

# Old News

Circa 2002

The Latest from Outer Banks Conservationists

Keepers of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse

## THE CURRITUCK BEACH LIGHTHOUSE CONTROVERSY

The story is true and it smacks of political injustice: Twenty years ago, a group of young, idealistic volunteers joined together with the dream of saving the abandoned Currituck Beach Lighthouse compound. They named themselves Outer Banks Conservationists (OBC) and set to work.

At that time the buildings had fallen into such disrepair that Currituck County officials asked the state to destroy the buildings. OBC felt that the compound was too important to lose and fought for the right to protect it. Their tenacity and enthusiasm paid off and the group was able to obtain a lease to the property. Because funds were extremely scarce in the beginning, the volunteers spent their own money and put their blood, sweat and tears into the restoration effort, working weekends and recruiting help from family and friends. Over the next 20 years, the group learned the restoration ropes, raised nearly \$4 million in private funds and transformed the

In 1978 when asked what to do with the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Compound . . .



The 'Keepers' Quarters' before renovations by Outer Banks Conservationists

Currituck County commissioners answered: "demolish the buildings!" — **but they were stopped.**

Outer Banks Conservationists answered: "let us restore them, care for them" — **and they did.**

In 2002 when the federal government asked who should get the Currituck Beach Lighthouse . . .



The 'Keepers' Quarters' and Currituck Beach Lighthouse fully renovated by Outer Banks Conservationists

Currituck County commissioners answered: "we should own it!"

Outer Banks Conservationists answered: "let us continue to care for it as we have since 1980."

**Question:** Is it obvious to the federal government who should care for the Currituck Beach Lighthouse ?

**Answer:** No

**Question:** Is it obvious to you?

Currituck Beach Light Station into a beautiful historic site visited by almost a hundred thousand people a year.

Now jump to present day. The federal government, through a new program, moves to turn ownership of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse over to a worthy caretaker. It would seem natural

that the group, OBC, who originally had the vision to save the lighthouse, would be given the title to the property. But amazingly Currituck County government, the group that originally wanted the state to demolish the historic buildings, moves to take ownership of the site. Currituck

*Continued on page 4*

# Timeline of OBC's Restoration Work at the Lighthouse

## 1978

The site, long since abandoned in 1939, is in disrepair. The main keeper's house (c. 1876) stands without windows or doors, open to vandals and the storms of the Outer Banks. The little keeper's dwelling (c. 1919-20) is so completely entwined with briars that it is not visible. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, at the request of county government, was asked to burn it down. Fortunately, this is not a high priority, perhaps because of their remote location.



*The main Keepers' house in 1979 before restoration.*

- repaired, reglazed, painted and secured all tower windows.
- began dehumidifying the tower.
- installed five interpretive exhibit panels.
- installed anemometer to monitor safe conditions for gallery access.

## 1991-92

More work is done to the lighthouse:

- scaffolded gallery and bracket areas for inspection and repairs.
- began lead paint removal with a needle gun.

- painted gallery areas, lantern exterior and conical roof and ventilator ball.
- micro-weld repairs to stair railings.
- original construction drawings are located at the National Archives.

## 1993-94

More work is done to the lighthouse:

- commissioned structural study.
- repainted interior, stripped and refinished work room floor and wainscoting.
- upgraded electric service.
- repaired masonry of chimney and tower.

- installed fence to keep visitors at a safe distance.

## 1994-95

More work is done to the lighthouse:

- painted stairs and railings with epoxy paint.
- repainted lower gallery deck and exterior tower wall.
- replaced wind speed generator
- cleaned marble floors and windowsills.

## 1980

The nonprofit Outer Banks Conservationists is formed to restore the site, with much to be done before more history is lost. Vandalized mantels and stolen stair railings must be restored, but first, missing windows and a leaking roof must be replaced. In the beginning there are few visitors and little money and progress is slow.



*The cistern after restoration.*

## 1983

The Stedman Incentive Grant provides \$1,500 to help restore one of the rain-water cisterns flanking the main keepers' house.

## 1990-91

Outer Banks Conservationists negotiates with the U.S. Coast Guard to open the lighthouse to the public. With assistance from the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, the little keeper's dwelling is stabilized and protected from the environment. Much work is also done to the lighthouse:

- painted the work rooms and hallway of the lighthouse.

## THE LITTLE KEEPERS HOUSE



**Before**



**After OBC's Renovation**

Less than 10 years ago during a meeting with Currituck county commissioners and state representatives about the public dock, a county commissioner suggested that "The Little Keepers House is beyond repair. It should be demolished and replaced with an indestructible concrete block building to house public toilets."

## 1995-96

The little keeper's dwelling is completely rehabilitated and opens as the site's museum shop. Work is also done to the lighthouse:

- replaced cedar shingle roof of work rooms and hallway.
- repainted interior, spot-painted gallery.

## 1996-97

More work is done to the lighthouse:

- installed reinforcing stair brackets.
- repainted work rooms.
- provided portable ramp for handicapped visitors.

## 1997-98

Stairways, including newly milled banisters, are restored in the main keepers' house. More work is done to the lighthouse:

- installed TV system to monitor visitors' safety.
- installed milled window shutters and bronze hardware.

## 1998-99

More work is done to the lighthouse:

- scaffolded for structural inspection of gallery brackets and belt course.
- developed architectural and structural work plan
- installed Bonisar collections of USLH artifacts for public viewing.

## 1999-2000

OBC holds a reunion for descendants of all former Currituck Beach Lighthouse keepers. Oral histories and old photographs are collected. Fees collected from lighthouse visitation help to finance a major restoration of the lighthouse:

- major iron and masonry repairs of gallery brackets, belt course, iron window frames, cornices, exterior door and railing, and lantern area.
- installed milled casement windows to match originals (replacing Plexiglas).



*Outer Banks Conservationists has also restored many artifacts associated with the lighthouse.*

- installed grills on casement windows to increase ventilation.
- repainted throughout the lighthouse.

- repainted hallway
- installed reproduction ladder for oil room
- recalibrated wind gauge.
- installed new TV monitoring system.
- repaired original Victorian bronze hinges.

## 2000-01

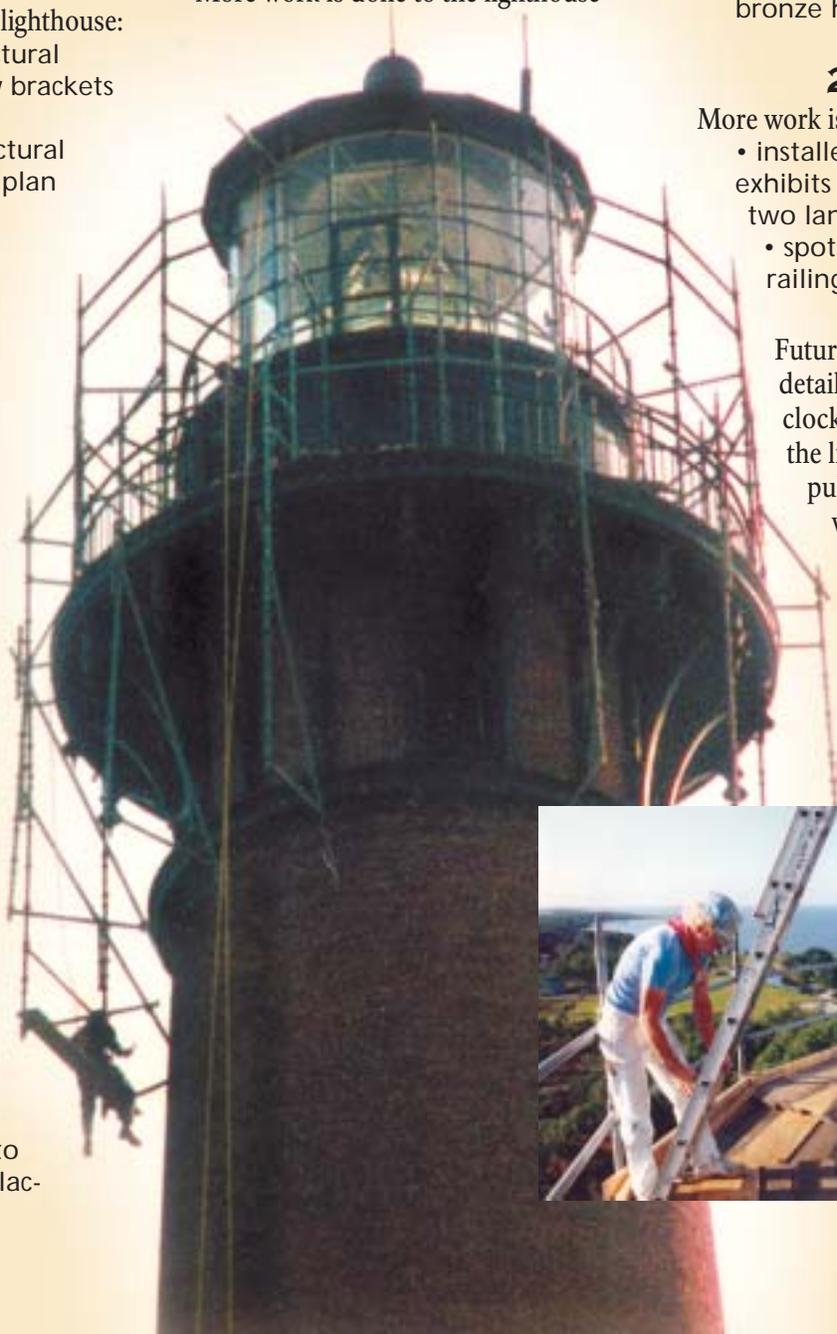
More work is done to the lighthouse

## 2001-02

More work is done to the lighthouse:

- installed new interpretive exhibits at tower base and on two landings.
- spot painted stairs and railings.

Future projects include a detailed restoration of the clockwork and lens areas of the lighthouse so that the public can view these as well. Outer Banks Conservationists is indebted to each visitor and contributor who makes "the preservation of place" possible.





Goodbye to Lighthouse Keeper  
Lloyd Childers

**L**n October Light Keeper Lloyd Childers will retire from the position she has held at Currituck Beach Lighthouse for five years. Lloyd came to Currituck Beach Lighthouse after working nearly 20 years in the position of grants administrator for the State Historic Preservation Office, during which time she managed the state lease to Outer Banks Conservationists. In 1997 Lloyd moved to Corolla to become the executive director/light keeper of OBC. Lloyd was actively involved with the continued restoration of the lighthouse compound and the Corolla Wild Horse Fund, Inc. She serves on the Board of Directors of Outer Banks Lighthouse Society and The Whalehead Preservation Trust and is a member of the Vestry of All Saints Episcopal Church in Southern Shores. She will retire to her home in Hampstead, North Carolina.

“Lloyd came to OBC at a time when her experience and passion for historic preservation were needed most. Her skills took the organization to a level of achievement and regard that I couldn’t have dreamed of when we were just setting out in 1980. She retires this fall as one of the most respected members of the nation’s nonprofit lighthouse community.”

**Bill Parker, Chairman, Outer Banks Conservationists**

“It is hard to imagine that anyone will be able to take her place. I will sorely miss her, but I wish her all the pleasures of a real retirement.”

**Pat Riley, Assistant Keeper, Currituck Beach Lighthouse**

“Lloyd has been a real inspiration to Donna and me and was always there when we needed her to be. Her heart is with the Corolla Wild Horse Fund and the wild horses she loves so much. It has been a pleasure working for and with Lloyd during our involvement with CWHF. Have a wonderful retirement Lloyd and Skip. We will miss you both dearly, you have been and will continue to be very treasured friends.”

**Gene and Donna Snow, Co-Directors of Corolla Wild Horse Fund**

“I have enjoyed my working relationship as well as my friendship with Lloyd.

She has a great talent in her working relationships with employees. Lloyd will be greatly missed by her staff and the Board of Directors.

**Melody Leckie, Finance Officer, Outer Banks Conservationists**

“I admire the way Lloyd has taken hold and done things down here. I think she has been terrific for this community.”

**Jo Runnells, Corolla resident**

“We’ll be sorry to see her [Lloyd] go because she’s done a good job at the lighthouse. I always liked the homecoming celebrations and the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the lighthouse. Those were nice.”

**Shirley Austin, Corolla resident and wife of former lighthouse keeper Gene Austin**

“Lloyd is the consummate professional. She leaves the lighthouse in excellent condition. I’m sure glad I don’t have to follow in her footsteps, because she was wonderful.”

**Doug Twiddy, Owner of Twiddy and Company Real Estate in Duck and Corolla**

*Continued from  
the front page*

County is competing directly against OBC for ownership through the federal program. Ironically, County government, which has never spent a dollar for the lighthouse may take the property from OBC.

If you, like many others, think this sounds unjust and unfair, you can help Outer Banks Conservationists by supporting their efforts to maintain stewardship of the Currituck Beach Light Station. There is a real possibility that the federal government will take the lighthouse from the hands of OBC and give it to the county government.

The first thing you can do to help OBC is to inform yourself about the issue at hand. Read on . . .

### **WHY WOULD THE Lighthouse CHANGE HANDS?**

At present, Outer Banks Conservationists does not own the lighthouse or its keepers’ buildings. OBC leases the 0.8-acre lighthouse site from the federal government and the 2.54 acres around it from the state. However, the federal government has declared the lighthouse surplus property and is giving it away in the winter of 2002. Only the 0.8-acre lighthouse site is being given away. OBC has a valid lease on the remaining 2.54 acres for another 28 years. Anyone can apply for ownership of the lighthouse, but so far only two entities are competing for ownership of the lighthouse, Outer Banks Conservationists and the local government of Currituck County.

Outer Banks Conservationists has partnered with the State of North Carolina on the lighthouse project for over 22 years, and the state will continue as a back-up steward if the site is given to OBC.

### **WHY SHOULD OBC OWN THE LIGHTHOUSE?**

Some people may think it doesn’t really matter who owns the lighthouse, as long it’s maintained and as long it remains a public site. But it absolutely does matter, as you will see.

# Here's the complete scoop on the controversy.

## OBC GETS THINGS DONE

Currituck Beach Lighthouse is the only lighthouse in North Carolina currently open to the public. Nearly 100,000 visitors climb the lighthouse every year, and, as always, OBC allows Currituck County residents to climb the lighthouse for free. Currituck County does not allow its residents to visit the Whalehead Club for free.

## WHAT ABOUT MONKEY ISLAND?

County government does not have a good track record with preservation projects. In 1988 U.S. Fish and Wildlife gave Monkey Island to Currituck County, which promised to restore and protect the island, its historic hunt-club complex and its historic artifacts from the Pamunkey Indian tribe. Currituck County said it wanted to build a wildlife and environmental education center on the island, and the county was given the island on the conditions that it would protect the island and build the center. County government never did anything with the island or its historic resources, which are now beyond repair. Due to the county's lack of motivation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife took Monkey Island back in 1998.

County government claims responsibility for restoring the Whalehead Club, but in fact the Whalehead Club was restored and is operated by the Whalehead Preservation Trust, another non-profit organization.

## OBC GETS THINGS DONE FOR LESS MONEY

Non-profit organizations have a track record of using their resources more efficiently, thereby doing things for less money. In 1999-2000, Outer Banks Conservationists used fees collected from lighthouse visitors to finance a major restoration of the Currituck Beach

Lighthouse ironwork. The restoration was accomplished at a cost of \$454,049. When Cape Hatteras Lighthouse underwent a similar restoration eight years earlier, in 1992, it cost the federal government \$946,380. As a non-profit organization, OBC is proud to have done the restoration work for 50 percent less than it cost the U.S. government.

## OBC USES PRIVATE FUNDS, NOT TAX MONEY

Since Outer Banks Conservationists was formed in 1980 it has spent more than \$1.5 million from private funds (no money from county, state or federal governments) restoring, maintaining and operating the lighthouse. OBC

raises money through lighthouse-climbing fees, private donations, a sponsorship program and grants. About 3,000 sponsors, or members, help fund Outer Banks Conservationists' projects.

## OBC USES ITS FUNDS FOR FURTHER CONSERVATION PROJECTS

All of OBC's funds are earmarked for conservation and preservation of place. Income is spent on further restoration of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse and its buildings and grounds, other Outer Banks restoration projects and local preservation projects. For instance, OBC established the Corolla Wild Horse Fund, spent nearly \$600,000 in the course of its life with OBC, and continues to support it now that it has gone out on its own. OBC supported an archaeological survey of Currituck Sound, an architectural survey of the Currituck Banks and currently supports the restoration of an old schoolhouse in Jarvisburg on the Currituck mainland (see related stories in this newsletter).

Ninety-two percent of the revenue generated by OBC in the past 20 years has gone to the benefit of projects in

Currituck County. OBC has supported many initiatives in Currituck County including Corolla Wild Horse Fund, Currituck Wildlife Museum, Corolla Fire and Rescue, Currituck Humane Society, Whalehead Preservation Trust, an architectural survey of Corolla, support of the restoration of the Old Jarvisburg Colored School and others. Some monies go to preservation projects in nearby Dare and Tyrrell counties as well. Where will Currituck County spend the lighthouse funds?

## HOW CAN YOU HELP OBC RETAIN THE CURRITUCK BEACH LIGHTHOUSE?

Shouldn't the lighthouse stay in the hands of the organization that put in the time, energy and money to save it?



If you want to help, go to [www.currituckbeachlight.com](http://www.currituckbeachlight.com)



On our website you can read more about the issue, sign the petition to keep OBC as lighthouse protectors, pass the word around to your friends and family, post comments to the website, and sign up to receive further information about this issue. Please do not delay: The applications are due in the fall of 2002, and time is of the essence. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact OBC directly about signing the petition or learning more about the issue.

A recently commissioned poll by OBC showed that Currituck County residents favor OBC as owners of the lighthouse two to one. However, the federal government will make the ultimate decision and no one knows what the final decision will be. Both entities are submitting applications, and ownership could go either way. It is critical that you do what you can to support OBC in retaining stewardship of this national historic landmark.

Currituck County residents favor OBC as owners of the lighthouse two to one.

The article below is reproduced directly from the September 2002 Issue of Lighthouse Digest.

# Lighthouse Digest

## Editorial Comment:

# The Future of a Lighthouse Hangs in the Balance

## County Government wants to take lighthouse from non-profit group that restored it

How would you feel if your non-profit group had worked for over 20 years to restore a lighthouse and then, just as success was at its peak, you found out that your state and local representatives wanted to take it away from you and give it to the county government to be part of a restored lavish hunting lodge/residence that has nothing to do with lighthouse history?

Most likely you would shout that this is a travesty and politics at its all time worst.

Well, it may very well happen with the Currituck Beach Lighthouse in North Carolina.

How can it happen you ask? The answer is simple.

The Currituck Beach Lighthouse was leased to the non-profit Outer Banks Conservationists who have spent the past 21 years restoring the tower, keeper's house and other buildings at the site. They have developed a gift shop, published an oral history of the lighthouse, and made what was once a light station in shambles, one of the premier restorations in the nation.

In 2001 the U.S. Coast Guard declared the Currituck Lighthouse excess property and it was made available for transfer of ownership by the General Services Administration under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000. This law gives equal footing to non-profits with other government agencies to apply for ownership of a lighthouse. However, although not written in the law, the spirit of the law really meant that a non-profit that had already worked to restore a lighthouse should be allowed to get ownership.

Now, along comes the local county government that says it wants to own the lighthouse, even though they had nothing to do with its restoration. In fact at the time the lighthouse restoration began when the keeper's house was falling in and the grounds were overgrown, they could have cared less about the lighthouse. Now that a

group of volunteers has spent 21 years restoring it, they want to take it over as an income-producing site and merge it into the adjoining park with a restored hunting lodge.

Worse yet, is that some North Carolina politicians support the county government. One of them, Currituck County Commissioner, Paul O'Neal, as quoted from a recent newspaper story said, "We're going to fight it politically, publicly and morally . . . We're going to combat them any way we can think of." What does he mean by MORALLY?

Is he insinuating that non-profits are immoral?

Then there's North Carolina Representative Bill Owens who says, "Non-profits are here today and gone tomorrow." Wake up Rep. Owens!!! *Politicians* are here today and gone tomorrow. What will happen to the lighthouse when the county government has a budget crisis? Will the lighthouse be closed? Will it fall into disrepair?

Will Rep. Owens volunteer his time to work at the lighthouse and maintain it? What do you think? The fact remains, non-profits are often in a more advantageous position to raise funds privately and accomplish repairs in a timely fashion than a financially strapped local government would be.

Consider some of the finest NON-PROFIT lighthouse restorations in the nation such as: Tybee Island, GA; Montauk, NY; Race Point, MA; Rose Island, RI; Seguir Island, ME; St. Augustine, FL; St. Helena, MI; Key West, FL; and the list goes on and on.

Or, how about George Washington's home, MT. VERNON, or Thomas Jefferson's home MONTICELLO, both of which are run by non-profits. Would he propose to throw out the non-profits that run these historic landmarks and many others around the nation and also turn them over to the local governments? Remember, the first tourist attraction in the United States was MT. VERNON, started and still run to this day by a non-profit.

### Signed by:

#### Cheryl Shelton Roberts

President Outer Banks Lighthouse Society

#### Tim Harrison

President - American Lighthouse Foundation

Editor - Lighthouse Digest Magazine

#### Gayle Haines

Past President Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society

Founding Member National Lighthouse Museum Board

Founder Lighthouse Safaris

#### Jim Gill USCG Ret.

President - Lightship Sailors Association

#### William Trotter

Past President American Lighthouse Historical Society &

Museum

Lighthouse Artist

#### Charlotte Johnson

Executive Director Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation

#### Anne Webster-Wallace

Past President Friends of Seguin Island

Director Island Institute's Maine Lights Program

#### Richard Moehl

President - Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association

#### Dave Lombardi

President - Dutch Island Lighthouse Society

#### Ron Foster

President - New England Lighthouse Lovers (NELL)

#### Dorothy Black

Co-Chair- Friends of Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse

#### Bob Trapani, Jr.

President-Delaware River & Bay Lighthouse Foundation

#### Bob & Sandra Shanklin

"The Lighthouse People"

#### Dale Treadway

Co-Chair - Avery Point Lighthouse Society

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Editor's note:  
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# Who Supports Outer Banks Conservationists?

## Balance



The Currituck Light Station might not exist today if it were not for the Outer Banks Conservationists. The Currituck Beach Lighthouse was there "today" and will be here "tomorrow" because of the Outer Banks Conservationists.

Applications are being submitted again for the ownership of Currituck Beach Lighthouse and will have been submitted by next month.

We, the undersigned, urge our readers to write letters of support for the Outer Banks Conservationists for ownership of Currituck Beach Lighthouse to the person who will make the difference. Write to: Gale Norton, Secretary of the Interior, 1849 C Street, Washington, DC 20240. Or contact her office by phone # 202-245-7000 or by e-mail at: gale\_norton@ios.doi.gov.

American lighthouse deserves the best and the Outer Banks Conservationist has fulfilled every need of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse Station. If the Currituck County commissioners had not spent 21 years restoring this lighthouse could a non-profit organization step in and take it away from them? Preposterous!

The lighthouse is transferred to the local Currituck County government will be nothing short of modern-day privateering with a difference from the U.S. government. What a discouraging precedent would be to non-profits all over America.

The U.S. Department of the Interior will make the right decision and give the lighthouse to the non-profit Outer Banks Conservationists. They saved it, they have kept it open to the public. They are the only fair and reasonable choice to become the owners. We can help. Send your letter, email or make that phone call.

Lighthouse Research

Cape Cod Chapter American Lighthouse Foundation

Author & historian

Feltner  
of Lighthouse Preservation Society

American Lighthouse Coordinating Committee  
Buffalo Lighthouse Association

Members  
Director Tybee Island Historical Society

Agglin  
East End Lighthouses, Inc.

There were many other people that wanted to be included in this list of signatures, but, because of space limitations could not be included here.

As the U.S. Coast Guard prepares to give away 300 of the nation's lighthouses, many eyes are watching what happens with Currituck Beach Lighthouse. This lighthouse was one of the first nine chosen to be given away because it is one of several that are now maintained and operated by non-profit organizations.

The transfer of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse is not just an Outer Banks issue. The preservation of this national historic landmark affects the whole nation, and people around the country have pledged their support for OBC.

## THE NC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL RESOURCES SUPPORTS OBC

"The Outer Banks Conservationists has done a magnificent job of renovating and maintaining the Currituck Lighthouse for the past 21 years. This group of talented, creative people took on the lighthouse project when no one else would touch it. The results of their work on the lighthouse and other similar projects have brought the Outer Banks Conservationists well-deserved national attention. We are delighted to be associated with the organization."

- Lisbeth C. Evans,  
Secretary of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources

"OBC, a private non-profit organization that works closely with our office, single-handedly rescued the lighthouse complex from the edge of oblivion and turned it into a preservation success story as well as an educational and tourism destination."

- Jeffrey Crow,  
State Historic Preservation Officer

## THE OUTER BANKS LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY SUPPORTS OBC

"Foremost, our concern is that each lighthouse be in the hands of a group that cares about the structure, its history, and preservation. Therefore, the OBLHS board of directors has voted to support the nonprofit Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc. (OBC) to continue as stewards of the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. Our public support for the OBC is based on their 21 years of work at the light station... They accomplished remarkable restoration without much support from government entities at a time when lighthouses were not considered worthy of public attention."

- Cheryl Shelton Roberts, co-founder of the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society in a November 2001 article in *Lighthouse Digest* magazine.

## The following organizations have drafted resolutions of support for OBC to gain ownership of the lighthouse:

- American Lighthouse Foundation
- United States Lighthouse Society
- St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum
- Outer Banks Lighthouse Society
- Montauk Historical Society of Montauk, New York
- Ponce De Leon Lighthouse Preservation Association
- Friends of Hunting Island State Park of St. Helena Island, South Carolina (Huntington Is. Lighthouse)
- Alaska Lighthouse Association of Douglas, Alaska
- Tybee Island Historical Society of Tybee Island, Georgia
- Friends of Doubling Point Lighthouse of Greenwich, Connecticut
- American Lighthouse Coordinating Committee of Derby, New York

# Who should the Currituck Beach Lighthouse go to?

The government?



*Bodie Island  
Lighthouse*

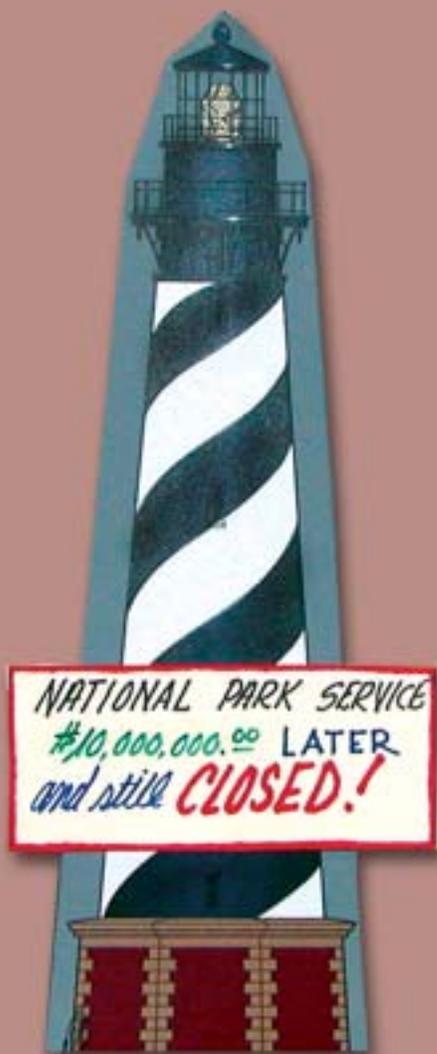


*Ocracoke  
Lighthouse*



*Cape Lookout  
Lighthouse*

Or to Outer Banks Conservationists,  
the non-profit organization  
that saved it and has kept  
it open all these years?



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
\$10,000,000.00 LATER  
and still **CLOSED!**

Cape Hatteras  
Lighthouse



**Welcome!**  
RESTORED BY A  
NON-PROFIT w/ **NO** TAX  
DOLLARS.

Currituck Beach  
Lighthouse

# OBC Aids Historic Projects in Currituck County

**A**lways looking out for ways to aid in historic preservation, Outer Banks Conservationists recently funded a couple of historic projects and research in Currituck County.

## CURRITUCK SOUND DISCOVERIES

In 2001, when Barbara Snowden of the Currituck County Historical Society was trying to raise \$10,000 for an archaeological survey of Currituck Sound, she had no trouble finding donors. Outer Banks Conservationists, East Carolina Bank, Currituck County, the Historical Society and East Carolina University all stepped up to fund the unique project, the likes of which has never been done before in this area.

The survey was a scientific, systematic study of Currituck Sound conducted by students and professors of maritime history at East Carolina University. Over the course of five weeks in the summer of 2001, the team

conducted a remote sensing survey and visual shoreline inspection in hopes of discovering historically significant vessels and artifacts on the sound bottom and shoreline.

For the study, Currituck Sound was divided up into 500 meter-square quadrants and the team randomly selected 60 quadrants to study in depth. They ran a side-scan sonar and megatometer over the quadrants and received printouts of any wood or metal that showed up on the sound bottom.

The team found numerous objects

on the sound bottom, including two airplanes, barges and two long timbers that may be part of a shipwreck. A detailed printout of each quadrant and what lies in it is available. Unfortunately, five pre-Civil War boats that reportedly lie on the bottom of Currituck Sound were not found, but the team was not discouraged because in this study they only covered about 3.5 percent of the sound.

Dr. Larry Babits and Wilson Snowden also conducted a visual survey of the west banks of the sound, systematically inspecting every inlet and opening. Babits found 12 prehistoric (Indian) sites that had not yet been recorded and also what appears at first glance to be an eighteenth-century homesite.

ECU graduate student Keith Wood is doing his master's thesis on this project and will have a detailed report available by next year.

"The survey was a success," said Snowden, who came up with the idea for the project and spearheaded the efforts to have it done. "It is the

first time a large body of water has been surveyed systematically and it gives us a better idea of our maritime culture."

Snowden says she hopes to bring the ECU team back to concentrate on the areas that revealed interesting objects, to conduct an archaeological dig at the possible homesite and to find those five boats that didn't turn up this time.

## OBC AIDS OLD JARVISBURG SCHOOL RESTORATION

Outer Banks Conservationists recently donated \$1,000 to help save a historic Currituck County schoolhouse that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

A group of Currituck County residents wants to restore the Old Jarvisburg Colored School, which possibly dates back to 1866. Restoration experts have found elements of the building that date it



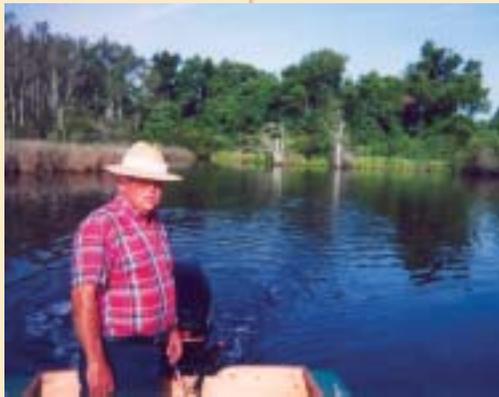
*OBC Chair, Bill Parker presents a check to Norma Williams for the Jarvisburg Colored School.*

to 1906. At this point, no one knows whether the school was remodeled extensively in 1906 or if it was rebuilt at that time. Either way, the structure has historical significance for black and white communities in Currituck County. The old schoolhouse served five generations of the county's black students before the county closed it in 1950s.

The schoolhouse is on the lower mainland and is owned by Corinth Baptist Church. The church's congregation has taken on the mission of raising funds for the restoration of the schoolhouse.

OBC helped fund the project because it fits in with its mission to preserve historic Outer Banks-region sites and heritage. OBC Chairman Bill Parker compared the restoration of the Old Jarvisburg Colored School to the restoration of the little keeper's house, which OBC completed in 1996.

For information about this project or to help with funding, call Norma Williams at (252) 453-8234. or send donations to PO Box 173 Barco, NC 27917.



*William Snowden in the Currituck Sound.*

## OBC SPONSORS ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES IN CURRITUCK AND DARE COUNTIES

As the Outer Banks landscape changes, the contrast between past and present is highly apparent. The modest dwellings of the quieter, simpler days often are juxtaposed with the million-dollar homes and shopping complexes of the modern era. With such a rapid transformation of cultures, the Outer Banks is in danger of forgetting its past.

As a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving the character of our past, Outer Banks Conservationists feels it is necessary to document these endangered local resources, especially the historic buildings that remain standing.

In conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources' State Historic Preservation Office, Outer Banks Conservationists has sponsored a survey of the historic buildings, structures and sites in Currituck and Dare counties, areas that are experiencing intense development. The survey specifically addresses structures located along the barrier islands between the Virginia border and Oregon Inlet, including Roanoke Island. The structures being documented are those constructed prior to 1950 that have little or no alteration from their original design, especially those retaining a strong sense of early character and reflecting their immediate original surroundings. These include Victorian houses, Craftsman bungalows, shingled beach cottages, concrete "flat top" houses, weatherboarded and concrete block commercial buildings, early hotels, hunt clubs, lifesaving stations, commemorative markers, nineteenth-century farmhouses and early twentieth-century schools.

To conduct this survey, Outer Banks Conservationists hired architectural historian Penne Smith Sandbeck. Other historians and the Outer Banks History

## Project Locations in Currituck County

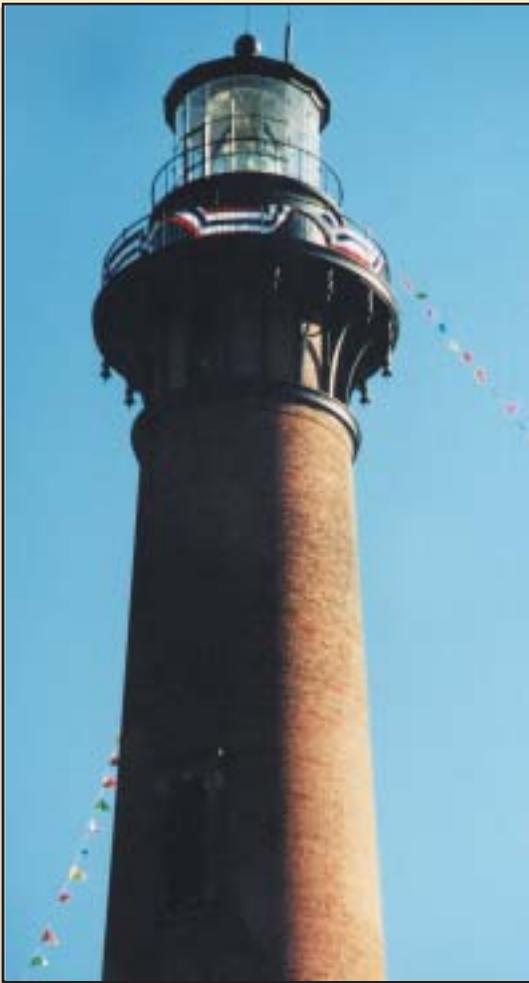


*92% of OBC's budget over the past 21 years has been spent on projects in Currituck County.*

Center are also involved in the project. Sandbeck and assistant Jennifer Martin did fieldwork between November 2001 and March 2002 and are now at work on compiling over 250 survey files, with photographs and fieldnotes, into a final, comprehensive document. The final document will be available to the public after October 2002 through the State Archives in Raleigh, the Currituck

County Library and the Outer Banks History Center.

The architectural survey of significant structures is an important step in preserving the past of the northern Outer Banks. As older buildings vanish to make way for new ones, it becomes essential to have an inventory of early Outer Banks structures.



## For Currituck County it's really about schools and taxes . . . read this.

In 1992, referring to the county's purchase of the Whalehead Club, "It's the biggest mistake the commissioners ever made," Gene Gregory said, "Any time you spend money on museums when we need schools, it's wrong."

— *Virginian Pilot*, November 4, 1992

In the April 12, 2002 meeting Gregory said that one percent of the county's occupancy tax, which equals \$1 million dollars could be used to support upkeep of the lighthouse. Commissioner O'Neal said that money is not a problem.

— *Outer Banks Sentinel*, April 14, 2002

Two months later when Currituck schools asked county commissioners for a \$570,000 budget increase, Commissioner O'Neal said, "For the time being school officials will have to make do with what they have . . . there are things we'd like to do in this county that we're not going to be able to do because of budget constraints."

— *Daily Advance*, June 1, 2002

### 4 ways you can help keep the Currituck Beach Lighthouse in the hands of the people.

- 1) Go to [www.currituckbeachlight.com](http://www.currituckbeachlight.com) and sign the online petition.
- 2) Talk with your friends and neighbors and make sure they are aware of what Currituck County is trying to do.
- 3) Call or write any elected official you know and ask them to support OBC.
- 4) Stay informed. This issue goes beyond historic preservation and could impact schools, your taxes and other county services.

**Outer Banks Conservationists, Inc.**  
Post Office Box 970, Manteo, NC 27954

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