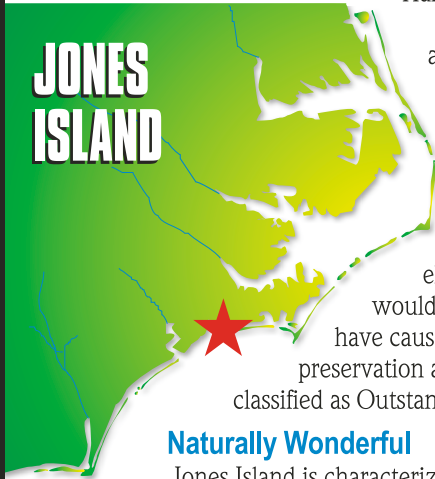


JONES ISLAND

NC COASTAL FEDERATION PRESERVATION, RESTORATION & ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROJECT

Jones Island is a 24-acre coastal island located in the middle of the White Oak River about a mile from the town of Swansboro. In October 2007, the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF), the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Audubon North Carolina and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation entered into a partnership to purchase 17 acres of Jones Island and include it as part of Hammocks Beach State Park.



The partners acquired Jones Island to reduce stormwater runoff and other negative impacts of coastal development to the river. Almost 6,000 acres of the river's waters are either permanently closed to shellfish harvesting or are subject to closure following heavy rains. More than 70% of those closed waters are in the main portion of the river around Jones Island. One of the river's major pollution sources is fecal coliform bacteria from stormwater runoff. The acquisition of Jones Island has eliminated the possibility of development on the island, which would have been an additional source of fecal contamination and may have caused an increase in the frequency of shellfish closures. The preservation also helps protect the waters downstream of the river, which are classified as Outstanding Resource Waters by the state.

Naturally Wonderful

Jones Island is characterized by low upland rises at the southeast and northwest ends, with marshes and small ponds along its eastern shore. Much of the island is dominated by a Coastal Fringe Evergreen Forest, which is considered to be a rare and regionally significant coastal ecosystem by the N.C. Natural Heritage Program. The forest is dominated by loblolly pine and live oak. Yaupon and wax myrtle are prominent in the dense shrub layer. Also, the Eastern Painted Bunting, a federal species of concern, uses the island as a nesting site.



Cultural Significance

The earliest inhabitants of the island were Native Americans, most likely an Algonquin-speaking tribe called the Neusiok. The Native Americans would have had a relatively easy life due to a plentiful food supply. They could fish for trout and flounder, gather clams and oysters, hunt for game animals such as deer and plant gardens of corn and squash. They also used Jones Island for pottery production due to its substantial white and red clay deposits.

The island is thought to be named after a local family that received thousands of acres in a royal land grant. During colonial times, it was used as a fishing camp and a livestock grazing area. Currently, Jones Island serves as a destination for water recreation activities, such as canoeing and kayaking.

Partnership

The North Carolina Coastal Federation has entered into a partnership with the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation and Hammocks Beach State Park to establish environmental education and habitat restoration activities on Jones Island that engage and educate the public about coastal environmental protection, restoration and stewardship.



SHORELINE PLANTING



BUILDING OYSTER REEFS



COMPLETED OYSTER REEFS

Habitat Restoration

The primary goals of restoration activities on Jones Island are to re-establish marsh grass and shore grass growth along eroding shorelines and to encourage growth of the eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) in the waters adjacent to the island. Volunteers plant plugs of salt marsh cordgrass, salt meadow hay and black needlerush. They also help bag oyster shells, construct oyster shell sills and monitor the growth of new oysters. These activities help stabilize the eroding shoreline; establish habitat for wildlife, shellfish and finfish; establish habitat that filters pollutants and nutrients; and contribute to improving the water quality of the White Oak River.

Environmental Education

Public education and awareness activities are conducted in conjunction with the restoration events. These activities create public awareness of, and support for, coastal habitat preservation, protection and restoration. NCCF coordinates with Hammocks Beach State Park and other partners to provide educational programming through participation in restoration activities that generate a sense of stewardship for the estuarine resources. Students and general public audiences explore the waters using nets and seines to discover the diversity of native marine life.



Funding for the various habitat restoration projects at Jones Island was provided through a national partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Restore America's Estuaries; the Community Conservation Assistance Program of the N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation; and Grady White Boats.



North Carolina Coastal Federation

CITIZENS WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHY COAST

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"Citizens Working Together for A Healthy Coast"

The North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is the state's only non-profit organization focused exclusively on protecting and restoring the coast of North Carolina through education, advocacy and habitat restoration and preservation. For more information call 252.393.8185 or check out NCCF's website at www.nccoast.org.