

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REPORT ON PROPOSED NATIONAL BEACH PARK

Between

MASONS INLET AND ELMORE INLET, NORTH CAROLINA

By

Hugh A. Campbell
Assistant Engineer

Oliver G. Taylor, Chief,
Eastern Division,
Branch of Engineering,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Eastern Division,
Branch of Engineering

Scotts Hill, N. C.
October 20, 1934.

REPORT ON PROPOSED NATIONAL BEACH PARK BETWEEN MASONS AND ELMORE INLETS

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

I. Location: This area, designated "Middle Sound Area", on the south east is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean from Masons Inlet to Elmore Inlet. From the middle of Elmore Inlet the line follows the center of Howard Channel to the mainland, and thence runs in a north west direction to the south east side of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad right of way to a point 1.3 mile south east of Hampstead Railroad Station; thence this line runs in a south west direction along the south east boundary of said Railroad property to a point .75 mile north east of Scotts Hill Railroad Station. From this point this line runs across the said Railroad property and at right angle with the railroad in a north west direction .25 mile; thence it turns a 90 degree angle and runs in a north east direction 2 miles; thence it turns a right angle and runs in a north west direction a distance of 4 miles; thence it turns a right angle and runs in a south west direction a distance of 5 miles; thence it turns a right angle and runs in a south east direction to and across the State Highway No. 30; thence this line runs in a south west direction along the south east side of said highway to a point approximately 3 3/4 miles south west of Scotts Hill Railroad Station; and thence it runs in a south east direction to and then along the channel of Pages Creek and the tidal marsh channel between Pages Creek and Masons Inlet to and through Masons Inlet to the ocean. This area will not include a section of land containing the village of Scotts Hill, which section is 77 mile long and .5 mile wide and having the shape of a right angle parallelogram, its center being the Scotts Hill Railroad Station and the long sides being parallel with the Railroad at this point.

(See attached U. S. Coast and Geodetic Map and also North Carolina County Road Survey Maps of Pender and New Hanover Counties - boundaries shown in red and roads shown in blue).

II. Present Means of Access: State Highway No. 30 either runs through or borders that portion of this area on the mainland, as well as does the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Many unimproved roads lead to various landings on the sound to other points within this area. There is a very good shell road leading from the State Highway to the Sound between Futch and Pages Creeks. There is no bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway at present and the beaches can be reached only by boat.

III. Extent of Area: The beaches in this area are ideal for a national beach park. The two beaches in this area have a total ocean frontage of about 8 miles of beautiful, wide, smooth, easy sloping sand beach. There are a total of 30,300 acres, approximately, in this area. There are about 800 acres in the beaches, about 6,500 acres in tidal marsh, ~~#####~~ approximately 10,000 acres in that portion of the mainland between the Sound and the State Highway, and about 13,000 acres in that part on this area which lies to the north west of the State Highway and the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. There are, of course, no bridges across the Intracoastal Waterway and the Sound in this section and these beaches can be reached only by boat. The Inlet shown on the enclosed U. S. Coast and Geodetic Map as "Old Topsail Inlet" has been completely closed for many years and the beach at this point is as high, as wide, and as good for swimming as any other portion of these beaches. The strip of land .25 mile wide and 2 miles long lying along the railroad and about half way between Scotts Hill and Hampstead, and being on the north west side of said railroad, was left out of this area because the writer did not believe this land was a necessity and on this strip several nice farms and homes are located.

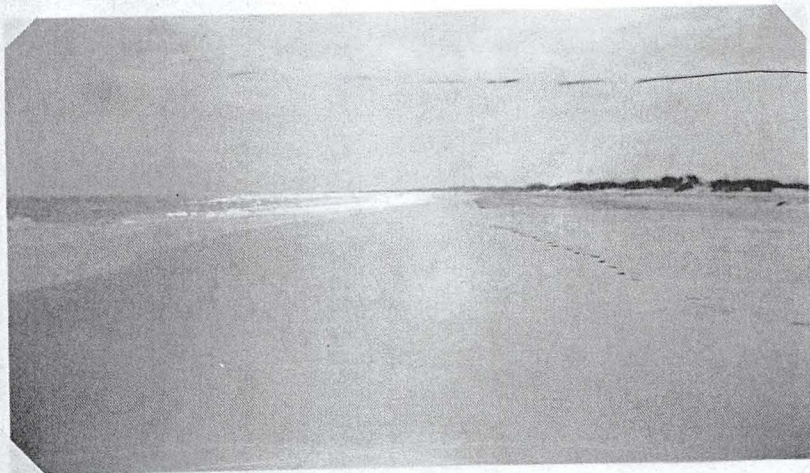
IV. Physical Characteristics:

- A. Scenic Values: The beach between Masons and Rich Inlets, designated "Foy's Beach", is a very attractive strip of beach land. It has a very fine, wide, gently sloping swimming beach on the ocean side. Back of the beautiful ocean sand beach is a high ocean bank, then farther in are countless small dunes and hillocks, some well grassed and some only partially covered with sea oats or other vegetation or bald. Along the sound side and back of most of these small dunes is a fringe of luxuriant growths of live oak, cedar, youpon, myrtle, and other trees and bushes common to beaches. Across the Sound, a distance of perhaps a mile and a half, looking toward the mainland one sees the beautiful high banks and bluffs of the mainland, with its several landings, each of which is usually located in a setting of wonderful old live oaks and other great trees, but also between these lands along the shore line large, fine trees of many varieties, largely live oaks, form a continuous background. A view of the tidal marsh and waterways is very pleasing. One sees myriads of little green islands and other formations, cut into every imaginable shape and size by the maze of marsh channels running in their winding courses in every direction. The beach between Rich and Elmore Inlets, designated "Hutaff's Beach", is equally as fine a beach for swimming and fishing, with a beautiful, wide, easy sloping beach, and other formations and appearances very much like "Foy's Beach", except that very few trees are found on this beach. Shrubs and bushes are in evidence along the sound side of this beach also, however. The Coast and Geodetic Map enclosed shows Old Topsail Inlet cutting through this beach. This Inlet has been closed for many years, and the beach now along that section that was Old Topsail Inlet is high and wide and as good in every respect as any other part of the main beach. Incidentally, it seems that on this same map the Inlet indicated under the name of 'Queen' should have been 'Masons'. There is no Queen Inlet at this time, it having been closed up many years ago also. There is much similarity in the appearance of these beaches with the beach on which is located the development of the popular and attractive Wrightsville Beach, opposite Wilmington, N.C., except that these beaches have an added advantage in that they are much wider. Along Middle Sound runs the Intracoastal Waterway and commercial and pleasure boats of all kinds ply this great canal.

The mainland between the Sound and the Highway, or the Railroad, is generally rolling and lovely country, cut by several creeks and streams, some of which extend inland as far as and past the highway, and some beautiful farms of large acreage with wonderful rolling fields and wide meadows, are located in this section. Although the woodland has been cut over in most sections within the past several years, many handsome trees and valuable long and short leaf pine thickets abound. Live oaks, dog wood, and many other varieties of attractive trees grow profusely in this section. Added to all this is the presence of large quantities of beautiful, flowing Spanish moss, draping itself majestically about and from the larger trees. At many points along the highway arches of Spanish moss hang from limbs of large oaks standing on each side of the road, completely arching the highway. Its beauty is beyond description.

Across the highway and the railroad to the north west is the hunting ground. It is generally flat and unsuited for farming purposes. In the low, poorly drained sections, great 'bays', often several miles in length, occur, and here is the home of the deer and many other animals. The luxuriant and dense growths of bay pine, 'hurrah' and bay bushes, bull bay, and many other small trees, evergreens, and shrubs, in these 'bays' give them much the appearance of 'jungles'. The greater portion of this section, however, is rather 'open' country with scattering pines and oaks of all sizes, and much of this open land is fast and thickly reseeding itself with young pines, some long leaf and some short leaf. It is not difficult to walk or ride through this region.

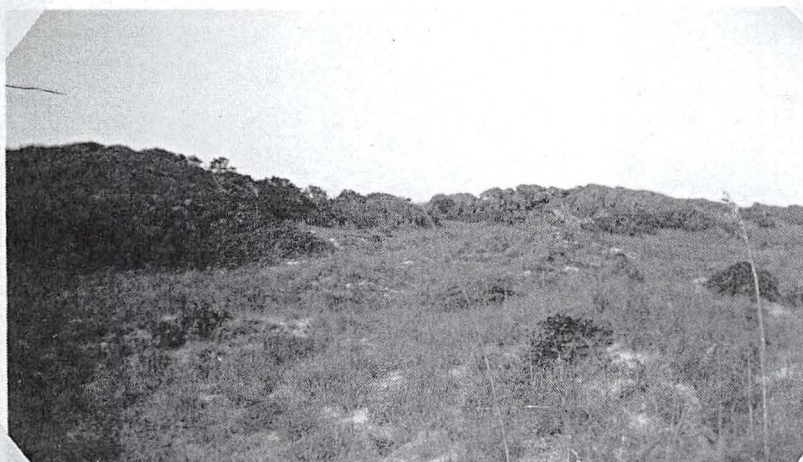
(See Pictures following)



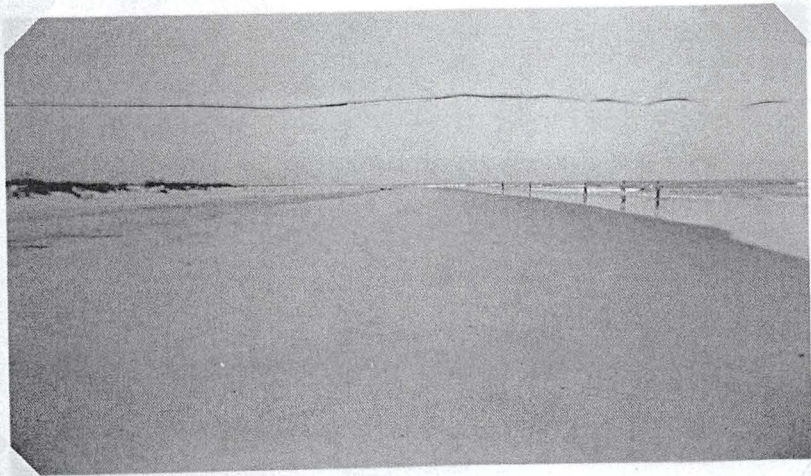
Foy's Beach - ocean beach looking S. W.



Foy's Beach - View from Ocean bank, looking S. W. and showing growths of shrubs and trees

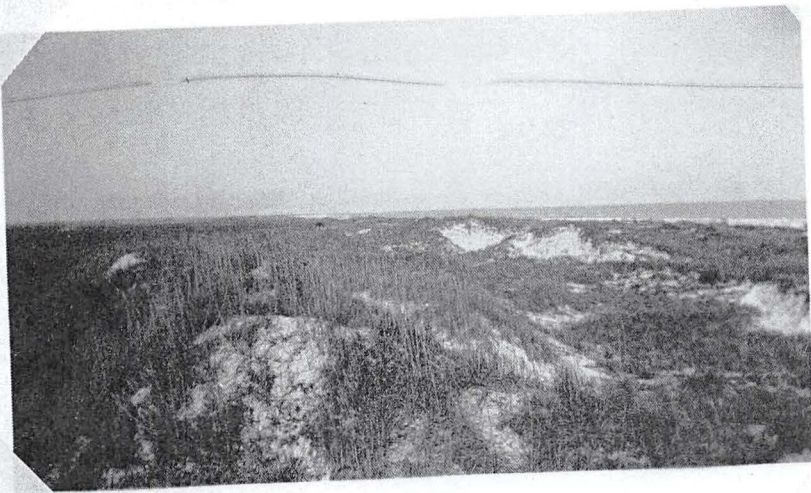


Foy's Beach, looking from ocean bank North, showing wooded growths and formations



Hutaff's Beach - View of ocean beach looking N. E.

Sportsman Surf Casino -



Hutaff's Beach - View from top of dune looking N. E.



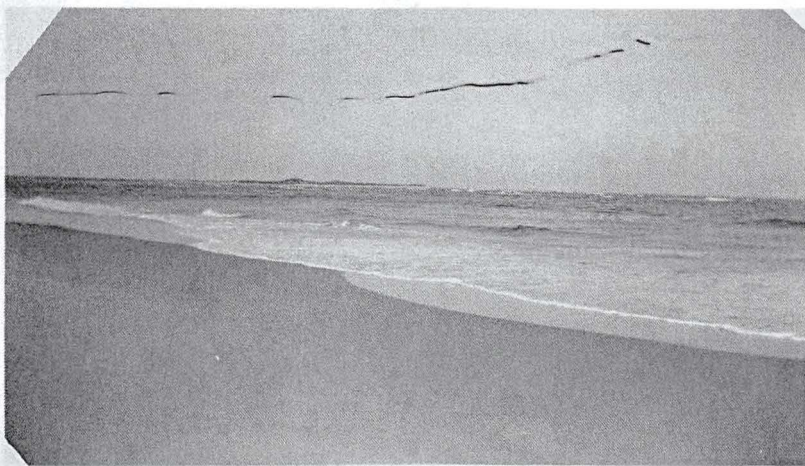
Hutaff's Beach, looking S. W. toward Rich Inlet



Hutaff's Beach, looking N. E. across Elmore Inlet from dune on sound side of beach



Hutaff's Beach - View of sand beach on Sound side, looking S. W.



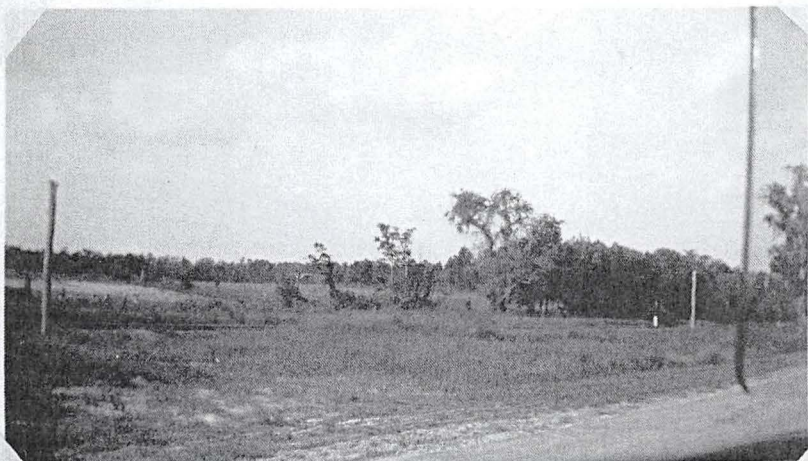
Looking across Rich Inlet from Foy's to Hutaff's beach



Looking across Sound from high bank of mainland
to Foy's Beach



Typical view of a field growing peanuts between
Highway and Middle Sound



Looking North across railroad and field and
to woods - just a little N. E. of Scotts Hill



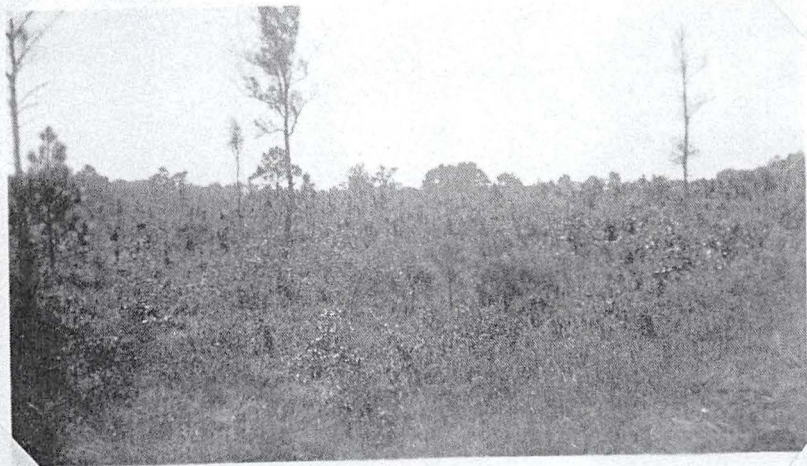
Woods road scene between Scotts Hill and Middle Sound, showing trees draped in Spanish Moss



Washington Oak on State Highway 30, about 3/4 mile S. W. of Hampstead



Beautiful live oaks with Spanish moss arching over State Highway 30 between Hampstead and Scotts Hill



Open woodland in hunting section N. W. of Highway,
showing young pines and scattering larger trees



Typical woods in hunting section N. W. of Scotts
Hill - a 'bay' in the background



Typical 'bay' in hunting section N. W. of Scotts
Hill - picture was taken outside of and approaching bay.

IV. Physical Characteristics:

B. Character of Beaches:

1. Width: Averages about 165 feet in width.
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 occasionally along the beaches.
3. Slope: About $5\frac{1}{2}\%$, running fairly uniform throughout the length of each beach.
4. Undertow: Undertow is noticeable, but neither strong nor dangerous.
5. Protection: Although not indicated on available maps, a sand bar or reef does 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 are no developments of the beaches, except one inexpensive cottage on "Hutaff's Beach". On the mainland, between the sound and the highway and railroad, are some very pretty, often large, farms. However, no expensive homes are located in this section because of the fact that the owners live in one of the nearby towns or in Wilmington. There are several settlements of colored people, but their homes are generally nothing more than shacks. On the sound shore are several cheap fishing huts and houses. There are no developments of any nature in the section north west of the railroad and highway except that recently the National Government has leased and fenced a portion of this land for cattle pasturage. This pasture, it is believed, is intended to be used only a comparatively short time. The hard surface highway, other unimproved roads, the Intracoastal Waterway, and the presence of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad have been mentioned before.

D. Possibility of Boating: Middle 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 very good, and fishing in and near the inlets is exceptionally fine. Surf casting from these beaches is very popular. Wonderful game fishing at New Topsail Inlet, only a mile and a half north east of "Hutaff's Beach", brings sportsmen to this section from all parts of this State.

E. Forest Values: Although most of the woodland in this area has been cut over in the past several years, a considerable quantity of good pine and hardwood timber still stands, and young pines, both long and short leaf, oaks, etc., are rapidly replenishing the forests of this section. If properly protected from fire, etc., this section will be well wooded again within a comparatively short period of time.

F. Wildlife Value: Deer are plentiful in the section of this area north west of the highway and the railroad. This is perhaps the section anywhere near the coastline in this part of North Carolina for deer hunting. Some black bears are also found here in the great 'bays' that occur in this portion of this area, as well as coons, opossums, and other animals in great numbers. Foxes are abundant, and some minks are caught. Quails are plentiful and some wild turkeys are found in this section. The writer knows of no section anywhere that would excell this area in possibilities as a game preserve. Ducks of several species, and some geese, find Middle Sound an ideal resting and feeding ground in winter.

G. Possible Cost of Land: The 800 acres of beach could be purchased for perhaps \$5.00 per acre, or a total of \$4,000.00. The tidal marsh of about 6,500 acres could probably be taken over at a very small cost. That section between the Sound and the Railroad of about 10,000 acres could be purchased for probably \$18.00 per acre, including buildings, or a total of \$180,000.00. The hunting section lying north west of the railroad and consisting of approximately 13,000 acres could be bought for about \$5.00 per acre, or a total of \$65,000.00. This would make the total cost of all land and buildings about \$249,000.00.

H. Special Matters of Interest: As is true with all coast sections in this portion of North Carolina, the climate is ideal here. The proximity of the Gulf Stream rarely ever permits the formation of ice in winter, while the salt laden ocean breezes keep cool and pleasant the summer months. Mosquitoes, dog and sand flies are plentiful, but no more so than on other beaches in this section. Some snakes, of course, are found, but not in sufficient numbers to be a serious handicap nor danger. About .8 mile south west of Hampstead, between the Highway and the Railroad, is that magnificent old live oak, known as the "Washington Oak", and under which is a bronze tablet bearing the following inscription: "In Patriotic Commemoration of the Visit of George Washington in his Tour of the Southern States, 1791", which was placed there by the North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution in 1925. Washington is said to have had lunch under the shade of this old tree on that occasion.

DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS:

I. New Roads and Boat Approaches: It would be necessary to build a hot asphalt mix 18-foot road from the Highway to the Sound somewhere between Futch and Page Creeks, which could be done for about \$18,000.00, the distance being about 2 miles. A wood timber bridge with an appropriate draw span across the Intracoastal Waterway and causeway across the marsh section from the mainland to "Foy's Beach", with a hard surface roadway on the causeway, would cost perhaps \$100,000.00, the distance being about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. A cold mix asphalt 18-foot road should be built along the $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of beach, with an approach to the bridge of the same material, which could be built for about \$24,000.00. Three small wharves should be built, one on the sound side of each beach and one on the mainland, which would not cost more than \$3,000.00. This would make a total of \$145,000.00 for all necessary roads, the bridge and causeway, and the wharves. It would probably not be desirable to build a bridge to "Hutaff's Beach" at this time. This beach is ideal in every way, both as a swimming beach and as a fishing center, but its distance from the mainland makes the bridging of the Sound to it undesirable until such time that more developed beach area may become necessary.

II. Desirable Accomodations: A large bath house with comfort stations and showers and clothes lockers and a pivilion for picnics and to serve as a shelter should be provided near the ocean beach. Automobile parking spaces and small shelters should also be built at intervals along "Foy's Beach", and one small shelter should be built near each end of "Hutaff's Beach".

III. Development Costs:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Roads, bridge, with draw span, and causeway, and wharves | \$145,000.00 |
| Bath house, with comfort statimons, showers and clothes lockers | 8,000.00 |
| Picnic pavilion | 3,000.00 |
| 5 small shelters at \$300.00 each | 1,500.00 |
| 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 - - - - - | \$163,500.00 |

There is a telegraph station at Hampstead, a telephone line runs along the State Highway, but there is no electric power line in this area.

IV. Circulation: The above mentioned new roads in addition to the existing roads would complete a very thorough system for getting to all sections of this area except Hutaff's Beach. Bridal paths could be established very easily, using existing unimproved roads and trails.