Northeastern North Carolina
Balancing Nature and Commerce
“Connecting Our Region”
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National Wildlife Refuges on the Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
“Big 6” Public Uses

- Fishing
- Environmental Education
- Photography
- Wildlife Observation
- Interpretation
- Hunting

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Economic Contributions of National Wildlife Refuges to Nature and Heritage Based Tourism

These visitors generated $2.4 Billion in sales for regional economies.

Non-residents accounted for 77% of visitor expenditures.

Nationwide 46.5 million people visited National Wildlife Refuges in 2011.

Refuge recreational spending generated about $342.9 million in tax revenue.

USFWS Banking on Nature 2013
Economic Impacts of National Wildlife Refuges

The Refuges in the Southeast United States have the highest visitation of any area in the country.

72% of spending was on recreation that was non-consumptive

USFWS Banking on Nature 2013
# Regional Refuge Economic Impacts

## Alligator River NWR
- **Total Visitors in 2011**: 51,793
- **Non-Residents**: 24,412
- **Residents**: 27,381
- **Total Visitor Expenditures**: $1,339,600
- **Total Tax and Revenue**: $174,300
- **For Every $1 Refuge Spent**: $0.31 was generated

## Pea Island NWR
- **Total Visitors in 2011**: 603,150
- **Non-Residents**: 362,755
- **Residents**: 240,395
- **Total Visitor Expenditures**: $16,208,300
- **Total Tax and Revenue**: $2,928,000
- **For Every $1 Refuge Spent**: $25,336.50 was generated

## Pocosin Lakes NWR
- **Total Visitors in 2011**: 70,150
- **Non-Residents**: 42,305
- **Residents**: 27,845
- **Total Visitor Expenditures**: $1,988,700
- **Total Tax and Revenue**: $311,000
- **For Every $1 Refuge Spent**: $2.21 was generated

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USFWS Banking on Nature 2013

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**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**
History – How Did We Get Here

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contacted The Conservation Fund regarding the Balancing Nature and Commerce Program

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service met with the Counties and Regional Council of Governments to gauge interest in the program

- Regional information meeting was held on January 28, 2015 to discuss the process and hear about a successful multi-region program in Pennsylvania

- First Steering Committee meeting held on March 31, 2015
  - Working committees were created to include: fundraising/sponsorship, facilities and catering (logistics), programming, and marketing

- **A DATE WAS SET** – October 12-14, 2015

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History – How Did We Get Here

• 6 months and 12 days from the first steering committee meeting and numerous meetings and conference calls were held

• On October 12th the event kicked off at the NC State Facility: Vernon James Research Center in Plymouth.

• Designation of the Albemarle Commission to be the central “clearinghouse” / Program Manager
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What is the Northeastern North Carolina Balancing Nature & Commerce Program

Purpose:
Cultivate the creation of a regional identity that fosters sustainable economic development and regional partnerships and builds awareness of the value of the Region’s assets

- 2 and ½ days of collaboration, learning and fervor was felt by the 80+ participants

- 6 Action Plans were developed by the workgroups that relate back to the purpose of the Balancing Nature and Commerce Program

- The Albemarle Commission, Region R’s Council of Government was selected as the Program Manager for the Program
History of Roanoke River Partner’s Development

- Response to the economic downturn in the mid 1990s
- Reps from the 5 NC counties that border the Roanoke River brainstormed ideas to stimulate the regional economy
- Formed a non-profit that continues to foster partnerships to support the development and promotion of a 137 mile water trail which features 16 unique camping platforms/sites as well as the communities along the river.
Roanoke River Water Trail & Camping Platforms

For reservations: (252) 792-3790 or www.roanokeriverpartners.org/pf-home.aspx

Legend
- Future Rosenwald River Center
- Camping Platforms
- Towns

1" = 1.75 miles

Map created by: Town of Williamston Planning Dept.
From Colored School to Warehouse to ROSENWALD RIVER CENTER
HAMILTON ROSENWALD PRESERVATION PROJECT (MARTIN COUNTY) NORTH CAROLINA

A (Colorful) Story to Tell
The Return of a Rosenwald School

By Carol J. Robb
Photography by Carl Gade

The significance of the Rosenwald Schools in eastern North Carolina runs much deeper than just buildings that housed a classroom for African Americans, and now a movement has begun to preserve their legacy.

The Rosenwald School was named after the Rosenwald Fund, a philanthropic organization that existed from 1917 to 1944 and provided funding for the construction of schools and other educational facilities for African American students. The Rosenwald Fund was established by Julius Rosenwald, a prominent businessman and philanthropist who was also a member of the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago.

The Rosenwald Fund provided matching grants to local communities to build schools, which were then matched by local contributions. As a result, a network of schools was built throughout the South, providing education to African American students who were previously excluded from receiving a formal education.

The schools were designed to be sturdy and practical, with large classrooms, libraries, and gymnasiums. Many of these schools were designed by local architects and were built using local materials. The schools were often the center of the community, serving as a gathering place for community events and social activities.

As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s, many of these schools were closed and turned into warehouses or other uses. However, in recent years, there has been a renewed interest in preserving these buildings and using them for other purposes.

In North Carolina, a group of preservationists have been working to save several of these schools, including the Rosenwald School in Hamilton. The school building has been restored and is now used as a community center, with the goal of preserving its history and providing educational programs for the community.

The Rosenwald School in Hamilton is just one example of how these historic buildings can be preserved and used for the benefit of the community. By preserving these schools, we can honor the legacy of the Rosenwald Fund and the contributions of African American communities who worked to build schools for their children.

As the story of the Rosenwald School in Hamilton continues to unfold, it serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving our history and the significance of the contributions made by African American communities.
Through our 5-County Collaboration we have built a much BIGGER brand ~
Collaborators & Partners

Who’s partnering to promote the **Roanoke River Region**?

- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- NC State Trails
- NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife
- U.S. Army Corp of engineers
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Private Landowners
- Roanoke River Mayors Association
- State & County Tourism Organizations
- Town/County Governments
- Regional Colleges/Universities
- Compatible initiatives
- Member groups & Individuals
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Roanoke River Partners Impact

• Over $236,000 in total assets (historic school building, 16 camping platforms/sites, boats, paddling gear and office equipment)
• Over $50,000 of in-kind contributions annually – calculated at the rate of $22.55 per hour (Independent Sector)
• Over $600,000 regional impact annually – projected from earlier ECU Rural Development Study (new data currently being assessed by NC Growth)
• More than $10 return to the region for each $1 invested
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Partners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Towns/Mayors</td>
<td>Outfitters/Farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counties/Commissioners</td>
<td>Construction Professionals/Suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Agencies/Officials</td>
<td>Restaurants &amp; Banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism/Chamber Professionals</td>
<td>Host of Businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/National Officials</td>
<td>Regional Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers &amp; Artists, Musicians</td>
<td>Campgrounds &amp; Bed &amp; Breakfasts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art &amp; History Groups</td>
<td>Hotels/Motels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo/Videographers</td>
<td>Museums/Galleries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film makers</td>
<td>Universities/Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper &amp; Publications</td>
<td>Churches/Community Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Agencies</td>
<td>Regional/National Funders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Festivals and Events</td>
<td>Members &amp; Volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20 year investment in a regional brand including outdoor adventures & Small town experiences
Enduring partnerships that yield regional investment & promotion
University partnerships that yield data, research & promotional value
Sharing this rural development model to expand regional eco-tourism “infrastructure”
Regional synergy that is a result of connections with complimentary initiatives inside/beyond our region
LESSONS LEARNED

• **Local buy-in is ESSENTIAL** in order to develop a sustainable model.

• **Greatest economic impact** is the return to the local community (more visitors; increased revenues for local businesses).

• Though our region is well-positioned with the raw materials of cultural and natural assets, **growing a thriving eco-tourism industry requires local investment to support this development**.

• **With local support/investment**, it is possible to attract outside investment (funds, TA, promotion, etc.) for regional development.

• **Grantors/investors want to see local buy-in** to ensure a good return on their investment.

• **Partnerships yield BIG benefits**…that can sometimes be even more critical/valuable than funding (Good example: BNC Partners 😊).
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The Council of Governments and Economic Development District’s Role and Partnership in the Process
COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
“CREDS”

One of the action steps in the Comprehensive Regional Economic Development Strategy is:

**Promoting the strengths that distinguish the Northeastern North Carolina Region, such as its great climate, picturesque scenery, connected waterways, historic heritage, and ecosystem**

AKA: Eco-Tourism
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BUSINESS SECTORS

ALBEMARLE REGION
- Eco-Tourism
- Tourism
- Aviation
- Marine – Boat Building & Fishing
- Agricultural Business / Biotechnology
- Public Health
- Small Business/Entrepreneur
- Warehouse Distribution/Logistics
- Technology
- Retiree / Relocation
- Alternative Energy
- Military
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IMPACT OF TOURISM/ECOTOURISM ON THE REGION

If this 13 county area were 1 county it would be the 3rd largest tourist spending county in NC out of 100 counties at $1.3 Billion

Info provided by Steve Morse, Ph.D., Western Carolina University
Tourism works for the 13 Counties in Northeast NC in 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourist Spending</td>
<td>$1.36 Billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs Created</td>
<td>15,340 jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker Paychecks</td>
<td>$262.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Taxes</td>
<td>$63.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local County Taxes</td>
<td>$61.0 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association’s Report “The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties, 2014”
1. Promoting Outdoor Cultural Heritage Tourism with a goal to promote outdoor cultural heritage tourism to increase tourism revenues for local communities across the region.

2. Regional River & Waterways Clean-up & Improvement of Access to Water Resources Projects by developing collaborative approaches to improve water quality/accessibility/maintenance of water/riverways to attract users to increase revenue for local communities.

3. Regional Map of Paddle Trails & Water Access, as well as recreational and historic trails Project that will be in paper form, as well as digital and mobile.
4. Connecting Communities--Hot Spot/Wi-Fi Enhancement Implementation Project which will identify regional need with overlay of uses and assets and to complete the broadband project with the end-mile

5. “Clean Water, Clean Air, Clean Living”—Increasing Healthcare Providers in Northeastern North Carolina by addressing the lack of healthcare professionals and negative health indicators for regional populations—meet the demand for doctors/medical professionals.

6. Build Community Awareness of the Value of a Unified Region
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NEXT STEPS

• Meeting with organizations that can add value to the process
• Educating our Counties and Towns on the Action Plan and Progress
• Grant Writing to support the action plan
• Work Group Meetings to clarify action plan and to collaborate with the workshop participants

• The model Northeastern North Carolina's Balancing Nature and Commerce project is utilizing: PA Wilds
Are there any questions?
Thank you!

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