



Cape Fear Firebird

The Light of Save the Cape



March 25, 2013

Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out.
-James Bryant Conant

Turtle Talk

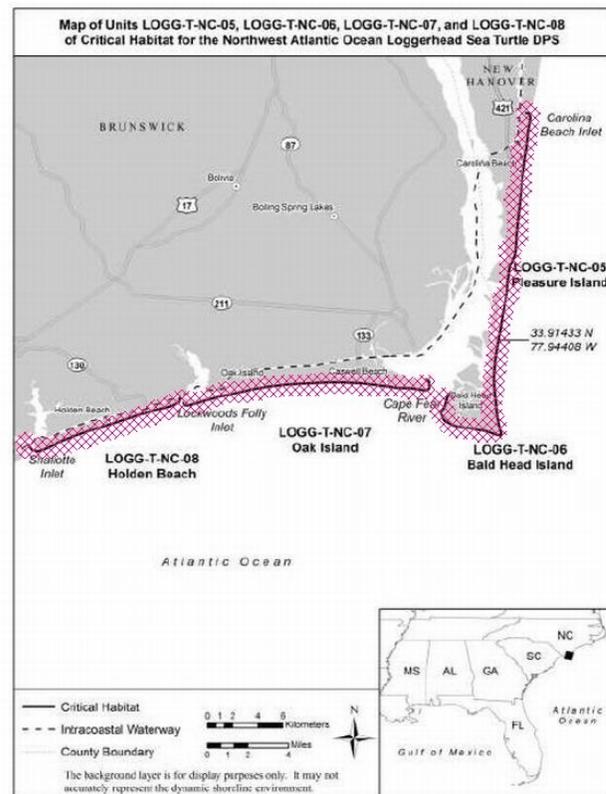
With some prodding from three non-profits, Oceana, Inc., the Center for Biological Diversity, and the Turtle Island Restoration Network, the US Fish & Wildlife Service has begun a procedure for designating critical habitat for the loggerhead turtle, an endangered species.

Endangered species are entitled to protection under the Endangered Species Act. Such protection involves protecting the habitat, of course, but there is always an issue of just what and where is that habitat. This action will locate the loggerhead turtle's habitat. The Fish & Wildlife Service says this about the action: "Critical habitat receives protection under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act requiring federal agencies to consult with the Service on federal actions that may affect critical habitat and by prohibiting federal agencies from carrying out, funding or authorizing the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat."

So this will shift the burden. It puts the onus on other Federal agencies and government and private entities seeking Federal permits in a critical habitat to satisfy the Fish & Wildlife Service that the habitat will not be destroyed or damaged.

The map at right shows how this will affect the Cape Fear. The critical habitat for loggerhead turtles would extend from Holden Beach all the way around the Cape Fear and up to Carolina Beach. Good news for those dedicated to protecting the sea turtle nests on our beaches. And for the rest of us, people as well as turtles.

The Fish & Wildlife Service seems a little timid about this. It took a lawsuit to move the project along, and even the current statements are rather apologetic; "We do not envision additional landowner use restrictions that will result from this critical habitat designation." And there is a project to examine the economic effects of the action.



So they need some support. There is a public comment period until May 24. Go here: <http://www.fws.gov/northflorida/SeaTurtles/seaturtle-info.htm>. Look at "Current Initiatives."