



Cape Fear Firebird

The Light of Save the Cape

November 24, 2014

Make no small plans for they have no power to stir the soul.
~ Niccolò Machiavelli

From Megaport to Megapark

The lower Cape Fear region has a rich maritime history, beginning with the first European exploration by Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524 and the establishment by Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon of a settlement in 1526—long before Sir Walter Raleigh’s settlers landed at Roanoke Island and Jamestown and the Massachusetts Bay Colony were founded.

The natural history is equally remarkable. The Cape has a greater diversity of plant and animal species than any area along the East Coast north of Florida and the largest number of rare species in the State.

In 1955, the National Park Service identified the Cape Fear as an area needing protection, and in 1967 recommended National Monument status. Two years ago, Save the Cape investigated creation of a national seashore at the Cape.

Now we have a better plan, something we think is more feasible: a ***Cape Fear Maritime Heritage Area*** embracing 11 State reserves and the new State park we propose for the Ports Authority’s megaport site at Southport, and including about 20 historic places on the National Register. This would create a strong identity for tourism, more than the sum of its parts in conservation and recreation purpose.

We are preparing a prospectus.

