a vibrant community was present by the late antebellum era. As it has in much of the Sunbelt, the Jewish population has expanded in metropolitan areas in the 20th century.

In communities throughout Eastern North Carolina, African American churches have long played a significant role. In the mid to late 1700s, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations in the region attracted both free and enslaved African Americans with their message of hope and their participatory styles of worship. These conversion efforts by "white" churches continued throughout the 1800s. The decades immediately following the Civil War saw the dynamic growth of independent African American churches, as well as missionizing from African American reform movements born in the Methodist church (African Methodist Episcopal Zion, or AMEZ, and African Methodist Episcopal, or AME). Church leadership often overlapped with political and educational leadership in African American communities, and churches frequently played a significant role in the mid 20th century Civil Rights Movement. Today, a number of predominately African American denominations are present in Eastern North Carolina, including Baptist churches (a majority of which are affiliated with the National Baptist Convention), AME, and AMEZ churches.

Foodways

North Carolina falls into the broad tradition of Southern foodways that includes sweet tea, greens, cornbread, grits, and all manner of pork products. Furthermore, from the rivers of the coastal plain, to the sounds and the Atlantic Coast, fish and shellfish have always been major dietary staples. Spots, speckled trout, croakers, bluefish, mackerels, roe mullet, clams, oysters, shrimp, and crabs (especially soft-shelled) are among the favorites.

Eastern North Carolinians have a few specific foods that warrant additional mention here. Pride of place clearly shows in the vinegar-based barbecue native to the eastern region, and “pig-pickins” are well-loved social events. Also, New Bern is the birthplace of Pepsi-Cola, Mt. Olive pickles are famous throughout the nation, and Texas Pete’s hot sauce is native to the nearby Piedmont.

*The Collard Shack, Otway
(left)*



*The 2008 North Carolina
Seafood Festival,
Morehead City
(CrystalCoastBlog.com)
(right)*



Eastern North Carolina’s favorite foods, especially seafood and agricultural products, are celebrated in annual festivals throughout the year. Community festivals focused on food include:

March

- Swansboro Oyster Roast
- Newport Pig-Cookin’ Contest

April

- North Carolina Herring Festival (Jamesville)
- Pig in the Park (Goldsboro)
- Brunswick Stew Festival (Shallotte)
- Grifton Shad Festival
- Mount Olive Pickle Festival
- Hog Fest (Edenton)

May

- North Carolina Strawberry Festival (Chadbourn)
- Carolina Strawberry Festival (Wallace)
- North Carolina Potato Festival (Elizabeth City)

June

- North Carolina Blueberry Festival (Burgaw)

July

- Earth and Surf Festival (Jacksonville)
- North Carolina Watermelon Festival (Murfreesboro)

August

- Sneads Ferry Shrimp Festival
- Winterville Watermelon Festival

September

- Richlands Farmer's Day
- North Carolina Turkey Festival (Raeford)
- North Carolina Muscadine Festival (Kenansville)

October

- North Carolina Seafood Festival (Morehead City)
- Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down and Festival (Rocky Mount)
- Edenton Peanut Festival
- Pleasure Island Seafood, Blues and Jazz Festival (Kure Beach)
- Swansboro Mullet Festival
- North Carolina Oyster Festival (Ocean Isle Beach)
- North Carolina Yam Festival (Tabor City)

Music

In North Carolina, music traditions of the mountains and the Piedmont often get more attention than Eastern North Carolina's music. The state is known for bluegrass, gospel, and the Piedmont Blues. Eastern North Carolina is home to notable gospel, blues and jazz musicians, including legendary figures such Thelonious Monk (Rocky Mount), John Coltrane (Hamlet), Bill Myers (Wilson), the Parker Brothers (Kinston), Billy Taylor (Greenville), gospel singers Bishop F. C. Barnes and Shirley Caesar (both of Wilson), and Piedmont Blues great George Higgs (Tarboro).

The North Carolina Arts Council (under the Department of Cultural Resources) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation have recognized the important music traditions of Eastern North Carolina in the recent establishment of the African American Music Trail. Goals for the trail include documenting artists and community music events, venues and sites; contributing to economic development using music resources and products to attract tourism and generate sales; creating supplemental income for African American artists and presenters; and bringing new customers to tourism-related businesses in the region. Public art and informational kiosks that interpret the region's music history enhance trail communities. The project is based in eight eastern counties—Edgecombe, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Nash, Pitt, Wayne, and Wilson.

A significant musical tradition from the coast is chantey singing, a call and response style used primarily by African American menhaden fisherman. Menhaden herring, an important fertilizer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were caught in huge nets that required the strength of many men. Chantey singing, like other traditions of work songs, rhythmically helped coordinate and motivate the heavy work of hauling in the nets. The tradition began to fade after hydraulic power replaced manpower aboard fishing vessels in the middle of the 20th century.

Cultural arts

Through time, Eastern North Carolina's forests, fields and waterways have provided abundant materials around which residents built and enhanced their daily lives. Artistic and craft traditions that clearly reflect the historical and environmental contexts of the region grew out of household economies. Over time, common articles people used in daily life have become cherished artistic traditions. These traditions include wood products from the area's abundant forests; textiles, especially those related to the cotton industry; pottery from the clay soils along some area rivers; and numerous traditions with maritime roots. Although all of these traditions are common to Eastern North Carolina, many can be found throughout the state with some regional variation.

For many craft traditions, there is an industrial correlate—the same natural resources that lay at the heart of artistic traditions also were the basis for many of the region's industries. Forests in Eastern North Carolina were the source of one of the region's most important historic industries—naval stores. Forests, still central to the modern-day timber industry, also supported the growth of a furniture-making industry. A brick-making industry was built around the clays available in the region. As described above, agricultural lands supported a range of crops on small farmsteads and large plantations, and the rivers, the sounds and the sea were a rich source for commercial fishing, transportation and shipping.

Furniture making

Since the early colonial period, furniture has been an important product for artisans and manufacturers. Colonial artisans of English ancestry in Eastern North Carolina came from other colonies or from England, bringing knowledge of their craft with them. Their designs and knowledge were the basis for furniture making in the Coastal Plain. Their traditions mixed with German, Highland Scot, Scots Irish, and African traditions, also taking hold in the piedmont and mountain regions of the state. Native trees including walnut, cherry, cypress, oak, yellow pine and poplar provided wood for furniture early on. Over time, this artisan tradition flourished into an industry focused in North Carolina's Piedmont. The state became known as the "Furniture Capital of the World" by the 1980s, when half of the furniture produced in the United States came from North Carolina.

Cotton textiles/quilting

Historically, cotton was a common crop—the basis for both a large textile industry in the state and for another contemporary cultural art with roots in domestic utility. Quilting is an important tradition for the women of Eastern North Carolina, stretching back to the colonial era. The production of textiles was time-intensive, so it was economic necessity for families to

save all material scraps and use them to make blankets. Quilting provided a place for women to channel their creativity, as they would piece the scraps together in different patterns such as Cotton Boll, Mariner's Compass, North Carolina Rose, Six-Pointed Star, among many others. The tradition served a social role, as well—in the 19th and early 20th centuries, quilting bees were a common event that brought neighbors together to help one another.

The industrial correlate, the textile industry, was dominated by the Piedmont but present in Eastern North Carolina. Several counties had mill towns, including Beaufort, Craven, Cumberland, Edgecombe, Richmond, and Robeson.

*North Carolina Quilts,
May Museum and Park,
Farmville
(left)*

*Carvers at Poplar Grove
Plantation, Wilmington
(right)*



Wood carving

Carving is another tradition in which the region's cultures intersected, and the creation of utilitarian objects from easily obtainable native materials gave rise to an artistic legacy. The Tuscarora and other Iroquoian tribes were skilled woodworkers, using steam to bend wood to produce tools for agriculture, eating, defense, games, and hunting and fishing. Eastern North Carolina tribes also carved large dugout canoes from cypress trees so they could traverse the region's network of water. Sculpting natural resources, including wood, goes far back into African American history—out of necessity, spoons, gourds, musical instruments, toothbrushes and toys were created from materials at hand. European settlers and their descendants also carved many useful and artistic objects.

The common practice of hunting waterfowl for food and sport in the region led to one of Eastern North Carolina's most enduring carving traditions, decoys (*see "Maritime Arts" below*).

Basketry

For as long as humans have inhabited Eastern North Carolina, they likely have been making baskets from indigenous materials. From pre-contact to the early 20th century, baskets were essential for gathering, storing, transporting, and measuring all manner of foods and necessities. Archaeological evidence confirms wide use of baskets in the early archaic period (8000 to 6000 CE), and Spanish explorers recorded basket use by native peoples in the 16th century. From the 18th century forward, Native American basketry traditions in the region melded with those from Europe and Africa. Until baskets were replaced by inexpensive metal and plastic containers, they were integral to both agriculture and fishing economies. Although baskets are no longer objects of daily use, basket-making remains an important cultural art in

Eastern North Carolina and throughout the state. Among the most common traditional basketry materials are white oak, river cane, pine straw, bark, and honeysuckle.

Pottery

North Carolina has a rich and enduring pottery heritage due to the abundance of clay in the state—few places on earth have more clay or more clay types. Clay is formed by the weathering of mountain rock in the western portion of the state, which then washes to the coastal plain through North Carolina’s vast network of rivers. As with basketry, the ceramic tradition in the region has early roots in Native American traditions from the Woodland period, beginning roughly 4,000 years ago. In the late 17th century, colonial settlement brought together Native American, European and African traditions. North Carolina’s pottery tradition is another example of a utilitarian domestic craft whose primary function shifted from daily use to art, as pottery vessels in the household were replaced by vessels made from glass, metal and eventually plastic.

The industrial correlate for the pottery tradition is brick-making. Red clay brick pits were once common along rivers of the coastal plain. Brick-making in Eastern North Carolina came with settlers from Virginia into the Albemarle region in the 1600s, and by the early 1700s the coastal area was known for brick and tile manufacture. More than three centuries later, North Carolina remains the second largest brick producer in the nation, although today the industry is centered on the Piedmont.

Maritime arts

The watery environs of Eastern North Carolina’s rivers, sounds, and banks have shaped the daily life of residents for centuries. The abundant seafood and the wintering grounds for waterfowl have long been a focus of both survival and recreation for residents, and many enduring traditions surround them. Well into the 20th century, transportation depended completely on boats, and even as the automobile made its way to the farthest edges of the region, ferries—both large and small—made it possible. As described previously, the region’s economy is tied tightly to commercial fishing and tourism, as it has been for over a 150 years, and maritime traditions still anchor life along the water.

As mentioned above, residents have specialized in building small watercraft since the pre-contact and colonial eras. Shallow draft boats such as the shad and the sharpie trace their ancestry to the periauger, and further back to the dugout canoes of the earliest native inhabitants.

Several maritime traditions are firmly rooted in putting food on the table and bringing in the catch. Carved waterfowl decoys were an important tool for hunting. As wooden decoys were replaced by plastic ones, and hunting evolved from necessity to recreation, an appreciation of the old carving tradition elevated decoy carving from utility to art. Net hanging, the making and repairing of nets for fishing, was once an important skill for survival, but is increasingly a vanishing art. For generations, people along the coast also made their own crab pots and carved their own oars.

The Jean Dale, a restored NC Core Sounder, Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, Harkers Island (left)



Decoys and hunting gear, Pamlico County Museum (right)



Today, demonstrations of all of the maritime cultural arts are featured in the annual North Carolina Seafood Festival in Carteret County, and information is available in places such as the state's maritime museums, the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, and the National Seashores at Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout.

Art and artisans in Eastern North Carolina

The Blount-Bridgers House in Tarboro, Pocosin Arts in Columbia, and the Imperial Centre for Arts and Sciences in Rocky Mount are three institutions that celebrate regional traditions and support the efforts of North Carolina artists and artisans. While much of the work in all three institutions has ties to the traditional cultural arts described above, all three also include work that goes beyond the traditional arts.

In addition, historic and interpretive sites across the region also provide opportunities for crafters and artisans. Popular Grove Plantation regularly hosts a carving group, a farmer's market, and basketry and blacksmithing demonstrations. The Core Sound Waterfowl Museum often hosts carvers and nethangers.

Guild organizations promote specific traditions through regular meetings, workshops, and special events. The region is home to guilds for carvers, quilters, and potters.

In addition to the Eastern North Carolina entities above, the state has a cabinet-level agency for the arts—the North Carolina Arts Council, under the Department of Cultural Resources. Established in the 1960s, this was the nation's first cabinet-level agency devoted to the arts. Through a competitive grants program, advocacy, educational outreach, and a wide range of technical assistance, the North Carolina Arts Council works with more than 3,000 nonprofit organizations dedicated to the arts in communities across the state.

The focus on the arts promoted by these sites, the state, and community and non-profit organizations is critical to the success of the North Carolina's strong creative economy.

Defense of a Nation

Since early exploration of the New World, the military has been a strong presence in Eastern North Carolina, giving the region a critical role in establishing a new nation in the Revolutionary War, in reflecting the struggle of a nation torn apart by Civil War, and in defending America's ideals in 20th and 21st century wars.

The location of North Carolina—in the relative center of the United States' coastline, and protruding into the Atlantic Ocean—has positioned it as a strategically important place for many centuries. Because of its unique geography, Eastern North Carolina is a place where military encounters have shaped our nation and, in some instances turned the tide of wars. Its importance is reflected in the historic sites and contemporary military installations that have played a role in protecting the nation. From the period of early settlements and forts in the 1500s, to the modern bases of Camp Lejeune, Fort Bragg, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station and Pope Army Airfield, Eastern North Carolina is a command point for the defense of our nation.

The American Revolution

Much of the conflict during the American Revolution was occurring inland, through the piedmont and central portions of North Carolina, but patriot causes were notable in the eastern part of the colony where British trade and tax policies had first-hand effects.

On April 12, 1776, the Halifax Resolves were passed by the Fourth Provincial Congress of North Carolina that met at Halifax County, North Carolina. The Resolves represent the first instructions by any colony that authorized its delegates to the Continental Congress to vote for independence from Great Britain. Eighty-three members voted unanimously to authorize North Carolina's delegates to vote for independence.

In early 1776, the patriot's victory in the Battle of Moores Creek, near Wilmington, effectively stopped British efforts in the region, causing delays in their occupation of the southern colonies for several years. Multiple inland battles between the British and the Americans in 1781 resulted in the retreat of British armies to Wilmington to resupply. Along the way, they encountered many skirmishes with the local populations. The British general, Cornwallis, determined to win North Carolina, and conquer the independence movement in the colonies, set a course for Virginia through Eastern North Carolina. Along the way the British destroyed considerable property and engaged the North Carolinians in a number of small battles. But it was at Yorktown, Virginia in October of 1781 where Cornwallis and the British Army were defeated, giving birth to a new nation and the State of North Carolina.

The Civil War

While most of Eastern North Carolina was relatively “quiet” during the American Revolution that was not the case during the Civil War. Indeed, Eastern North Carolina and its interconnected system of waterways leading to the Atlantic Ocean became a strategic focal point for Union commanders determined to crush the Confederates and their ability to resupply troops in the southern interior. Eastern North Carolina witnessed the Burnside Expedition (January to July 1862), the Fort Fisher-Wilmington Campaign (December 1864 to February 1865), and the Campaign of the Carolinas (Sherman and Johnston, February to April 1865).

Early in 1862 Roanoke Island became the site of a significant historical event as General Ambrose Burnside led 13,000 men and 80 ships through Hatteras Inlet and up the Pamlico Sound to wrest control of three forts and capture the island. Burnside knew that control of Roanoke Island not only meant control of the Outer Banks and the extensive sound system of Eastern North Carolina, but ultimately control of the entire North Carolina coast. Burnside’s victory on Roanoke Island over the Confederates led by Brigadier General Henry Wise exposed all of the remaining coastal towns of North Carolina to eventual surrender and control by the Union.

The quick fall of North Carolina’s coastal defenses to the Union was strongly criticized and the Confederate leadership in Virginia took serious blame for leaving the state’s coast largely under defended. Considerable efforts were made by the Confederates to strengthen defenses in other port towns and by building iron-clad boats to do battle with the Union fleets. The CSS Neuse and the Albemarle were two of these vessels. It was hoped the Neuse would be used to rescue New Bern from Union control but it never saw action. New Bern fell into the control of Burnside and the Union in March of 1862 and became the headquarters of the Union. From this point, Union troops were able to launch successful attacks on, and gain control of, key inland cities including Kinston, Goldsboro, Tarboro, and Rocky Mount. With control of the coast, the sounds and the rivers, and now control of the coastal plain towns and their railroad connections, North Carolina was effectively neutralized through the balance of the war. Not until April 1864, when a combined operation of the ironclad ram CSS Albemarle and Confederate forces under the command of Major General Robert Hoke successfully attacked the federal garrison at Plymouth, would the Confederates control the northeastern and eastern coast again.

Despite the neutralization that occurred along much of the North Carolina coast, the port of Wilmington remained a critical harbor for blockade-runners, thriving as a hub for Southern maritime trade throughout the war. Shallow-draft steamers brought military provisions to Wilmington’s docks that were then sent straight to Virginia, the heart of the war’s Eastern Theater, via the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad. In turn, blockade-runners left the port with cotton, naval stores, and lumber that kept the economy alive. In the last year of the war, Wilmington was the anchor for the lifeline that kept General Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia supplied. After the fall of Mobile, Alabama, in August of 1864, Wilmington was the last major Confederate seaport open to blockade-running traffic.

In January 1865, Union forces took control of Fort Fisher near Wilmington’s harbor. Shortly thereafter, General William Sherman safely led his army across the Cape Fear River to Goldsboro and an eventual confrontation with General Joseph Johnston in Bentonville (just west of the study area). Although Johnston’s troops waged a bloody battle against Sherman and his forces—the worst conflict in North Carolina—the Confederate troops were defeated. Soon the outcome of the war would be effectively decided.

The Civil War saw the construction of a series of forts along the Outer Banks and into the river system. Fort Fisher and Fort Anderson, the largest Confederate installations, were constructed at the mouth of the Cape Fear to protect blockade-runners supplying General Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia. With the exception of Fort Macon, established in the wake of the War of 1812 and formally abandoned by the Army in 1903, none of these forts were active in the 20th century.

*The Battle of Goldsboro
Civil War Marker,
Goldsboro
(left)*

*C.S.S. Nuese, Gov.
Caldwell Memorial and
C.S.S. Neuse State Historic
Site, Kinston
(right)*



20th and 21st Century Wars

While most battlefields of World Wars I and II may have been thousands of miles away from the United States, the Atlantic coast off of North Carolina was a key location for enemy naval activities. Again, the strategic location of the North Carolina coast—mid-way along the eastern seaboard—caused German U-boats and minelayers to take positions off the coast to attack merchant ships and trade vessels waging economic war on the U.S. and its allies. In June 1918, the German U-boat U-151 sank four ships in raids off the coast. A handful of attacks by the Germans occurred through the summer and fall, including the sinking of the British tanker Mirlo, ceasing only with the end of the war in November 1918.

Fort Bragg, established in Fayetteville in 1918, was the state’s only 20th century military installation until World War II started in Europe. From 1940 to 1943, the United States began a defensive buildup on home soil, much of which was focused on North Carolina. Fort Bragg expanded from a base of a few thousand to over 100,000 soldiers, and new military installations were constructed in Goldsboro (Seymour Johnson Army Airfield, today an Air Force base), Havelock (Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station), and Jacksonville (Marine Corps

Base Camp Lejeune, including the Montford Point training facility for African American Marines), among dozens of other places. During the war years, North Carolina trained more troops than any other state at the more than 50 military-related bases and camps located throughout the state.

Shortly after the United States entered the war in 1941, the Germans, recognizing the vulnerability and exposure of merchant shipping along the U.S. coast, took positions to wreak carnage in the Battle of the Atlantic. The waters off North Carolina became known as “Torpedo Junction” as over 100 ships were damaged or sunk, many within view of residents along the beaches, causing wreckage and bodies to wash up on shore. Although German activity in Torpedo Junction lasted throughout the war, the greatest activity of casualties from U-boats occurred in the first seven months of 1942.

The U.S. began to tighten its anti-submarine activities, supported by private boats, fishing trawlers, pleasure boats and naval vessels from the United States and the British navies. Capes Lookout and Hatteras became the locations of sheltered mooring, and places where convoys were assembled to escort ships to the open ocean. Attacks on German U-boats also started with the Roper, a U.S. destroyer, sinking the U-85 off Nags Head in April 1942. The sinking of U-boats became more frequent, causing the German naval command to withdraw most of their submarines from the U.S. coast.

Although many of the military installations erected during World War II closed shortly after the war, the military’s importance to the economy of Eastern North Carolina cannot be understated. Soldiers from North Carolina served in every major military action in the 20th and 21st centuries, and the bases of Eastern North Carolina continue to provide troops and military support to U.S. defenses and operations around the world. Among the many successful endeavors of the military personnel from these bases, the most notable is the recent Operation Neptune Star. On May 2, 2011, troops from the Joint Special Operations Command, which is headquartered at Pope Air Force Base and Fort Bragg in North Carolina, an all-star team made up of the Army’s Delta Force, SEAL Team Six, Army Rangers and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, swept into Abbottabad, Pakistan and in a pre-dawn raid on a compound, killed Osama bin Laden.

Today, active military bases located in Eastern North Carolina represent all branches of the service. They include:

- Fort Bragg (Fayetteville)
- Camp Mackall (Scotland and Richmond counties)
- Pope Army Airfield (Manchester)
- Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point (Southport)
- Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (Goldsboro)
- Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City (Elizabeth City)
- National Strike Force (Elizabeth City)
- U.S. Coast Guard Sector North Carolina (Wilmington)

- Camp Lejeune (Jacksonville)
- Marine Corps Air Station New River (Jacksonville)
- Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point (Havelock)
- Fleet Readiness Center East aboard MCAS Cherry Point (Havelock)

In 2007, in response to military operations in the Middle East and base realignments at home, the U.S. Congress directed a significant increase in personnel for the Marines and the Air Force in North Carolina. The 55,000 new residents this brought to Eastern North Carolina represented the greatest military increase since World War II.

Military history at the Sampson County Museum, Clinton (left)

Airborne and Special Operations Museum, Fayetteville (right)



The strong military presence has led to the development of a wide range of other opportunities and support related to defense, including defense and communications contractors and research and development initiatives in the private and public sectors.

In all, the defense industry comprises 7% of the North Carolina's gross domestic product and brings \$23 billion into the state annually.

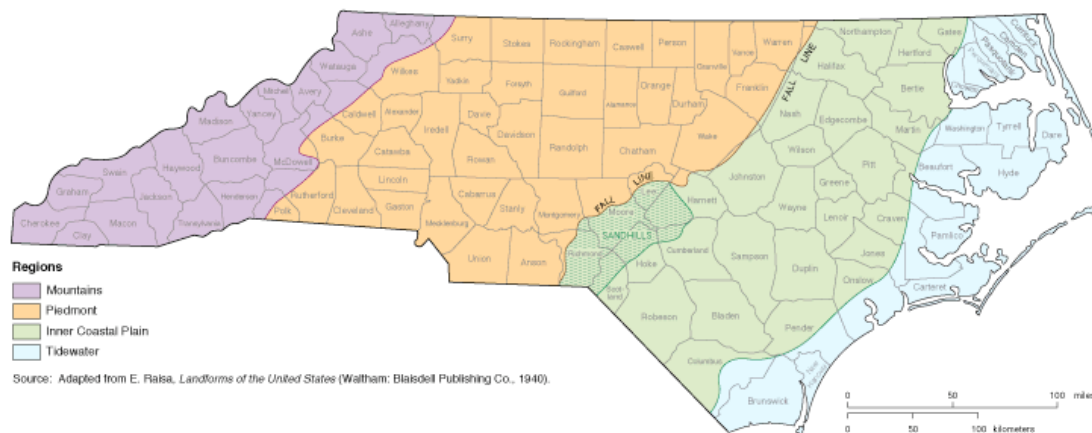
The Environment—Rivers to Sounds to Sea

The confluence of human activity and the interconnected waterways of eastern North Carolina have shaped the region’s past, defined its unique present character and charted a course for the future.

The Coastal Plain

North Carolina has three very distinct geographic sections: the mountains in the west, the piedmont in the center, and the coastal plain in the east. The coastal plain of North Carolina makes up about 45% of the state’s total land area. The coastal plain is bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by a fall line, a broad zone where the soft rocks of the coastal plain meet the hard crystalline rocks of the piedmont. The coastal plain varies in width, ranging from 100 to 200 miles. It rises gently in elevation to the west, from about sea level at the coast to as much as 500 feet in the sand hills district (including parts of Scotland, Richmond, Hoke and Cumberland counties). Within this coastal plain is the estuarine system of Eastern North Carolina—an extensive water network of creeks, rivers, bays, sounds, marshes, swamps, inlets and the coast. This region represents the confluence of southern aquatic and terrestrial species, both flora and fauna, and is the second largest estuary on the North American continent. This estuarine system is the region’s greatest natural resource and is nationally significant for its size, for the abundance and diversity of wildlife and vegetation that call it home, and for the influence it has had on the history and traditions of the people who have lived upon it for generations.

The environmental and cultural regions of North Carolina.
(available at ncatlasrevisted.org)



At one time there were more than 10 million acres of wetlands in North Carolina with the vast majority of this acreage lying on the coastal plain. Wetlands on the piedmont or in the mountains of North Carolina tend to lie along streams whereas those near the coast are products of that region’s low elevation. About half of the state’s original wetlands have been drained and converted to forestry, agriculture or urban uses. The balance is in freshwater wetlands. About 200,000 acres of original salt marshes remain undisturbed. About two-thirds of North Carolina’s rare, threatened and endangered species of plants and animals live in wetlands.

The coastal plain is sub-divided into two major sub-areas: the outer coastal plain which lies closest to the ocean and the inner coastal plain which is higher in elevation and contains land that is better drained. The outer coastal plain, also known as the tidewater region, is extremely flat, averages less than 20 feet above sea level and contains large swamps and lakes indicative of poor drainage conditions. Of the Eastern North Carolina counties that make up this region (all of Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Hyde, New Hanover, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrell, Washington and parts of Beaufort, Columbus, Craven, Gates, Jones, Martin, Onslow and Pender), 11 of them have 55% or more of their land in wetland soil areas. Streams on the outer coastal plain are brackish and subject to tidal fluctuations.

The inner coastal plain (which includes the counties of Bertie, Bladen, Duplin, Edgecombe, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Lenior, Nash, Northampton, Pitt, Robeson, Sampson, Wayne, Wilson, and parts of Beaufort, Columbus, Craven, Gates, Jones, Martin, Onslow, and Pender counties) is higher in elevation and better drained and contains distinctive wetlands or upland bogs known as pocosins. The pocosins cover more than half of the land in the eastern coastal counties and consist of evergreen shrubs and pond pines that are thick and often impenetrable. There are also the Carolina Bays, elliptical lakes of unknown origin. Many pocosins originated as Carolina Bays and have since filled with vegetation and sediment.

*Boating in Great Dismal
Swamp State Park, (right)*

*Cape Fear River,
Wilmington (right)*



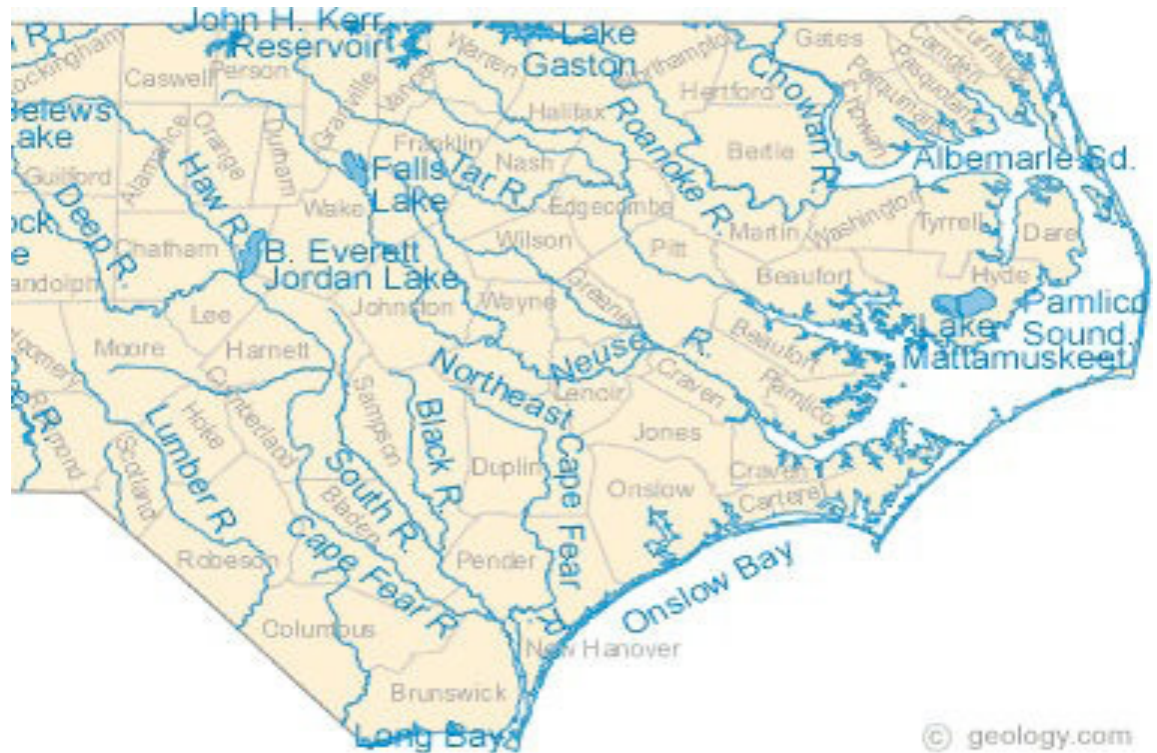
The fall line marks the boundary between the coastal plain and the piedmont. Rivers that rise in the Blue Ridge Mountains flow across the piedmont and enter the coastal plain at the fall line. This boundary is characterized by steep river gradients and rapids. Downstream of the fall line, the rivers flow to the southeast and have carved broad, low valleys in the soft, easily eroded sediments of the coastal plain. There the rivers have gentle gradients and are flanked by swamps and marshes. They are generally navigable all the way up to the fall line, an important factor in the early settlement of the region from the coast.

The coastal area north of Cape Lookout is a “drowned coast,” in which the sea level rise associated with the end of the last Ice Age and the continual melting of the ice caps has caused the ocean to invade the lower reaches of river valleys. These rivers—the Chowan, Roanoke, Pamlico and Neuse, along with dozens of creeks and streams—also feed hundreds of millions of gallons of fresh water into this area, mixing with the salt water supplied through the inlets. This drowning has produced large inland bodies of water called sounds such as Albemarle, Pamlico and Currituck Sounds. With little tidal action, these waters have low salinity counts and very shallow waters. They are abundant with small islands that make well-suited homes

for waterfowl, game and vegetation. Associated with these sounds is a string of barrier islands that is separated from the mainland by as much as 20 miles (the Outer Banks). These linear islands apparently were formed as sea level rose over old beach ridges and sand dunes. Continued rises in sea level, accompanied by wave and wind action, cause these islands and their lagoons to slowly move inland. This steady inland migration, known as barrier island rollover, plus the exposure to hurricanes and other storms, keeps much of this land in constant motion.

The sounds, lagoons and sea marshes along the coast near the Outer Banks are vital parts of the coastal ecosystem. These bodies of water, partially cut off from the sea, form with the mixture of salt water coming in through the inlets in the outer banks meeting with the fresh water flowing from the rivers. These estuarine waters are one of the most distinctive features of Eastern North Carolina. The vast network is second in size only to that of the Chesapeake Bay, and the estuarine waters make up more than two million acres of the state – more than any other except for Alaska and Louisiana. The shallow shoals and sand bars associated with barrier islands are constantly shifting in location. As stated previously, they have presented sailors with very hazardous waters in which to navigate and also made it difficult for early explorers and settlers to land on the northeast coast of North Carolina.

*The watery environs of
Eastern North Carolina
(Adapted from
geology.com)*



South of Cape Lookout is the Cape Fear Uplift, where the coast gently folded upwards. Instead of drowning the river valleys, the uplift exposed an even coastline, along which have formed long stretches of broad beaches. The large sounds found to the north are not present, nor are extensive barrier islands. Historically, this length of coast was somewhat more accessible, despite the Frying Pan Shoals that make the mouth of the Cape Fear River, the entrance to the port of Wilmington, dangerous and which require dredging to maintain a navigable channel.

Today this region is known for its miles of wide, sandy beaches that extend southward through the Grand Strand of South Carolina.

In the southern region, the rivers are short, often with the source of the river in the same coastal county as its mouth. The Cape Fear River, which is formed in the piedmont region of North Carolina, has an extensive tributary basin. Other small rivers and sounds make up the estuaries in this region, causing the waters to have strong tidal action and higher salinity, contributing to the ideal conditions for extensive salt-marsh complexes. The marsh grasses and vegetation here are so thick and extensive that they often cover the entire stretch of water, making it indistinguishable from the land.

The narrow strips of land between the rivers—the peninsulas—are extensive floodplains where the water table is often near the top of the soil. The upper level of land is soft and peaty, the result of the swamp forests that are found throughout these fingers of land. These swamps, in their natural state, are flooded hardwood forests filled with abundant wildlife and aquatic life, and consist of gum cypress, white oaks, river birch and sycamores.

Twenty of the 40 counties in the study region fall within the jurisdiction of the North Carolina Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA). CAMA was passed in the 1970s in an attempt to guide planning, manage population growth, and protect and preserve the region's rich and diverse natural resources. CAMA covers the coastal and sound side counties of Beaufort, Bertie, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Tyrell, and Washington.

Chapter 3

Feasibility Study Findings

The development of this feasibility study has entailed an examination of the stories, the resources, and the opportunities associated with interpretation, conservation, and economic development in Eastern North Carolina, including the possibility of the designation of a National Heritage Area. Findings from the study are set forth in this section. Proposed themes and a conceptual boundary are described, followed by a summary of the analysis of management alternatives. The preferred alternative is identified, as is a conceptual financial plan that supports it. Finally, the results of the study are considered with regard to evaluation criteria the National Park Service developed for National Heritage Area designation.

Themes and Boundaries

Themes

In developing themes for the proposed Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area, the study team and the task force examined several possible alternatives based on historical stories and events that make the region nationally significant. The themes grew out of known topics of historical significance, as well as the surveys, stakeholder interviews, and site visits conducted over the first six months of the study. Boundaries of the commission territories and the county political lines were erased so as not to be influenced by any pre-determined demarcation. Thematic programs already in existence at specific sites were given consideration as possible foundations for building themes for the project area. All sites and thematic programs were plotted on maps with careful regard given to the commonality of a story and an eye to the inclusion of multiple sites that possess significance for Eastern North Carolina.

The interpretive themes (described below)—*Settling a New World, Living with the Land and Water, and Defense of a Nation*—could each be an individual theme capable of supporting an argument for a National Heritage Area in Eastern North Carolina. However, through the study team’s analysis of the resources, it became clear that if the focus of the heritage area was just one of any of these themes, only a portion of the significant story of Eastern North Carolina would be told. Choosing one theme limited a regional story to a single period of American history or only one element. If this approach were taken, it could result in leaving out other nationally significant themes that embody the culture and heritage of Eastern North Carolina, or in the proposal of a second or third heritage area that would capture the unique story and significance of the region. There was a general consensus by the task force, supported at the public meetings, that a comprehensive approach with only one heritage area effort was desired.

Similarly, when examining existing interpretive programs, like the Historic Albemarle Tour (HAT) or other historic road corridors, it is obvious these routes contribute to the interpretation, marketing, promotion and conservation of heritage of Eastern North Carolina.

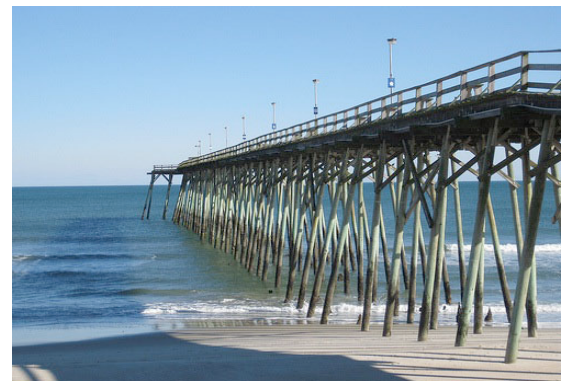
HAT, as well as Historic Route 17 that connects Elizabeth City in the northeast corner of the region with Wilmington in the southeast, Route 12 along the Outer Banks from Corolla to Beaufort, or Route 70 through the center of the region from Goldsboro to Beaufort, all contain important resources that can tell a story of significance for Eastern North Carolina. Again, limiting the proposed National Heritage Area to one of these corridors would limit the story of significance of Eastern North Carolina. Furthermore, picking any one historic theme or route ran counter to the opinions and desires of those in the region involved in the planning. Throughout all of the stakeholder interviews, public meetings and the survey, there was strong agreement that the region has been fractured too long and that the National Heritage Area, as evidenced by the collective planning and community participation that was occurring, could become the unifying tool regional leaders have sought. What was needed was an overarching theme that could tie together the historical significance and living landscape of Eastern North Carolina and become a platform for a unified marketing and heritage tourism campaign.

The coastal plain of Eastern North Carolina is made up of small rural towns, seaside villages and bustling cities. While one experiences an incredible heritage and culture of the region when travelling through the 40 counties of Eastern North Carolina, sites with common themes are distant and sometimes disconnected. Eastern North Carolina is a large region, and travel is made difficult by the expansive network of backcountry roads, two-lane and sometimes four-lane highways. Except for Interstate 95 on the western edges of the study area, there are relatively few major roads connecting places.

Yet, the experience of Eastern North Carolina is fairly similar throughout the region, whether one is in the northeast, the eastern, or the southeast section of the state. There is a unique bond between the people of this region who share a heritage of hard work and who live in an incredibly distinct landscape. While the historic resources of Eastern North Carolina are significant and link places that share similar stories, the one resource that ties the region together is water.

*Waterfront, Beaufort
(left)*

*Carolina Beach Fishing
Pier
(right)*



Eastern North Carolina's waterways form the web connecting the stories and the people that live in its towns and counties. It is this nationally significant estuarine system that has been the foundation of its nationally significant history—from Sir Walter Raleigh, to the traditions and livelihoods of the people through the centuries, to the constant presence of the United States military and the strategic position of the region. Its rivers, sounds and the sea unite the region and its people and provide for a cultural experience full of tradition, history, pride and

excitement. Therefore, the overarching theme agreed to in the planning process by the task force and overwhelmingly supported at the public meetings is “Rivers to Sounds to Sea.”

Overarching Theme

Rivers to Sounds to Sea

The confluence of human activity and the interconnected waterways of Eastern North Carolina have shaped the region's past, defined its unique present character and charted a course for the future.

Interpretive Themes

Settling a New World

Facing untold hardship with equal determination, early habitants capitalized on Eastern North Carolina's prominence on the Atlantic coast to create a home and livelihoods and eventually to influence the establishment of a new nation, one which encompassed the region's inherent struggle between freedom and enslavement.

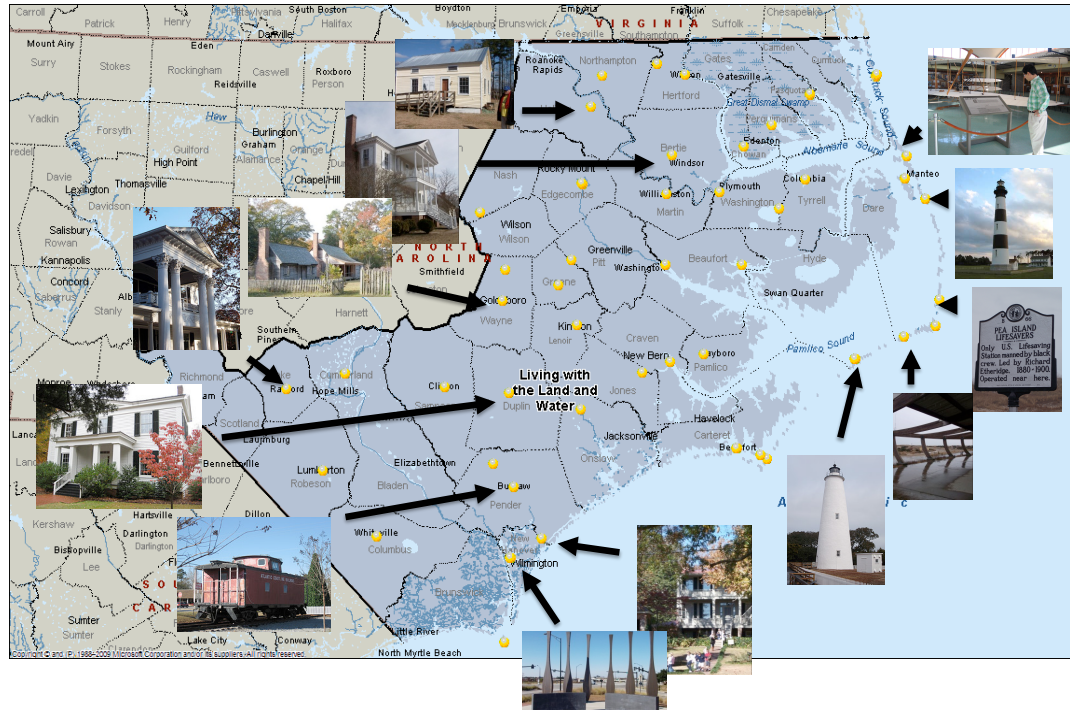
Heritage resources related to the interpretive theme "Settling a New World." All resources were included in the project's Heritage Resource Assessment.



Living with the Land and the Water

Eastern North Carolina's distinctive landscape of coastal plain, piney woods, banks and waters gave rise to all manner of livelihood, from those who scratched out a living to those who amassed prosperity from maritime and agricultural enterprises, shaping daily life and impacting regional and national historical events.

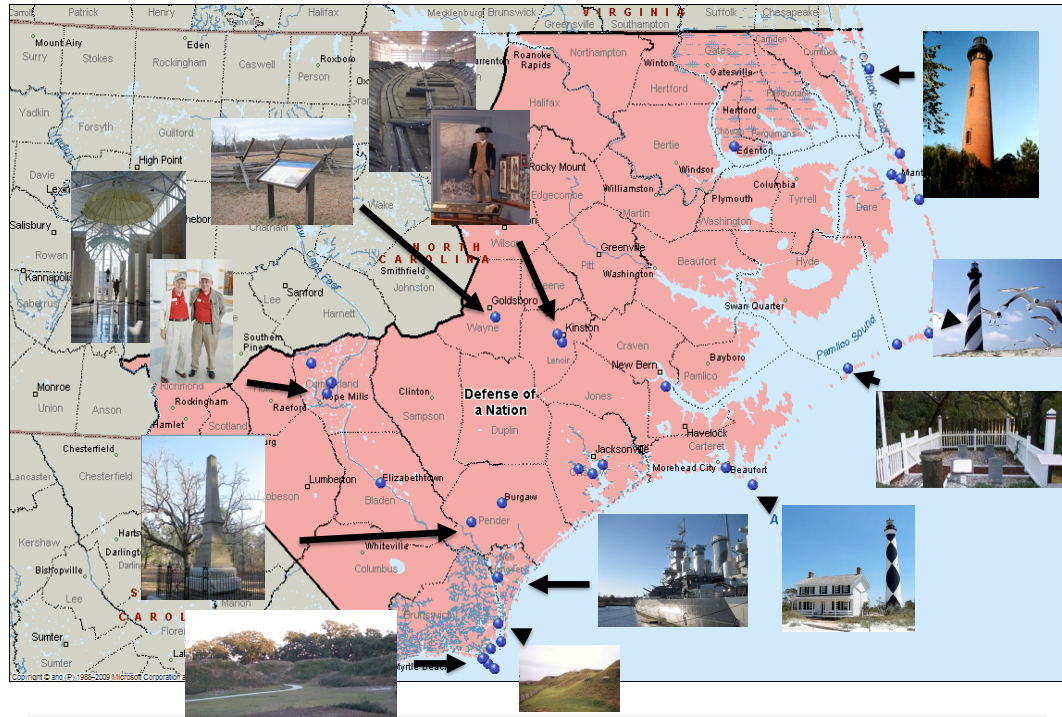
Heritage resources related to the interpretive theme "Living with the Land and the Water." Resources shown here were included in the project's Heritage Resource Assessment.



Defense of a Nation

Since early exploration of the New World, the military has been a strong presence in Eastern North Carolina, giving the region a critical role in establishing a new nation in the Revolutionary War, in reflecting the struggle of a nation torn apart by Civil War, and in defending America's ideals in 20th and 21st century wars.

Heritage resources related to the interpretive theme "Defense of a Nation." Resources shown here were included in the project's Heritage Resource Assessment.



Boundary

The proposed boundary for the Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area encompasses 40 counties that cover the state's Coastal Plain and the vast estuarine network that ties the region's rivers to the Atlantic Ocean. The 40 counties are Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne, and Wilson. The area is roughly the portion of North Carolina east of Interstate 95 and reflects the study area described in the introduction to this study.

The designation of the proposed boundary for the Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area unfolded over the course of the development of the feasibility study. The study team began with the 40-county study area that encompasses the territory served by the three economic development commissions. Within that area, the team conceptually wiped away all existing jurisdictional boundaries in order to view the region as blank slate. Then, through a process that included the various surveys, resource assessments, and background research conducted as part of the feasibility study, the study team considered boundary options.

The 40 counties that comprise the study area share similar geophysical, natural, and cultural traits, traditions and activities. In developing the perimeter for the Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area, the region's traits, traditions and activities were analyzed and layered upon each other to delineate a boundary that is comprehensive, easily defined and stands up to scrutiny. In proposing the boundary, the study team—in collaboration with the three commissions, the tri-regional task force, and the public—considered the following:

Historical and Functional Traits

The historical trajectory of the region has shaped its present, including the identity and activities of the people who live there. Resources throughout the region express the three interpretive themes —*Settling a New World*, *Living with the Land and the Water*, and *Defense of a Nation*. Furthermore, all of these are linked under the overarching theme of *Rivers to Sounds to Sea*, which firmly binds the historical events and the resources related to those events to the unique landscape on which history has been played out.

Geophysical/Topographical Traits

The physical complexity of the region is a single vast landscape comprised of different ecological zones and dotted with communities in Eastern North Carolina's coastal plain. Communities range from rural agrarian villages to densely populated and highly developed beach resorts, interconnected by a system of roads, rivers and sounds. The estuarine network serves as the backbone for this structure.

Culture—The Human Dimension

Understanding how people associate with each other within the region, historically and currently, contributes to a boundary that incorporates cultural traditions, settlement patterns and work. People define the places where they live. Their view or association with a place often makes them see their home or community as part of a larger physical delineation. Historically, specific cultural groups settled Eastern North Carolina. Their traditions have been handed down over generations, contributing to the sense of community and place that characterizes the distinct region. These traditions and many sites within the region are expressed in the interpretive theme *Living with the Land and the Water*.

Political

Political boundaries are often the most convenient demarcations for heritage areas. They are not ideal boundaries, however, because they are drawn for purposes other than interpreting historic events or stories, and they do not recognize the importance of culture in defining a place or uniting a region. The political characteristics of the boundary are important, however, in considering what roles public entities may play within the heritage region. The political boundaries of the 40 counties fit the patterns described above. Indeed, when examining geophysical, cultural and historic resources, justification exists that the proposed boundaries be expanded further east to include other towns and counties. It was decided, however, that the feasibility study would propose the initial boundary as the 40 counties and that further examination would occur during the management plan.

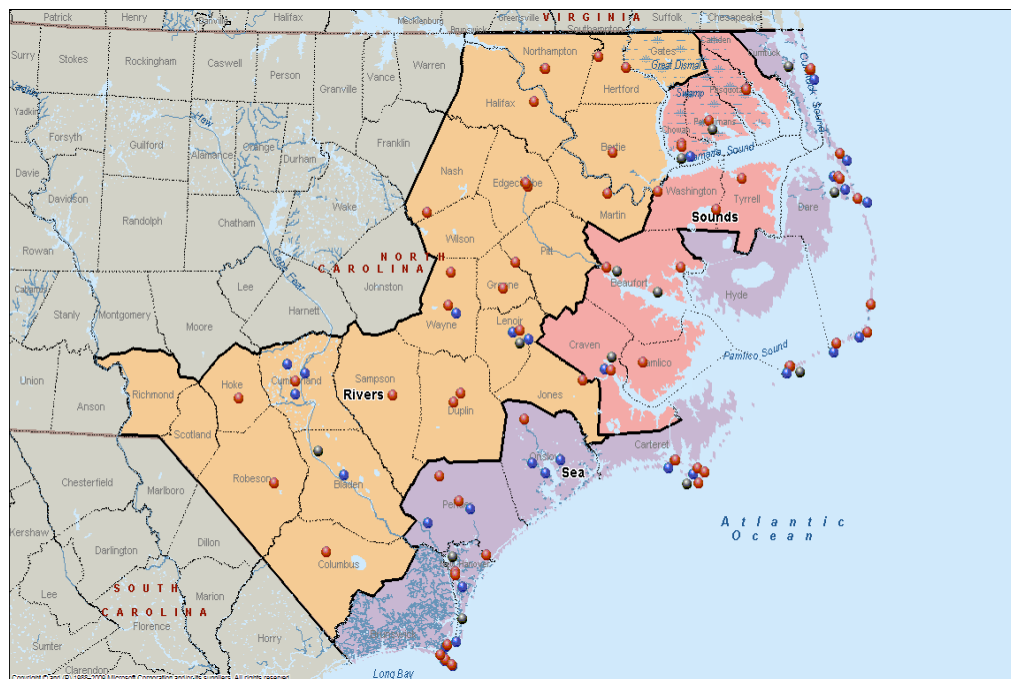
Practical

The final determination in proposing a boundary incorporated the varying compositions of each of the elements described. The region's significant cultural and natural resources, living traditions, and the various jurisdictions in which today's residents live are all interrelated in the landscape defined by the estuarine network of Eastern North Carolina's coastal plain.

The planning process considered a number of smaller boundaries, but found them to exclude important resources or collections of resources, resulting in the loss of a comprehensive story and a diffusion of sense of place. For example, the Albemarle region has an extensive collection of resources related to early settlement. However, if this region alone was designated, important resources related to settlement would be excluded (those in the Cape Fear Valley), as would collections of significant resources that tell the story of our nation's defense. Similar exclusions were true if the focus remained on other smaller areas such as the Outer Banks, or on specific road or river corridors within Eastern North Carolina. Under the overarching theme of *From Rivers to Sounds to Sea*, however, the three interpretive themes are bound together in a landscape with nationally significant resources that demonstrate a shared history and vibrant living traditions in Eastern North Carolina.

In the end, the boundary selected through this process is one that, on a practical level, is able to be managed, hinge with the story that resonates throughout the region, and defines a region capable of being served. The final boundary reflects the capacity of the organization and its partners as stewards to develop, administer, maintain and promote a unified Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area.

Distribution of heritage resources for all interpretive themes (grey-Settling a New World, red-Living with the Land and the Water, blue-Defense of a Nation). Resources shown here were included in the project's Heritage Resource Assessment.



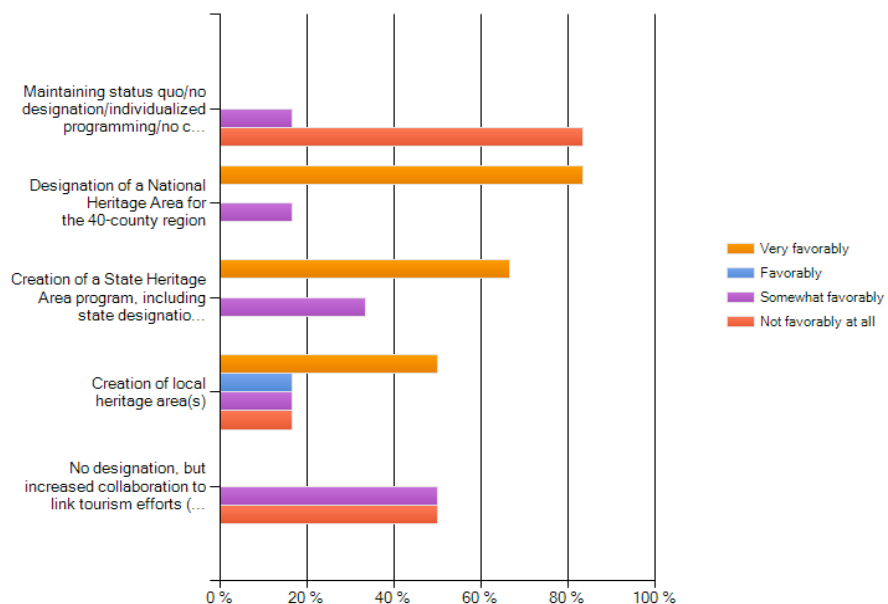
Management of an Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area

Throughout the 18-month planning study, the study team examined various organizations and partners, including the three economic development commissions leading the feasibility study, to determine long-term management for a possible National Heritage Area. In addition to management, all partners were queried on possible financial and technical support for a National Heritage Area for the eastern portion of North Carolina. Given that designation of a new National Heritage Area is uncertain, the questions posed to the partners were two-fold. The first involved development of a management plan and looked at which organization(s) were best suited to lead this effort. Partners were also asked about financial and technical support they might provide to this next phase of work. The second set of questions assumed the establishment of a new National Heritage Area and focused on which organization(s) may be best suited to be a long-term manager of the NHA, as well as what financial and technical support the partners can provide.

An online poll was conducted of partners and Task Force members to determine which alternatives to present at the final public meeting. In this poll, the questions asked were distilled from suggestions collected from interviews and meetings with partners and stakeholders, along with the Task Force, government officials and other interested parties, organizations and individuals.

Since this feasibility study looks at the possibility of the creation of a NHA in North Carolina’s eastern region, the first question asked about support for its creation. An overwhelming majority, more than 83%, chose “Very Favorably” to designate an Eastern North Carolina NHA, with a state heritage area and a local heritage area also rating high.

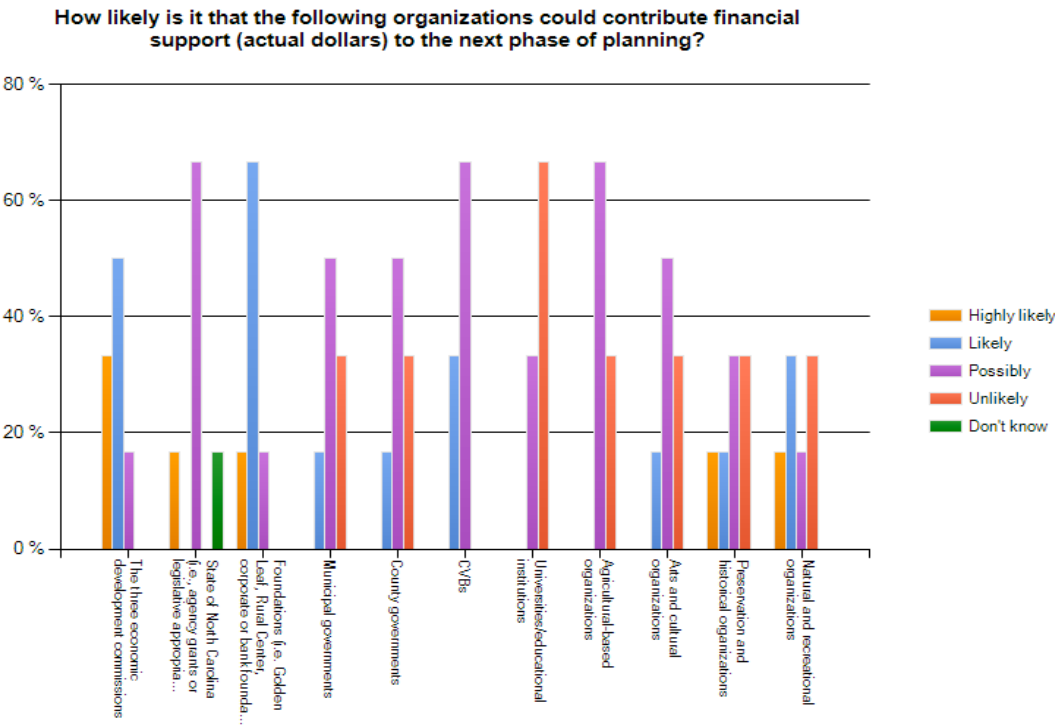
How favorably do you view the following management alternatives?



With the support for pursuing National Heritage Area designation established, the participants were then asked who should lead the next phase of planning. The unanimous response – 100% – said the three economic development commissions should be the lead. Each of the commissions support this finding and has agreed to partner in leading the management planning phase.

The third question asked survey participants who should be the designated management entity should a National Heritage Area be established. Here the results were divided. Fifty percent felt the management entity should be a partnership between the commissions and an existing regional organization, with the other 50% suggesting that a new organization be established to manage an Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area.

Participants were then asked about financial support for the management planning phase. Most (68%) felt that local foundations could possibly support the plan, with the three economic development commissions contributing. Also suggested were local governments, the State of North Carolina, tourism promotion agencies, agriculture-based organizations, along with arts and culture organizations.



Partnership Commitments to the Eastern North Carolina Heritage Area

ORGANIZATION	ACTIVITY	FINANCIAL COMMITMENT	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/ IN-KIND SUPPORT
Regional Economic Development Commissions	Planning and implementation	Funding	Staffing; office space; equipment & supplies; member expertise
State of North Carolina	Planning and implementation	Funding from existing programs	Staffing; access to state-owned sites; tourism promotion and marketing
Foundations (private, corporate, other)	Planning and implementation	Funding for planning; marketing and promotion; implementation projects; operations	Advice and counsel on funding strategies; capital campaigns; fund raising
Local Governments	Operations and implementation	Funding	Staff support; office and meeting space; equipment usage
Tourist Promotion Agencies	Brochures; web site promotions and other marketing materials	Possible grants and funding	Staff assistance; trade show promotions; social media marketing
Colleges and Educational Organizations	Educational and interpretive programs; research		Interns and research assistants; seminars and lectures; grant writing; meeting space
Agriculture-based Organizations	Farm conservation; agri-tourism programs		Technical and professional assistance; staffing; advocacy
Arts & Cultural Organizations	Oral histories, folk life programming; arts & crafts programs;		Professional assistance; workshops lectures; community outreach

ORGANIZATION	ACTIVITIES	FINANCIAL COMMITMENT	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/ IN-KIND SUPPORT
Preservation & Historical Organizations	Interpretation; preservation programming and projects; oral histories	Possible grants	Staff support; technical expertise; research; volunteers
Natural & Recreational Organizations	Natural resource & conservation programs; eco-tourism projects; trails, bikeways, and scenic by-ways	Possible grants	Staff support; technical expertise; research; volunteers

TEN YEAR REVENUE PROJECTION

Total Revenues: \$11,000,000¹

ANTICIPATED NHA APPROPRIATIONS	ANTICIPATED OTHER FEDERAL FUNDS	ANTICIPATED STATE OR LOCAL FUNDS	GRANTEE MATCHING REQUIREMENT FOR \$2,500,000 IN MANAGEMENT ENTITY GRANTS TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS	OTHER PRIVATE GRANTS, DONATIONS, AND MISCELLANEOUS INCOME
\$5,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,000,000

Revenues for the Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area are estimates, based on historical trends for NHAs, and assuming the enactment by the U.S. Congress of a National Heritage Area program bill. In addition, amounts identified are based on interviews and data collected from task force members, key stakeholders and government officials.

¹ Revenues in each column may be adjusted upward or downward based on actual NHA Appropriations and funding from other sources.

ALTERNATIVES FOR THE PROPOSED HERITAGE AREA

According to the National Park Services' National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines (August 2003), consideration of management alternatives for a new National Heritage Area should examine other options in addition to an NHA. For Eastern North Carolina, the task force examined four alternatives for heritage resources and a tourism initiative in the region, including a "no action" alternative. These alternatives were proposed at the third public meeting and a hybrid alternative was selected. The following is a summary of the alternatives considered.

Alternative #1 – No Action and Continuation with Current Practices

The heritage tourism programs of Eastern North Carolina are currently managed by several organizations with focused efforts based on either specific regions or thematic responsibilities. Three economic development commissions with authority for tourism promotion in the northeast, eastern, and southeast portions of North Carolina collaborate on projects and some cross promotion, but because their commissions are specific to counties of North Carolina, the existing collaboration for promoting tourism is sporadic. In addition, several other organizations, like North Carolina Coast Host and the Historic Albemarle Tour, have either very specific regions or resources as their responsibilities. A "No Action" alternative would:

1. Continue individual programs and projects through convention and visitors bureaus and at county levels, economic development commissions and other entities;
2. Maintain scattered coordination, with limited partnering;
3. Perpetuate the lack of unifying theme or story that ties region together;
4. Provide no new funding, nor NPS technical assistance, and keep a highly fragmented and competitive "relationship" between the partners.

Alternative #2 – Local Coordination

This alternative examined the existing roles of the organizations in Eastern North Carolina as they are working on heritage tourism (explained in Alternative #1), and explored the possibilities of greater partnership, along with more cross promotion. While all parties expressed interest in a closer working relationship, there were noted disadvantages to this alternative.

1. Individual programs and projects continue through convention and visitors bureaus, economic development commissions, varying promotional organizations, and at county level;
2. Coordination is advanced between counties and CVBs; partnering increases, but is localized;
3. Lack of unifying theme or story that ties region together;
4. Funding opportunities may increase, but remains competitive among "partners;"
5. Provides no new funding, nor NPS technical assistance or funding.

Alternative #3 – State Heritage Area Designation

The 18-month planning process for the Eastern North Carolina region resulted in a number of benefits to the communities and the heritage tourism partners in 40-county region. Greater communication and cooperation has occurred. Excitement has been growing in the counties as geographically dispersed communities are working together to promote, develop and conserve the unique heritage and history of Eastern North Carolina. This effort, if it ended here, would have some benefit as stated in Alternative #2. But there is more that can be done. Alternative #3 examined the possibility of creating a state heritage area for Eastern North Carolina. This alternative would establish a formal program for North Carolina to work with communities in the eastern region to coordinate projects and direct existing funding in more targeted ways than is currently done. There would be additional benefits to the state as a new heritage area program could also benefit the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area in western North Carolina and the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor along the southeast coast of North Carolina, both of which are Congressionally-designated NHAs. In addition, a state program could benefit another region of North Carolina, the proposed Southern Campaign of the Revolution National Heritage Area, currently in the planning phase.

1. Individual programs and projects continue through convention and visitors bureaus and at county level;
2. Coordination is advanced between counties, economic development commissions and CVBs; public-private partnerships begin to emerge;
3. Coordination is advanced between existing state programs and other regional heritage assets;
4. Development of a unifying state theme or story that ties the region together;
5. Funding opportunities through available state grants and programs could be streamlined;
6. Provides no new funding, nor NPS technical assistance or funding.

Alternative #4 – National Heritage Area Designation

The fourth alternative considered would designate the 40 counties in the eastern portion of the state as a National Heritage Area. This effort is not necessarily new for parts of the region as 16 northeast counties attempted this several years ago; however the planning project did not succeed. With this current plan, a broader geographic region was examined, which resulted in more regional cooperation, stronger historical and cultural themes, and most important, the establishment of a nationally-significant argument – the extensive estuarine system – that ties together the unique landscape and heritage of Eastern North Carolina.

Designation as a National Heritage Area would bring national and international recognition to Eastern North Carolina, helping generate more tourism, a better understanding of the unique cultural heritage and historic resources, and generate economic benefits for the communities. The combined promotion and marketing efforts that would result will further enhance partnerships between organizations.

Designation as an Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area under the banner of “Rivers to Sounds to Sea” provides a unique marketing brand incorporating all of the unique elements of

the region and enabling its comprehensive history to be told. NHA designation will draw more attention to the region's heritage assets and provide more ways to thematically connect inland communities to those along the Atlantic Coast, enabling cross-marketing that will benefit the entire region.

National Heritage Area designation would expand the National Park Service's involvement from only those National Historic Sites and National Seashores where the NPS works, to becoming a more involved partner throughout the region. This expanded partnership will help those communities not located near an NPS site benefit from NPS technical assistance, while the entire region will benefit from additional federal funds as a result of the NHA designation. In addition, the designation will provide unique benefits to North Carolina with two NHAs designated within the state.

1. Individual programs and projects continue through convention and visitors bureaus, the economic development commissions, regional tourism partners, and at county level.
2. Coordination is advanced between counties and convention and visitors bureaus; public-private partnerships increase at local, state and federal levels, and become region-wide, eliminating boundaries.
3. Identification of a nationally significant theme and story ties together the whole region.
4. Designation brings national and international recognition and makes the region eligible for federal funding to assist with planning, implementation, conservation and marketing.
5. Other funding opportunities with public and private partners may increase.

Alternative #5—NHA Designation with State Heritage Area Designation and Local Involvement

The last alternative considered would seek a National Heritage Area designation and a State Heritage Area designation. This fifth alternative would involve the local partners and communities and their current programs and activities, while providing for enhanced opportunities for public-private partnerships with a dual designation by the state and federal government. A number of other NHAs benefit from federal and state designations, as programs in Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and others have provided additional technical support to the NHAs along with more coordination of programming and projects between various state agencies and the NPS and other federal departments.

A dually-designated NHA will maximize the ability of Eastern North Carolina to promote itself nationally and internationally. Partnerships at all levels of government will be encouraged and sought with private-sector organizations. Boundaries that create obstacles to working together will be erased as the benefits of regional efforts for heritage development, tourism, and economic development are strengthened. Federal designation will bring NPS funding and technical support. State designation will enable North Carolina to target its current funding and prioritize it within the 40-county region. This coordinated effort will be an attractive asset and could attract funding from private and philanthropic sources for programs and projects. Finally, just as a new federal NHA would benefit North Carolina and its other National Heritage

Areas, a new state heritage area program will add countless benefits to those NHAs and position Eastern North Carolina NHA, Blue Ridge NHA and the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor to gain from greater state programming and participation.

1. Individual programs and projects continue through convention and visitors bureaus, economic development commissions, regional tourism partners, and at county level.
2. Coordination is advanced between counties and convention and visitors bureaus; public-private partnerships increase at local, state and federal levels, and become region-wide.
3. Identification of a nationally significant theme and story ties together the whole region.
4. Designation brings national and international recognition and makes the region eligible for funding to assist with planning and implementation.
5. Funding opportunities with public and private partners may increase.
6. A state program is created, complementing NHA and local efforts, and enhancing partnerships among North Carolina's heritage areas.

Preferred Alternative – NHA with State and Local Involvement

The preferred alternative that was unanimously selected by the task force members and overwhelmingly supported by the public at the final public meeting is Alternative #5. This alternative received strong support also from the stakeholders interviewed and from the State of North Carolina, including the Governor's Office, the Department of Cultural Resources and the Department of Commerce. In addition to creating a National Heritage Area and establishing a State Heritage Area program in North Carolina, the partners agreed to the following:

The next phase of planning—the management plan—should be coordinated by the three economic development commissions, with an eye toward evolving the partnership and identifying a long-term management entity to oversee the National Heritage Area.

1. Funding for management planning will be sought from an array of sources – federal, state, local and private.
2. Organizations participating in the planning and development of the heritage area will be encouraged to provide in-kind support when and where possible.
3. Early implementation projects will be pursued as a way to further solidify the regional partnership and help advance projects that demonstrate an overarching theme.
4. There may be other counties that reflect the environment, history, and culture of Eastern North Carolina that could be considered for incorporation into a National Heritage Area. One such area that has already been identified is Johnston County. Additional study of this and other counties should be considered during the management planning phase.

Evaluation According to Federal Criteria

The National Park Service has 10 suggested criteria to assess a region's suitability for National Heritage Area designation. The study team analyzed the proposed Eastern North Carolina Heritage Area in the context of each criterion. The study team has concluded that the proposed Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area meets all 10 of the criteria and is suitable for designation as a National Heritage Area.

- 1. The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.***

✓ **Meets criterion**

The landscape of Eastern North Carolina is structured by vast network of water that connects the rivers that flow across the coastal plain to a series of sounds and beyond to the Atlantic Ocean. This nationally significant estuarine landscape, second in size only to the Chesapeake Bay region, has influenced the settlement, history, and living traditions and daily lives of the generations of people who have lived there. The landscape holds the stories of the exploration and settlement of a new continent, the livelihoods that have allowed people to survive and thrive in the watery region, and the importance of a military presence from the colonial era to the present day. A large array of resources throughout the region convey these stories, including national parks and seashores, state parks, state historic sites, wildlife refuges, maritime and military museums, battlefields, historic communities and districts, lighthouses, historic house museums and plantations, canals, trails, ferry crossings, scenic byways, creative arts facilities and active military bases. See Appendix F for a web link to the inventory of associated sites in Eastern North Carolina.

These resources are managed by a wide variety of entities with varying capacities, including federal, state, and local government, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and private landowners. Many of the resources are non-contiguous, spread across the 40 counties that comprise the coastal plain. These resources can provide invaluable interpretive and educational opportunities to the public, based on the nationally significant themes described in this study. At present, there is no single organization that facilitates physical and organizational linkages among the sites, improving visitor access and understanding, building capacity, coordinating regional marketing and branding, and continuing living traditions. The Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area could build on the strong tourism legacy in the region, broadening and deepening regional linkages based on heritage assets and cultural arts. This approach would result in economic enhancement for the region as a whole, and capacity building and increased visitation at individual sites.

2. *The area reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the national story.*

✓ **Meets criterion**

Throughout the region, utilitarian crafts of the past—quilting, pottery making, basket weaving and decoy carving, for example—have become cherished arts in the present. Historic sites, craft guilds, and local and state arts councils have helped to recognize the quality of life and economic benefits derived from maintaining these and other traditions.

Maritime traditions such as boat-building and net-hanging are still practiced in communities on the sounds and on the Outer Banks. Chanteymen no longer haul heavy menhaden nets by hand, but their work songs are still important, as is the commercial fishing industry from whence they came.

Although the purpose has passed from subsistence to recreation, waterfowl hunting and fishing traditions not only persist, but anchor a vibrant recreational economy. Even tourism is a century-old tradition here, as families migrate to the coast to escape the inland summer heat.

Foodways—from all manner of fish to vinegar-based barbecue to the fruits of the land—are important for families and communities, as evidenced by the large number of food-oriented festivals held in the region.

All of the living traditions described in this study arise from the relationship between humans and specific environments Eastern North Carolina, in which agricultural and maritime economies have dominated the region for centuries.

3. *The area provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features.*

✓ **Meets criterion**

Eastern North Carolina has a wealth of historic communities and sites, museums, battlefields, and lighthouses, all of which are tied to the nationally significant natural environment in which they are situated. Some of the resources are under the protection of the National Park Service, branches of the military or state government. Although all public entities have suffered in the current recession, these resources can generally be considered protected in the short- and long-term. Many resources are in the care of local government and non-profit organizations. Although many of these resources are protected, and have been protected for decades, the financial and organizational capacity of the organizations responsible for them varies greatly and is generally more vulnerable to major economic downturns such as the current recession. Also, there are many sites and landscapes that contribute to Eastern North Carolina's stories that need further documentation and protection.

Some resources are threatened and a National Heritage Area can help educate the partners involved with stewardship of these resources to develop solutions with results that assist with conservation of a resource without impeding development or other economic opportunities.

4. *The area provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.*

✓ **Meets criterion**

In public meetings, residents often stressed that Eastern North Carolinians “still live closer to the land” than do others. They asserted that recreation has long been an important aspect of life in the region. This includes hunting, fishing, and boating on the area’s plentiful waters, as well as all manner of beach activities. Several organizations dedicated to these recreational pursuits exist and could collaborate on initiatives under the umbrella of an Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area. In addition to opportunities to capitalize on these activities, there is also the potential to expand the number of land and water trails.

The area possesses outstanding educational opportunities regarding history and culture as related to colonial settlement and life, military history from the Tuscarora War to the present, and agricultural and maritime history and traditions. The area also includes the opportunity to share important but often little-known aspects of African American history. In addition to significant stories of slavery and tenancy, Eastern North Carolina can tell important stories of struggles and success in the history of the pre-Civil War free middle class, the Pea-Island Lifesavers, the Reconstruction era, Tillery Resettlement Farms, and the Montford Marines.

5. *The resources important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation.*

✓ **Meets criterion**

As part of the overarching heritage tourism project of which this feasibility study is one component, the study team conducted a field survey of conditions and visitor readiness of more than 80 sites. In addition, an inventory of 1,066 sites, including those in the survey, gathered information on heritage resources and their integrity. Sites are under federal, state, local government, and private management. Collectively, these sites are critical in preserving, protecting, and interpreting the history and culture of Eastern North Carolina. Connected by the estuarine network and the history that played out there, they relate to the three interpretive themes—*Settling a New World*, *Living with the Land and the Water*, and *Defense of a Nation*, and the overarching theme that ties the region together, *Rivers to Sounds to Sea*.

The sites under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, the U. S. Army, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (Division of State Historic Sites and Properties and the Division of State History Museums/Office of Archives and History),

and the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation consistently retain a high degree of physical integrity and currently have interpretive and educational programs in place. Furthermore, within each management entity above, collaboration already occurs. Many other sites in non-profit and local government management retain a high level of integrity, and some offer exceptional interpretation and visitor services. As identified in the *Heritage Sites Assessment Report* and the inventory, there are many sites that offer potential for resource preservation and visitor experience. With technical assistance provided by a heritage area management entity, these sites could also support visitor opportunities and educational and interpretive programs.

6. *Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area.*

✓ **Meets criterion**

Through a series of public meetings and stakeholder interviews, a collaboration of the three regional economic development commissions—North Carolina’s Northeast Commission, North Carolina’s Eastern Region and North Carolina’s Southeast—has been identified to lead the next phase of this initiative—development of a management plan and oversight of early implementation activities. Public scoping has also indicated the long-term coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area should either fall under the collaborative jurisdiction of these three commissions or work as a close partner with them. The preferred management alternative for the proposed National Heritage Area included general financial information as developed over the course of the feasibility study.

The coordinating entity comprised of the three economic development commissions would serve as the key facilitator of a network of diverse partners including public, federal, state, and local agencies and private organizations. The commissions currently are structured to work with a wide range of partners, and those partners within their existing heritage tourism focus will be key participants in National Heritage Area endeavors. In addition, a variety of potential partners and funding sources were identified during the feasibility that will be important to the future success of the heritage initiative. This partnership network will be critical in achieving the long-term goals of the National Heritage Area as expressed in a management plan and also will assist in raising funds to facilitate the operations of the National Heritage Area. Letters demonstrating a broad base of commitment and support are appended to this document.

7. *The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area.*

✓ **Meets criterion**

Throughout the planning process, the study team worked with the three commissions and a Tri-regional Heritage Tourism Task Force comprised of representatives of state agencies, non-profit organizations, and county-based tourism agencies. The three commissions are closely aligned with the county governments within each of their service areas, which has meant strong county support for this initiative. In addition, the three commission leaders and the study team met with a number of state agencies and closely allied partners, including:

- Department of Commerce—NC Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development
- Department of Cultural Resources—NC Arts Council
- Office of the Governor)
- Golden LEAF Foundation
- NC Rural Economic Development Center

Representatives of the state agencies expressed strong interest in the designation of a National Heritage Area and are committed to continued involvement as the process moves forward. Furthermore, state agencies are considering the creation of a state heritage area program that would include the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, the Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, and the proposed Eastern North Carolina National Heritage Area, and could be expanded to include other significant heritage regions within the state.

The numerous letters appended to this document attest to the high level of support for the proposed heritage area among state and local governments, organizations, and individuals.

8. *The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area.*

✓ **Meets criterion**

The activities of a National Heritage Area—preservation and interpretation of heritage resources, conservation of living traditions, heritage education, and sustainable economic development based on recreation and heritage tourism—align perfectly with continued economic activity in Eastern North Carolina.

Agricultural and maritime activities, both of which have contributed to the region's economy since the colonial era, are integral components of the contemporary economy. Fields in cultivation and the expansive network of rivers, sounds, and sea attest to the ongoing importance of these traditional activities. The region holds many historic communities with agricultural or maritime roots that maintain these activities and also have added the component of heritage tourism.

Heritage tourism, recreation, and the “creative economy” based in part on the region’s living traditions are among the other key drivers of Eastern North Carolina’s economy. Hunting, fishing, and boating grew out of subsistence activities that began to evolve into recreational activities more than a century ago. Similarly, tourism has deep roots in the region. Summer migration to the beach began in the mid-1800s, and heritage tourism has century-old roots in battlefield protection. Interest in heritage tourism expanded in the late 1930s, and again in advance of the nation’s Bicentennial celebration in the 1970s. The “creative economy” is linked closely with heritage tourism, and helps to provide economic and quality of life benefits based on products and places with roots in the region’s past.

The military consistently has maintained a strong presence in Eastern North Carolina since World War II and will remain an anchor industry. Interpretation of military history and the celebration and commemoration of the sacrifices of servicemen and their families aligns with the region’s priorities.

9. A conceptual boundary map is supported by the public.

✓ Meets criterion

A conceptual map of the National Heritage Area has been developed and was shared during a series of three public meetings in the study area in September 2011 and January 2012. The map received overwhelming support at all meetings. Please see the conceptual boundary map (*page 65*).

10. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.

✓ Meets criterion

This feasibility study was conceptualized and managed by the three regional economic development commissions in North Carolina’s coastal plain, roughly the area of the state east of I-95. North Carolina’s Northeast Commission, North Carolina’s Eastern Region and North Carolina’s Southeast collaboration on the heritage tourism initiative and development of the feasibility study led to the public’s unanimous affirmation of this group to undertake the next phase of planning and development for a National Heritage Area. The final coordinating entity will be organized through the management planning process, with current public preference that this collaboration continues in a leadership role or possibly sharing leadership with a new entity created to meet the specific needs of the emerging National Heritage Area as identified through planning.

The three economic development commissions that have coordinated this feasibility study in a super-regional effort through financial and administrative management and the creation and administration of a tri-regional task force have committed to move forward with a management planning phase. Although the ultimate management agency has not been

determined, a plurality of those polled during the feasibility study process agreed that the three economic development agencies should at the least take the interim role to manage and oversee a management planning phase once the designation has been attained and should ultimately continue to play a strong leadership role in conjunction with a permanent coordinating entity.

Appendices

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Project Participants

Commissions

John D. Chaffee, *Executive Director, North Carolina's Eastern Region*
Vann Rogerson, *Executive Director, North Carolina's Northeast*
Steven Yost, *Executive Director, North Carolina's Southeast*

Erin Eatman, *Marketing and Communications Coordinator, North Carolina's Eastern Region*
Steven Pearce, *Marketing and Communications Coordinator, North Carolina's Eastern Region*
Anita Johnson, *Communications Director, North Carolina's Northeast*
Hannah Jones, *Regional Assistant, North Carolina's Northeast*

Tri-Regional Heritage Tourism Task Force

Angie Brady, *Director of Tourism, Fayetteville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau*
Theresa Carter, *Tourism Manager, Onslow County Tourism*
Kim Hufham, *President and CEO, New Hanover County Tourism Development Authority*
Marc Finlayson, *Executive Director, Highway 17 Association*
Maryann Friend, *Assistant Secretary, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources*
Penny Leary-Smith, *Director, Dismal Swamp Welcome Center*
Andre Nabors, *Tourism Development Manager, North Carolina Department of Commerce*
Nancy Nichols, *Tourism Director, Chowan County Tourism Development Authority*
Charlotte Underwood, *Director, Elizabeth City Area Convention and Visitors Bureau*

Study Team

Mary Ruffin Hanbury, *Hanbury Preservation Consulting*
Carolyn Brackett, *National Trust for Historic Preservation*
August R. Carlino, *Planning Consultant*
Lauren Finney, *Black Orchid Design*
Nancy I. M. Morgan, Ph.D., *Point Heritage Development Consulting*

Appendix C

Public Involvement Participants

The following list includes individuals who participated in the public involvement component of the project, including stakeholder interviews and attendance at public meetings.

NAME		ORGANIZATION
Sarah Katherine	Adams	Martin County Tourism Development Authority
Karen Willis	Amspacher	Core Sound & Outer Banks National Scenic Byway
Andy	Anderson	Waynesborough Park
Kelly	Andrew	
Jennifer	Arnold	Washington County Chamber of Commerce
Trish	Ashburn	Tryon Palace
Larry	Auld	Perry-Western Insurance
Monique	Baker	Pender County Tourism
Carol	Banks	1808 Blount-Bridgers House/Pittman Gallery
Billy	Barber	Martin Community College
Chris	Barber	Rehoboth Church Preservation Society
Elizabeth	Barrow	Crystal Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau
Pernell	Bartlett	
Jon	Barwick	Visit Kinston Tourism Development Authority
Win	Batten	Town of Warsaw
Steve	Biggs	Bertie County
Dempsey	Bond	Martin County Tourism
Aaron	Bull	Bull & Company
Travis	Burke	North Carolina Cooperative Extension (Pasquotank)
Elizabeth	Campbell	Museum of Coastal Carolina
Thomas	Carter	Onslow County Tourism
Jerry	Castelloe	Ahoskie Chamber of Commerce
Misty	Chase	Greene County Government
Karen	Clough	Pocosin Arts Folk School
Dick	Collier	Northampton County Tourism Development Authority
Judy	Collier	Northampton Chamber of Commerce
Darrell	Collins	Wright Brothers National Memorial
Lauren	Collins	The Times-Leader
Heber	Colthain	
Joe	Cooper	Historic Hope Foundation
Rebecca	Cross	Elizabeth City Development, Inc.
Jeffrey	Crow	North Carolina Office of Archives and History
Carl	Curnette	Elizabethan Gardens/Historic Albemarle Tour
Maureen	Donnelly	Elizabeth City Tourism Development Authority
Ray	Donnelly	Elizabeth City Bed and Breakfast
Darrell L.	Echols	Outer Banks Group, National Park Service

Michele	Ellis	Travel & Tourism
Sid	Ely	Perquimans Chamber of Commerce
Gareth	Evans	Bellamy Mansion Museum of History and Design Arts
Jason	Ginder	Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Roy	Golden	
Mickey	Golden	
Mary Helen	Goodloe-Murphy	Outer Banks National Scenic Byway
Gary	Grant	Concerned Citizens of Tillery
Reba	Green-Holley	North Carolina Cooperative Extension (Gates)
Joy	Greenwood	Dismal Swamp State Park
Lisa	Grice	Onslow County Museum
Charlotte	Griffin	
Lisa A.	Griggs	Griggs Best Shot Photography
Woodrow W.	Grizzle III	Elizabeth City State University Planetarium
Russ	Haddad	Office of Congressman Butterfield
Keith	Hardison	North Carolina Historic Sites
Wayne	Harris	Albermarle Economic Development Commission
Tom	Harrison	Washington County Travel and Tourism
Karen	Hayes	Somerset State Historic Site
Sarah	Hayward	Dismal Swamp State Park
James C.	Helms	Lake Waccamaw State Park
Lauren	Hermley	North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
Susan	Hinkle	Downtown Business & Professional Association
David	Hodges	
Jennifer	Holcomb	Columbus County Tourism Bureau
Pat	Holz	Belhaven Chamber of Commerce
Ashley	Honaker	Camden County
Joanne	Honeycutt	East Carolina Village of Yesteryear
Rhett	Honeycutt	East Carolina Village of Yesteryear
Josephine	Hookway	Historic Bath Commission
Lance	Jenkins	Roanoke Canal Museum and Trail
Judy	Jennette	Washington County Tourism Development Authority
Anita	Johnson	North Carolina Northeast Commission
Judy	Johnson	North Carolina Northeast Commission
Doward	Jones	Roanoke River Lighthouse and Maritime Museum
Brent	Kanipe	Martin County Planning
Donna	Kemp	The May Museum and Park
David F.	King	Sampson County History Museum
Jeannie K.	King	Sampson County History Museum
C. Rudolph	Knight	Perry-Western Insurance
Jill	Landen	Whalehead Club
Brent	Lane	Wake County
Kelly	Lasky	Rivers & Associates, Inc.
Lorotta	Laut	Zendei Consultory
Chris	Lawson	Wayne County History Museum

Arnold	Leder	Wayne County Historical Village
Lynn	Lewis	Washington Tourism Development Authority
Robert J.	Lewis	Columbus County Planning Department
Deana	Locke	Ocracoke Preservation Society
Pat	Long	Center for Sustainable Tourism, East Carolina University
Lynette	Mallery	Historic Albemarle Tour/Historic Windsor
Jackie	Margoles	Burgwin-Wright Museum House
Candace	McCreevy	Lower Cape Fear Historical Society/Latimer House
Jim	McKee	Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site
Lenore	Meadows	Town of Beaufort
Ray	Meiggs	Arts of the Albermarle
Dave	Middleton	North Carolina Inner Banks
Joyce	Mitchell	Office of U.S. Senator Kay Hagan
Brenda	Mixon	Partnership for the Sounds
Brenda	Monty	The Enterprise
William	Moore	Office of Congressman Walter Jones
Amanda	Mullen	Fairfield Inn
Nancy B.	Muller	Elizabeth City State University
Mike	Murray	Outer Banks Group, National Park Service
Buster	Nunemaker	North Carolina Aquarium/Historic Albemarle Tour
Alex	Naar	Center for Sustainable Tourism, East Carolina University
Jeri	Oltman	Perquimans Chamber of Commerce
Candis B.	Owens	Tarboro Town Council
LuAnne	Pendergraft	East Carolina State University/Port Discover
Eric	Pearson	Town of Windsor
Lucia	Peel	Roanoke River Partners
Joseph	Peele	Office of U.S. Senator Kay Hagan
Sarah	Peveler	Consultant
Sara Lilley	Phelps	Eastern 4-H Center
Jane	Phillips	Visit Kinston Tourism Development Authority
Dan	Porter	Camden County
Scott	Power	North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (Eastern)
Garth	Regan	Office of U.S. Senator Richard Burr
David	Reid	Museum of Cape Fear Historical Complex
Tommy	Roberson	Town of Williamston
Gene	Rogers	Martin County Historical Society
Betsy	Rosemann	Goldsboro Wayne County Travel & Tourism
Jane	Rustin	Wayne County Heritage Association
Jock	Scarsborough	Windsor
Paige P.	Schneider	East Carolina University
Joseph	Schwarzer	North Carolina Maritime Museums
Betty Jo	Shepherd	Office of U.S. Senator Richard Burr
Carol J.	Shields	
Brandon	Shoaf	Town of Hertford
Nancy M.	Sigmon	Columbus Co. Tourism Board

Nancy	Simon	Poplar Grove Plantation
Charles L.	Smith	
Laura	Smith	Harmony Hall /Bladen County Historical Society
Dottie	Spencer	East Carolina University/Country Doctor Museum
Donna	Stewart	Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center
Leigh	Strickland	Gov. Charles B. Aycock Birthplace State Historic Site
Mande	Swisher	North Carolina Cooperative Extension (Robeson)
Lee	Swain	Historic Bath State Historic Site
Laura Lee	Sylvester	Kinston Chamber of Commerce
Molly	Taylor	Partnership for Children
Reid	Thomas	North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (Eastern)
Rosemary	Toumey	East Carolina Village of Yesteryear
Connie	Townsend	Historic Albermarle Tour
Jac	Turner	PNC Bank
Diane	Tyndall	Craven Community College
Charlotte	Underwood	Elizabeth City Convention and Visitors Bureau
Linda	Vann	North Carolina's Northeast Commission
Albert	Vann	North Carolina's Northeast Commission
Debbie	Vargas	Greenville Convention and Visitors Bureau
Judy	Vassar	Currituck County Travel & Tourism
Harry	Warren	North Carolina Museum of Forestry
Jennifer	Watkins	North Carolina Estuarium
Carroll	Webber	
Traci	White	Bertie County Planning
Lisa	Whitman-Grice	Onslow County Museum
Kesha	Williams	East Carolina State University
Signa	Williams	Dismal Swamp State Park
Terri	Williams	Wayne County History Museum
Russell	Wilson	Cape Lookout National Seashore
John	Wood	North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (Eastern)
Fred	Yates	North Carolina's Northeast Commission
Tanya	Youns	Roanoke Island Festival Park

Appendix D

List of Presentations

Commission representatives, Tri-Regional Task Force members, and the study team have had the opportunity to provide information on the Eastern North Carolina Heritage Tourism Initiative/National Heritage Area Feasibility Study at many venues across the region. The following is a list of presentations given about the project.

2011

February	North Carolina's Northeast State of the Region—Williamston, NC
April	Eastern Region Tourism Mini Summits—Wallace, NC
September	State Governmental Partners—Raleigh, NC

2012

January	Coast Host Annual Meeting—Pine Knoll Shores, NC
February	Eastern Region Tourism Mini Summits—Rocky Mount, NC
	North Carolina's Northeast State of the Region—Williamston, NC

(Please note: Presentations given by task force members need to be added).

Appendix E

Letters of Commitment

Organizations and individuals throughout Eastern North Carolina have expressed strong support for the designation of a National Heritage Area. This section includes letters of commitment and support for the initiative.

(Please note: The letters will be added following the public review period, prior to submittal to the Secretary of the Interior.)

Appendix F

Resource Links

In addition to the National Heritage Area feasibility study, the study team was contracted to produce the *Heritage Resource Inventory of Eastern North Carolina*, the *Eastern North Carolina Heritage Assets Report*, the *Eastern North Carolina Marketing Assessment Report*, and the *Eastern North Carolina Marketing Strategies Report*. Electronic versions of these documents are available for download in their entirety at XXXX.

(Please note: Need to add hot links to documents on Commissions' websites for public review draft.)

(Question: Were these to be considered internal documents or should links be included? If they are not appended to the public draft, they should still be appended to the draft that is submitted to NPS as part of the body of work that went into this project.)

Appendix G

Acknowledgments

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