

HOOP POLE CREEK NATURE TRAIL GUIDE

MARITIME FORESTS

The globally imperiled maritime forests of Hoop Pole Creek are home to a unique plant community. Trees and shrubs in the forest are specially adapted for survival in sandy soil, dune swale topography (dunes and the low, wet depressions between them) and strong sea breezes loaded with salt spray and sand. Well-developed root systems anchor them in the soft soil and tap deep for ground water. Support against the wind is provided by strong trunks with twisting branches. Broad-leaf evergreen leaves or needles are extra-thick to retain moisture and able to absorb sunlight year round.

1 REDBAY (*avocado relative*)

- ◆ Leaves have bluish color on their underside and reddish veins.
- ◆ Leaves, when crushed, have an aromatic odor and can be used for cooking.

2 HERCULES-CLUB

- ◆ Glands containing aromatic oil are found in the bark, fruit and leaves.
- ◆ Folk medicines prescribed chewing the bark to relieve toothaches. Thus its nickname – the toothache tree.
- ◆ Non-tropical member of the citrus family, prickly ash.

3 PENNYWORT

- ◆ Small, round, nasturtium-like leaf, with the petiole (or stem) attached to the center of the leaf.
- ◆ Bears small, white flowers with five petals in compound umbels.
- ◆ This carrot relative thrives in dune swales and along the edges of salt marshes.

4 SPANISH BAYONET-YUCCA

- ◆ Leaves are evergreen in color, thick, leathery, and have a sharp-pointed shape.
- ◆ Bears white bell-shaped flowers on tall flowering stems. Also, bears purple berries which can be eaten if the pulp of the fruit is baked.
- ◆ Flowers June-July and fruits Oct-Dec.
- ◆ Also known as beargrass, it is part of the lily family.



5 WAX MYRTLE

- ◆ Flowers April-June and fruits May-Oct.
- ◆ In colonial times, wax from the berries was used for making candles, and leaves were used to repel insects.

6 YAUPON HOLLY

- ◆ This shrub ranges from 3-10 feet in size with leaves that are glossy on top and dull underneath.
- ◆ Bears greenish flowers and red or orange fruit known as drupes. Flowers June-Aug and fruits Sept-Nov.
- ◆ Used by Native Americans for making a purgative (vomit-inducing drink) known as the “black drink,” and by early Spanish, French and British colonists to make cassina tea.

7 AMERICAN HOLLY (*also known as the “Christmas Holly”*)

- ◆ Evergreen shrub with spiked, toothed leaves, which can live for 150-200 years.
- ◆ Lumber resembles ivory and was used to make piano keys.

8 RED CEDAR (*also known as the “salt-marsh evergreen”*)

- ◆ When young, the tree has a shrubby appearance and sharp, overlapping scales.
- ◆ Yields moth-repellant oil and produces a fragrance that repels insects.
- ◆ Lumber is used in construction and furniture. Berries are used to flavor gin.

9 AMERICAN OLIVE or DEVILWOOD

- ◆ Identified by its evergreen, smooth, opposite leaves that taper to a point at each end. Leaves are approximately 5 cm. in length and 2.5 times as long as they are wide. Bark of tree is pale in color.
- ◆ Devilwood gets its name from its extremely tough wood which was used to make tool handles and other items that require extreme durability.

10 RED MULBERRY

- ◆ Leaves have three different shapes: oval, mitten-shaped or 3-lobed.
- ◆ Used by Native Americans to weave cloth. Also used for “tree nails” (wooden pins) and other items in shipbuilding.

11 LIVE OAK

- ◆ Broad-leaved evergreen trees that rarely grow to be 50 feet tall. Canopy can spread to 150 feet wide.
- ◆ The often-sculpted shape results from onshore winds and salt spray.

12 SMALL-FLOWERED BUCKTHORN

- ◆ Small-flowered Buckthorn is a very odd shrub. Acting more like a vine, it leans on other shrubs and trees for support and can reach heights of 25 feet.
- ◆ Thorn-tipped branches give way to small-toothed, opposite or sub-opposite leaves.
- ◆ One of the rarest shrubs in North Carolina, it is found growing in shell middens and hammocks.

13 SALT SHRUBS

- ◆ Collection of small trees and shrubs that grow near the edges of the forest and in the higher areas of marshes where less affected by tidal flooding.
- ◆ Serves as a wind-break to block salt air and protect the maritime forest from the salt's damaging effects.

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Atlantic Beach, NC

A project of the North Carolina Coastal Federation and the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund



TRAIL INFORMATION

- ♦ **Hiking and Walking Trail** are for walking, bicycling and handicap access only.
- ♦ **Trail open for public use**, year round, during daylight hours only.
- ♦ **Not permitted:** Smoking, fires, alcohol, recreational/off-road vehicles, dumping, and firearms.
- ♦ **Please do not remove** or disturb wildlife or plants.
- ♦ **Stay on the designated trails** and leave nothing behind except your footprints.
- ♦ **Beware of biting insects**, venomous snakes and poisonous plants along the trail, especially poison ivy.



HOOP POLE CREEK NATURE TRAIL

The Hoop Pole Creek Nature Trail winds through the Hoop Pole Creek's maritime forest and into an estuarine ecosystem. The Hoop Pole Creek property is listed as a natural heritage area because of its important values and functions. It serves as a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants while enhancing water quality, and its healthy maritime forest and coastal marshes filter and absorb sediment, nutrients and other pollutants.

HISTORY OF HOOP POLE CREEK

This property in Atlantic Beach has had a variety of common names throughout its history including: Cheeseman's Inlet, Hoop Pole Creek, Hoop Hole Creek, Hog Hill and Sugarloaf Properties. The name Hoop Pole came from a section of bark peeled from a young sapling or pole that was then used to secure the ends of wooden barrels before metal hoops came into use. These poles were gathered from a forest near the place we now call Hoop Pole Creek.

PROTECTING HOOP POLE CREEK

Over the years, Hoop Pole Creek has been targeted for development. Plans included a boat marina and 41 residential and six commercial lots. In 1997, the NC Coastal Federation bought Hoop Pole Creek's 31 acres with a grant from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund. Supporting the mission for the trust fund, the Coastal Federation placed a conservation easement on the property, forever protecting this area for its outstanding water quality benefits and preserving its historical and recreational values.



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Clean Water Management Trust Fund
In 1996, the NC General Assembly established the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) to finance projects designed to clean up pollution in the state's surface waters and to protect and conserve those waters not yet polluted. The intent of the legislation was long-term water quality that also benefited drinking water supplies, wildlife and marine fisheries habitats.

Funding for trail guide and signage provided by:
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

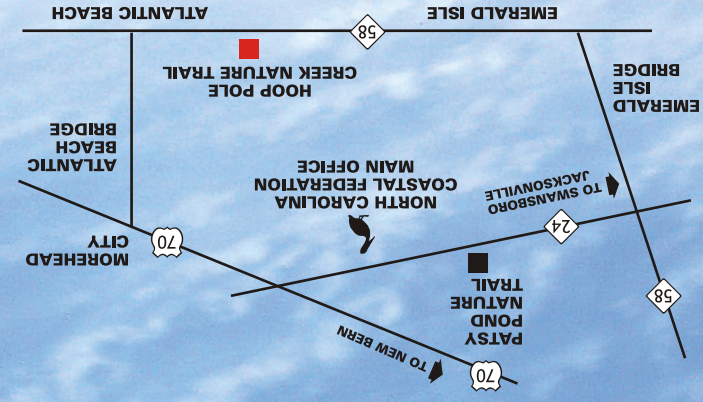
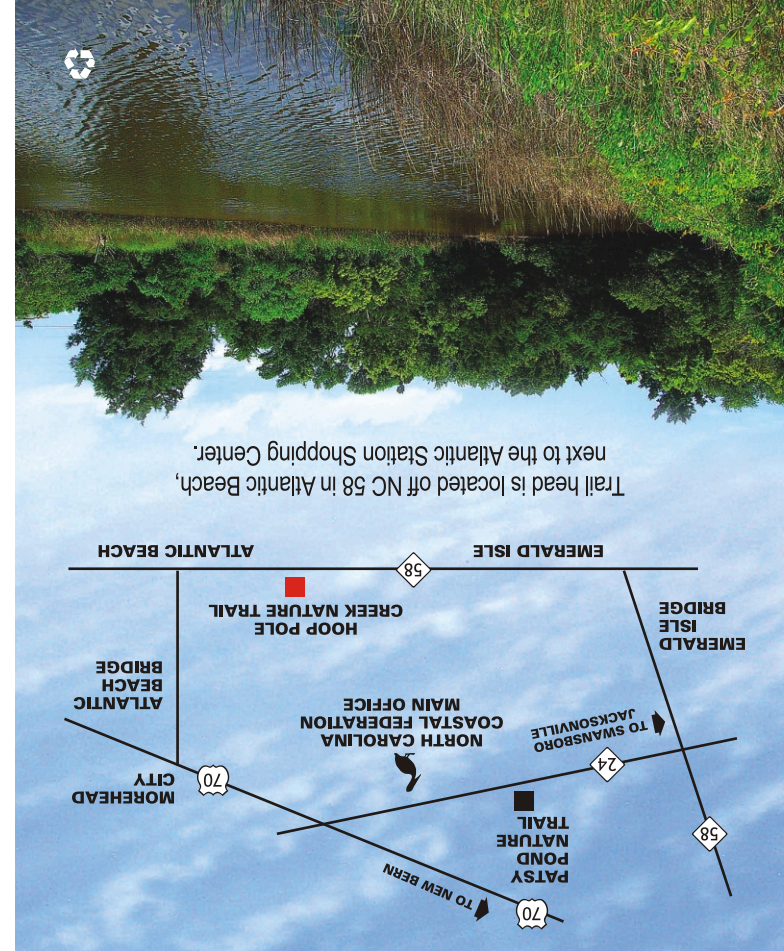
Adopt-A-Trail Program

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The crew of NCCF volunteers who helps maintain the trail throughout the year.

RULES AND TIPS FOR VISITORS

- ♦ **DIFFICULTY:** Easy.
- ♦ **LENGTH:** 1 mile round trip.
- ♦ **PARKING:** Available at site.
- ♦ **ENTRY/EXIT POINTS:** Begins and ends off NC 58 in Atlantic Beach, next to the Atlantic Station Shopping Center.
- ♦ **INTERPRETIVE TRAIL:** Numbered signs correspond to brochure available at trail head and at NC Coastal Federation office.
- ♦ **HABITAT:** Maritime forest, salt marshes, dune ridges, estuaries and native flora and fauna.
- ♦ **POTENTIAL WILDLIFE:** Variety of songbirds, wading birds and birds of prey, deer, raccoons, butterflies, dragonflies, turtles, lizards and snakes.



Trail head is located off NC 58 in Atlantic Beach, next to the Atlantic Station Shopping Center.

HOW TO FIND US

