

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REPORT ON PROPOSED NATIONAL BEACH PARK

Between

ELMORE INLET AND THE PENDER-ONSLOW COUNTY LINE, NORTH CAROLINA

By

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C O P Y

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Scotts Hill, N. C.  
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THE PENDER COUNTY-ONslow COUNTY LINE

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

I. Location: This area, designated "Topsail Sound Area", is bounded on the south east by the Atlantic Ocean from Elmore Inlet to the line between Pender and Onslow Counties where this line meets the ocean. On the north east this line follows the Pender-Onslow line from the ocean to the Wilmington-Jacksonville State Highway. Then this line bears south west along the south east side of said highway to a point 1 mile north east of Woodside. From this point it extends north west at a ninety degree angle with the highway for a distance of 3 miles. From this point it runs in a south west direction at right angle with the line from the highway to that point for a distance of 3.5 miles, thence it turns another right angle and runs in a south east direction about 3 miles to and across the aforesaid highway, thence it follows the south east side of said highway to a point 1.5 miles north east of Hampstead, thence it turns south east and runs to and down the channel of Old Topsail Creek and from the mouth of said creek along a marsh channel to and through Elmore Inlet to the ocean.  
(See attached U. S. Coast and Geodetic Map and also North Carolina Map of Pender County - boundary lines shown in red and roads in blue).

II. Extent of Area: The beach in this area is unusually well suited to the requirements of a national beach park and has an ocean frontage between New Topsail Inlet and the Pender County - Onslow County line of about 9 miles. The island between New Topsail and Elmore Inlets has a beach on the ocean side about 1.25 miles in length. This short beach is very fine for surf swimming also, but this island is desirable primarily because of its popularity along with the beach on the opposite side of New Topsail Inlet for surf casting by fishermen. These beaches average about .25 mile in width and contain approximately 1,600 acres. That portion of the mainland running from the Pender-Onslow line to Old Topsail Creek and averaging about 2.75 miles in width contains about 16,000 acres. The deer and game hunting land on the north west side of the State highway contains about 6,700 acres. There are also approximately 6,000 acres of tidal marsh in this area. Total acreage of this entire area is about 20,300 acres.

III. Present Means of Access: State Highway No. 30 from Wilmington to Jacksonville and New Bern either borders or runs through the entire length of that portion of this area on the mainland. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad runs along the north west side of this highway and parallel with it from one end of this area to the other. Many unimproved roads in all sections of this area lead to the various landings on the sound and to other points in this area. There is no bridge across the Intra-coastal Waterway and the Sound at present and the beach can be reached only by boat.

IV. Physical Characteristics:

A. Scenic Values: Small well and partially grassed knolls and hillocks are scattered here and there over the entire length of this beach and from the high ocean bank to the sound. About 7 miles of this beach is well wooded and covered by beautiful and luxuriant growths of



#### IV. Physical Characteristics: Cont.

##### A. Scenic Values: Cont.

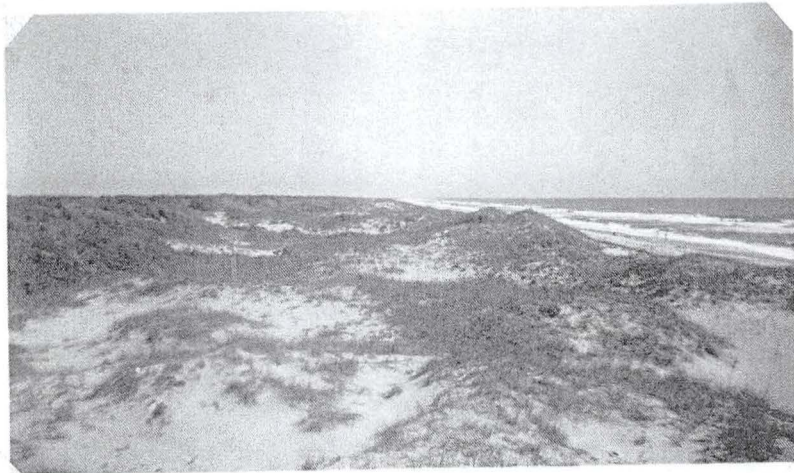
myrtle, youpon, cedar, live oak, and some pine and other trees and shrubs common to this type of soil, starting about the center longitudinally of the beach with low shrubs and dwarf trees and spreading umbrella-like to the tallest trees near the sound shore line. This unusual and lovely formation is caused by the effects of the prevailing winds blowing inland from the ocean and by the cutting and wearing of the dry sand blown by the winds. Dunes probably 30 to 35 feet high in that section opposite Virginia Creek are known as "White Hills" and they are very attractive and, as the name implies, are of a rather white sand of very fine texture. Shrubs and small evergreens and some trees grow on and around these hills. The ocean beach itself is very uniform in formation and well suited to the requirements of a beach park, but it is not so wide as some of the other beaches along this portion of the coast. Looking from the top of the dunes one sees upon looking inland across the sound the real beauty of the tidal marsh, cut into every imaginable shape by the innumerable winding marsh channels. Farther on and near the mainland is the Intracoastal Waterway, and then the high, rolling country of the mainland, fringed along the sound shore line by some of the largest and handsomest live oaks to be found anywhere and with other fine trees, particularly pines. The mainland between the sound and the highway is generally rolling and interesting country, cut by many creeks and streams, many of which extend as far as and beyond the highway. Most of the timber has been cut from this land, but many large trees were left standing and young pines, both long and short leaf, oaks of many varieties, gums, dog wood, hickories, and shrubs of various kinds abound. Beautiful fields of peanuts, corn, hay, or potatoes, are frequently seen in this section. Spanish moss drapes itself gracefully from a tree occasionally, but not nearly so frequently as in sections a little to the south west of this area. Across the highway the hunting section is generally flat and unsuited for farming purposes. In the low, poorly drained sections great 'bays', often several miles long, occur. These bays are the home of the deer, some bears, and many other animals, and dense growths of bay pine, 'hurrah' and bay bushes, and bull bay, as well as many other small trees and shrubs, give them the appearance of jungles. The greater portion of this section is rather open with scattering pines and oaks of all sizes, but at present well seeded with young pines, and it is not difficult to walk or ride through this open country.

(See pictures following)





Ocean beach, looking S. W., opposite "White Hills"



View from ocean bank at White Hills, looking N. E.



View in woods, near Sound side of beach, at  
White Hills





Sound beach at White Hills, looking South West

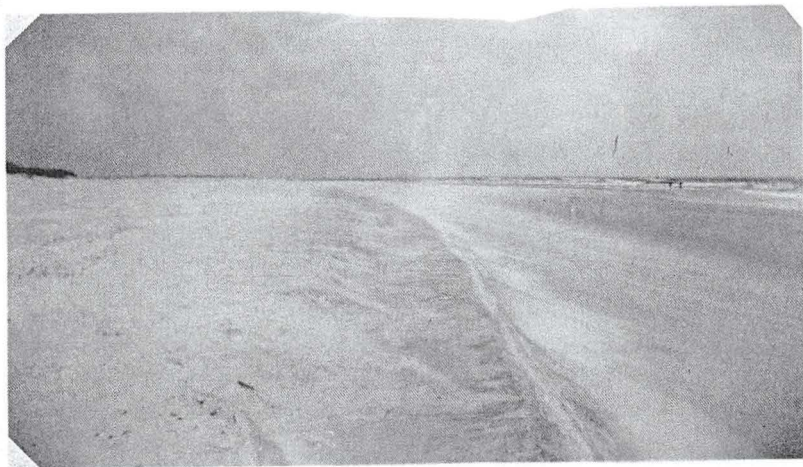


View from top of hill on sound side of beach,  
looking S. W., at point  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile N. E. of New  
Topsail Inlet.



View of beach area a short distance N. E. of New  
Topsail Inlet, looking North East.





Ocean beach just North East of Elmore Inlet,  
looking N. E. and showing fishermen surf casting

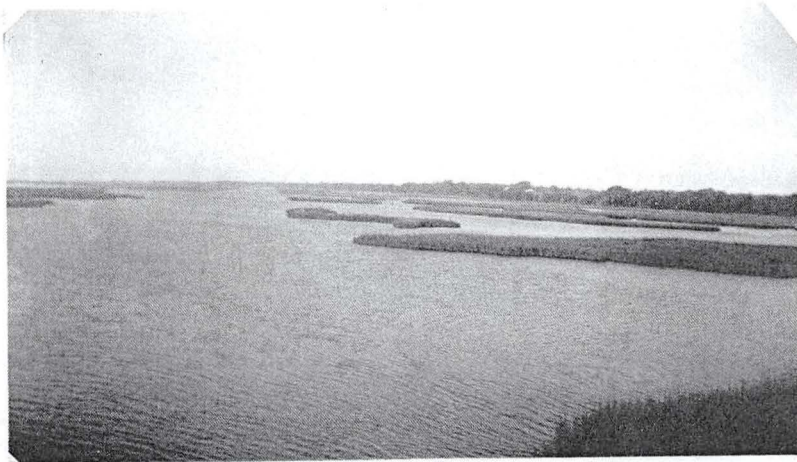


Looking S. W. toward Elmore Inlet from S. E. end  
of island between New Topssil Inlet and Elmore Inlet

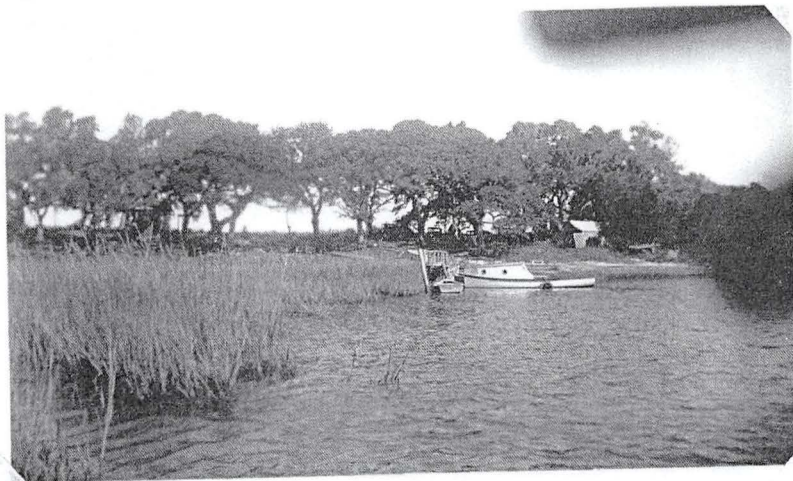


Typical mainland landing scene - Factory Landing





View from top of Light Bouy #28, looking S. W.  
showing Intracoastal Waterway and mainland shore



Looking North to Holmes Landing from Intracoastal  
Waterway, showing cluster of beautiful live oaks



View looking North on N. W. side of Highway  
at point a short distance N. E. of Woodside





View along woodland road between Highway and  
Sound opposite Sears Landing



Fresh pond and woodland scene near Virginia Creek



Looking N. W. from highway in Woodside section,  
showing railroad and typical woodland view.



#### IV. Physical Characteristics: Cont.

##### B. Character of Beaches:

1. Width: Averages about 125 feet.
2. Color and Texture of Sand: Fine, rounded yellow to white sand. Some sharp, fine to coarse sand and some small gravel and sea shells are present at various points along the beach.
3. Slope: about 7%, running fairly uniform throughout the length of the beach.
4. Undertow: Undertow is noticeable, but neither strong nor dangerous.
5. Protection: Although not indicated on maps available, sand bars exist a few hundred feet from shore and this reef acts as a protecting barrier, diminishing considerably the momentum and size of the largest waves and decreasing the undertow.

C. Present Development: There is no development on the beach except a few cheap shacks. ~~On the mainland, between the sound and the highway,~~ are some nice farms and several fairly nice farm homes. A few fisheries are located along the sound shore. In this area also there are some small settlements of colored people, but none of their homes are more than shacks. The hard surface highway and other unimproved roads in this area, as well as the presence of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, have been mentioned previously.

D. Possibility of Boating: Topsail Sound, with its large creeks and channels, and the Intracoastal Waterway make an excellent harbor and waterway for small craft of every description. Fishing in the Sound is exceptionall good, and probably no place along the Atlantic coast affords better grounds for big game fishing than at and in the vicinity of New Topsail Inlet. Surf casting from the beaches on both sides of New Topsail Inlet is more popular than at any other point within many miles of Wilmington, N. C. Following is an extract from the 1934 Prize List and Annual of the New Hanover Fishing Club, of Wilmington: "Last season was good to us, especially to the fishermen who fished late in the fall, and Topsail Beach outdid itself, especially in slues quite a few miles above the Inlet".

E. Forest Values: Although most of the woodland in this area has been cut over in the past few years, a considerable quantity of good pine and hardwood timber still stands, and young pines, both long and short leaf, are rapidly replanishing this area, and, if properly protected from fire, etc., this whole area will be well wooded again within a comparatively few years. There are no trees of any particular value as timber on the beach.

F. Wildlife Value: A geat many deeyhave their habitat in the 'bays' in that section of this area on the north west side of the highway. Coons, opossums, some minks, and squirrels, as well as an occasional bear, are found in this area. Quails are plentiful and some wild turkeys are often seen here. Ducks of several species in large numbers and some geese rest and feed in the sound in winter.

G. Possible cost of Land: The 1,600 acres of beach property could be purchased for about \$5.00 per acre or less, making a total of not over \$8,000.00. The 16,000 acres between the sound and the highway could be bought for \$20.00 per acre, including all buildings, or a total cost of \$320,000.00, and the 6,700 acres north west of the



G. Possible Cost of Land: Cont.

State highway can be bought for about \$5.00 per acre, or a total cost of \$35,500.00. There would be practically no cost in getting possession of the 6,000 acres of tidal marsh. This would make the total cost of all land and buildings in this area approximately \$361,500.00.

H. Special Matter of Interest: As is true with all sections of the coast in this portion of North Carolina, the climate is ideal. In winter the proximity of the Gulf Stream rarely ever permits the formation of ice, while the ocean breezes keep cool and pleasant the summer months.

Mosquitoes, sand flies, and dog flies are plentiful, but probably no more so than at other beaches in this section of the coast. Some snakes are found, but not in sufficient numbers to be a serious handicap or danger.

DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS:

I. New Roads and Boat Approaches: It would be desirable to construct an 18-foot hard surface road from the State Highway to the Sound at, perhaps, Sloop Point or at Sears Landing, a distance of about 3 miles. This road should be built of hot asphalt mix and would cost probably \$9,000.00 per mile including grading, or a total of \$27,000.00. It would be necessary to build a draw bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway and Sound a distance of about 2,000 feet. This bridge could be built of wooden timbers on wood piles and similar to bridges built by the North Carolina Highway Commission. From the end of this bridge a causeway with a hard surface road could be built across the marsh to the beach. If the bridge and causeway were built at Sears Landing, this work could be done for probably \$60,000.00, but, if built at Sloop Point, it would cost perhaps \$80,000.00. The Sloop Point location would be the more desirable because this location would be nearer the center of the beach. A cold mix asphalt road should be built the entire length of the beach which is a little less than 9 miles. This road would cost about 6,000.00 per mile, or a total of \$54,000.00. A small wharf and approach should be built on the beach side of the sound and another wharf and approach on the mainland side, both of which could be built for perhaps \$2,000.00. Assuming that the bridge and causeway were to be built at Sloop Point the total cost of all roads, the bridge and causeway, and the wharves with their approaches would be in the neighborhood of \$163,000.00.

II. Desirable Accomodations: A large bath house with comfort stations, showers and clothes lockers, and a picnic pavilion to be used also as a shelter should be built on the beach near the ocean. Automobile parking spaces and small shelters should be constructed at intervals along the beach. One or two small shelters should also be built on the beach between Elmore and New Topsail Inlets for protection of those preferring to swim or fish there.

III. Development Costs:

Roads, bridge and causeway, and 2 wharves	\$163,000.00
Bath house, comfort stations, showers and clothes lockers	8,000.00
Picnic pavilion	3,000.00
10 small shelters at \$300.00 each	3,000.00
Electric plant and wiring	2,500.00
Water supply, shallow well, tank and piping	2,000.00
Septic tank and piping	1,500.00
TOTAL - - - - -	\$183,000.00

IV. Circulation: The above mentioned new roads in addition to existing roads and trails would be all required. The unimproved roads and trails would make ideal bridal paths, and would be useful in getting to the various landings and harbors on the sound.





Highway scene, looking South in Woodside section



Woodland scene in hunting section N. W. of Highway,  
showing a 'bay' in the background



Typical farm section between Highway and Sound,  
showing rolling country