Vision for the Spruill Home Place Farm
June 2012
We are deeply committed to a perpetual conservation and low-impact access program for our family land on the south shore of Albemarle Sound. This land has very special meaning for us, well beyond its having been our Spruill “Home Place” since 1914. For all these years its farmers, their families and untold visitors have taken great pride in the diversified crops growing in its rich soil, savored the dusty smell of peanuts being harvested, reminisced and shaded under its pecan trees, marveled at its 100+ year old Scuppernong grape vine, picked figs from its prolific bushes, fished for White Perch or whatever would bite from its shores, waded and splashed in its shallow sound waters, been intimidated by the mystery of its wet swamp and been scolded by Osprey nesting in very old Bald Cypress trees growing in chest-deep sound waters.

These are experiences we want to share with the generations to come. We are deeply concerned about the fate of our natural world and recognize the value that reconnection with nature provides. To us, these 110 acres with 1,600 feet of sound shore are an amazing outdoor classroom—a place to understand our dependence on the land and waters and to preserve and inspire reverence for the wonders of nature.

There is a long tradition of sharing this land and the sound shore with visitors. We want to expand that access and classroom in a perpetual way. The following pages should help you understand why and what we are offering.

-Jack Spruill, September 2010
Statement of Purpose

This document is intended to demonstrate the value of this land in terms of its possibilities for restoration, public water access, and natural and cultural history education.

Our goal is to donate the land to an appropriate conservation owner. The land will be protected by a conservation easement which supports the uses described in the following pages. This conservation easement will be held by an independent trustee.

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History

The 110-acre ‘Home Place’ Farm has been owned by the Spruill family since the early 20th century. Ed and Martha Spruill (‘Big Papa’ and ‘Big Mama’) purchased the property in 1914, restored an existing farmhouse and continued prior crops of peanuts, corn, cotton, soybeans, wheat and tobacco. Their family and farm efforts expanded quickly, adding more buildings and a pear orchard to the busy operation. At various times during the last 100 years, the family also kept hogs and planted tomatoes, peppers, sweet potatoes, pecans and asparagus for additional income and sustenance. For several years during the 1920’s, the acreage along the sound was home to a fishing operation, where pound nets collected herring, shad, striped bass and white perch.

Potsherds and tomahawk points can occasionally be found along the shore of the property, which suggests pre-European settlement by the Algonquin tribes (Mequopen, Moratuc) who were known to live in adjacent areas.

During the early 20th century, the Farm was home to numerous tenant farmers, including the Nixon and Chesson families. Relics of these original homes can be found across the site. The original access to the sound shore within the Farm was a straight continuation of the farm road that is present today.

The Farm is bounded by ‘the Big Lead Ditch’ to the west, a swamp to the east, the Loop Road to the south and the Albemarle to the north. Several large ditches criss-cross the fields, hosting populations of numerous birds, crayfish, muskrat and even mink. At one time, herring were known to run up the Big Lead Ditch, and were harvested in large quantities with dip nets by the Spruill children. Approximately 12 acres of cypress-gum swamp support woodpeckers, great horned owls, deer, squirrels, foxes and the occasional black bear. Bald cypress mark the slow march of the shore, and are home to osprey and eagles.

Although the land has been continuously farmed since the Spruills first purchased the property, later generations gradually moved to other locations. Some of the original structures are gone, including a large barn and the original farmhouse, but the packhouse and a one-room school remain. The family cotton gin is still stored in the packhouse, along with other original early farming equipment. Presently, 78 acres are actively farmed with rotating crops. An enormous grape arbor and stand of prodigious figs, thought to be greater than 100 years old, mark the edges of the original farmyard.

In 1981, ownership of the Farm was transferred to Jack and Dian Spruill Williams, who recognized an opportunity to provide a place where the public could come to learn about the natural and cultural history of the south shore of the Albemarle.
Goals

Passive recreation, natural history education, cultural heritage interpretation, organic farming, research, and restoration are core components of our goals for the farm.

1. Restore pre-agricultural native habitat and dynamic edges by expanding existing natural systems.

2. Create a welcoming and safe place to learn.

3. Improve water quality and energy efficiency across site.

4. Provide public water access to Albemarle Sound.

5. Create opportunities for local employment.

“Progress does not have to be patented to be worthwhile. Progress can also be measured by our interactions with nature and its preservation. Can we teach children to look at a flower and see all the things it represents: beauty, the health of an ecosystem, and the potential for healing?” —Richard Louv, “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder”
Existing Conditions

Albemarle Sound

Map Key:
- Shore
- Cypress-gum swamp
- Restored hardwoods
- Bottomland forest
- Active crops
- Farmyard + structures
- Ditches
- Figs, grape arbor, pecan, + pear
Trees on the Farm

*Acer rubrum*  
*Albiza julibrissin*  
*Betula nigra*  
*Broussonetia papyrifera*  
*Carpinus caroliniana*  
*Carya illinoiensis*  
*Carya glabra*  
*Carya tomentosa*  
*Chamaecyparis thyoides*  
*Diospyros virginiana*  
*Fagus grandifolia*  
*Ficus carica*  
*Fraxinus caroliniana*  
*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*  
*Juniperus virginiana*  
*Liquidambar styraciflua*  
*Liriodendron tulipifera*  
*Magnolia grandiflora*  
*Melia azederach*  
*Morus rubra*  
*Nyssa aquatica*  
*Nyssa sylvatica*  
*Ilex opaca*  
*Pinus taeda*  
*Platanus occidentalis*  
*Populus heterophylla*  
*Prunus angustifolia*  
*Pyrus sp.*  
*Quercus alba*  
*Quercus falcata v. pagodifolia*  
*Quercus laurifolia*  
*Quercus michauxii*  
*Quercus nigra*  
*Quercus stellata*  
*Salix nigra*  
*Symplocos tinctoria*  
*Taxodium diusticum*  

Red Maple  
*Mimoso*  
*River Birch*  
*Otabeite, Paper Mulberry*  
*Ironwood*  
*Pecan*  
*Pignut Hickory*  
*Mockernut Hickory*  
*Atlantic White Cedar*  
*Persimmon*  
*American Beech*  
*Fig*  
*Carolina Ash*  
*Green Ash*  
*Eastern Redcedar*  
*Sweetgum*  
*Tulip Poplar*  
*Southern Magnolia*  
*Chinaberry*  
*Red Mulberry*  
*Swamp Tupelo*  
*Black Gum, Black Tupelo*  
*American Holly*  
*Loblolly Pine*  
*Sycamore*  
*Swamp Cottonwood*  
*Black Cherry*  
*Pear*  
*White Oak*  
*Cherrybark Oak*  
*Laurel Oak*  
*Swamp Chestnut Oak*  
*Water Oak*  
*Post Oak*  
*Black Willow*  
*Horsesugar*  
*Bald Cypress*  

*bold italic* - non-native  
*Bold* - planted
Other Vegetation on the Farm

- **Andropogon** sp.
- **Aralia spinosa**
- **Arundinaria tecta**
- **Baccharis halimifolia**
- **Berchemia scandens**
- **Borricchia frutescens**
- **Callicarpa americana**
- **Campsis radicans**
- **Carex spp.**
- **Chionanthus virginicus**
- **Clematis crispa**
- **Cornus spp.**
- **Datura stramonium**
- **Eupatoriadelphus fistulosus**
- **Eupatorium capillifolium**
- **Helianthus tuberosus**
- **Hibiscus moscheutos**
- **Iris virginica**
- **Lindera benzoin**
- **Myrica cerifera**
- **Osmunda cinnamomea**
- **Osmunda regalis**

**Bold italic** - non-native

* - planted

- **Devil’s Walking Stick**
- **Switchcane**
- **Silverling, Groundselbush**
- **Rattan-vine**
- **Sea Oxeye**
- **Beautyberry**
- **Trumpetvine**

- **Fringetree**
- **Swamp leatherflower**

- **Jimsonweed**
- **Joe-Pye Weed**
- **Dogfennel**
- **Jerusalem Artichoke**
- **Swamp Hibiscus**
- **Blue Flag**
- **Spicebush**
- **Wax Myrtle**
- **Cinnamon Fern**
- **Royal Fern**

- **Nuphar lutea**
- **Panicum spp.**
- **Parthenocissus cinquefolia**
- **Peltandra virginica**
- **Phoradendron leucocarpum**
- **Pontederia cordata**
- **Rhus copallina**
- **Rosa palustris**
- **Sambucus canadensis**
- **Saururus cernuus**
- **Smilax spp.**
- **Solanum carolinianum**
- **Toxicodendron radicans**
- **Urtica dioica**
- **Vaccinium spp.**
- **Vitis rotundifolia var.**

- **Spatterdock**
- **Virginia Creeper**
- **Arrowweed**
- **American Mistletoe**
- **Pickerelweed**
- **Winged Sumac**
- **Swamp rose**
- **Elderberry**
- **Lizardtail**

- **Horse Nettle**
- **Poison Ivy**
- **Stinging Nettle**
- **Blueberry, Huckleberry**
Soils Summary

According to a Natural Resource Conservation Service of North Carolina soil resource report, the site contains 5 soil types, which exhibit a range of drainage classes and compositions. Approximately 43 acres have a soil type that is labelled as ‘prime farmland.’ Approximately 67 acres are a soil type that is characterized as ‘farmland of statewide importance,’ which indicates a slightly lower agricultural value, due to slightly steeper slopes, or other possibly restrictive characteristics. Remaining site soils include poorly drained areas, or areas which could be considered ‘prime farmland’ if drained.

**AaA Altavista fine sandy loam**, 0-2 percent slopes. ~36 acres. This moderately well-drained soil is composed of sandy and loamy fluviomarine and/or other marine deposits, and is generally found in marine terraces. Depth to water table is approximately 18” - 30”. *Prime farmland.*

**DgA Dogue fine sandy loam**, 0-3 percent slopes. ~6 acres. This moderately well-drained soil is composed of loamy and clayey fluviomarine deposits, and is generally found on ridges of marine or stream terraces. Depth to water table is approximately 18” - 36”. *No designation.*

**Ro Roanoke loam**, ~24 acres. This poorly drained soil is composed of clayey marine and/or fluviomarine deposits, and is generally found in depressions or flats of marine or stream terraces. Depth to water table is approximately 0” - 12”. *Farmland of statewide importance.*

**Wa Wahee fine sandy loam**, ~43 acres. This somewhat poorly drained soil is composed of clayey fluviomarine deposits, and is generally found in flats of stream or marine terraces. Depth to water table is approximately 6” - 18”. *Farmland of statewide importance.*

**WkB Wickham loamy sand**, 0-4 percent slopes. ~1 acre. This well-drained soil is composed of old loamy alluvium derived from igneous and metamorphic rock, and is generally on stream terraces. Depth to water table is more than 80”. *Prime farmland.*
There are only 2 public access points directly on the Albemarle Sound, the largest freshwater sound in North America.

- Spruill Home Place Farm
- Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) boat access
- Roanoke River Partners camp platform
- NC paddle trail access
- WRC public fishing access - none

*map information from One NC Naturally Conservation Planning Tool*
Connections - conservation lands

- Spruill Home Place Farm
- Open Space and Conservation Lands - conservation land easements and ownership

*map information from One NC Naturally Conservation Planning Tool*
## Intensity of Potential Uses

We envision that the Farm could support a variety of uses.

### Low (passive)

- **Site improvements**
  - habitat restoration
  - living shoreline
  - invasive plant eradication
  - water quality improvements

- **Activities**
  - day-hiking
  - birdwatching
  - paddling
  - shore fishing
  - cultural history talks
  - native plant study

- **Site facilities**
  - wayfinding + usage signage
  - parking
  - public access road/path
  - trails/benches/elevated walk
  - canoe/kayak launch
  - fishing pier
  - interpretive signage

- **Site management**
  - trail + structure maintenance
  - garbage/recycling collection
  - hours/security

### Moderate

- **Site improvements**
  - none

- **Activities**
  - overnight camping
  - environmental education (instructor-led)
  - archaeology

- **Site facilities**
  - toilet (composting/other)
  - potable water supply
  - campsites
  - picnic shelter/tables
  - view blind(s)
  - storage shed(s)
  - outdoor classroom

- **Site management**
  - additional facility housekeeping

### High (active)

- **Site improvements**
  - herring fishery restoration
  - model farm
  - renewable energy generation

- **Activities**
  - cultural history education demonstrations
  - living farm
  - fishery energy production (past + future)

- **Site facilities**
  - renovated/relocated farm structures + equipment
  - ADA accessibility

- **Site management**
  - additional facility housekeeping

- **Staff**
  - volunteer
  - part-time/full-time
Possible Uses Diagram

Sea level rise and changing shoreline - this site offers an experiment in progress, with both bulkhead and natural shoreline.

Topography and soil patterns indicate cross-site surface water movement.

This property edge was originally wooded. There is a story that a mink was trapped here...

Natural surface parking with directional signage

Connect off-site drainage

The packhouse and farmyard contain original equipment that could be used for demonstrations

Existing crop fields could be used for educational organic farming, with demonstration Best Management Practices

Natural surface campsites and a camping platform

Natural surface trails and low boardwalks, with low-key interpretive signage

Natural surface plots of research

Natural surface trails and low boardwalks, with low-key interpretive signage

Albemarle Sound

Shore research

Public access

Camping

Research plots

Demo BMPs

Heritage farm

Farmyard + structures

+/- 24 acres

Access from Spruill Loop Rd.

500 feet
Regional Outdoor Educational Facilities

The Home Place Farm would be located centrally among a number of Washington, Tyrrell, Martin and Bertie County attractions. The site would be unique amongst these places in that it could offer public sound shore access, undisturbed cypress-gum swamp exploration, active farming, research opportunities and restoration in one compact, easily accessible location within 15 miles of 4 public schools.

1  Palmetto Peartree Preserve
10,000 acres, Tyrrell Co., offers birding, wildlife observation, hiking, biking, primitive camping, horseback riding, paddling, & fishing.

2  Pettigrew State Park
5,300 acres + 16,600 water acres, Tyrrell & Washington Cos., offers biking, boating, family & primitive camping, fishing, picnicking, and ranger-led educational programs.

3  Somerset Place
31 acres, part of Pettigrew State Park, Washington Co., offers original and reconstructed historic plantation structures, archaeological excavations, visitors center, trails, ADA-accessible trails, restrooms, & educational programs.

4  Walter B. Jones Center for the Sounds & Scuppernong River Interpretive Trail
Tyrrell Co., offers a visitors center, restrooms, wildlife observation, birding, fishing, canoeing & kayaking, hiking, scenic overlooks, picnic shelter, & historic features.

5  Roanoke/Cashie River Center
Bertie Co., offers a visitors center, boat ramp, riverfront boardwalk & canoe ramp, canoe/kayak rentals, outdoor amphitheater, educational programs, & restrooms.

6  Davenport Homestead
Washington Co., this private facility offers living history demonstrations related to 18th century farm life.

7  Roanoke River Lighthouse and Maritime Museum
Washington Co., downtown Plymouth, offers a museum for study of local maritime history, a restored lighthouse, riverfront boardwalk, educational programs, & restrooms.

8  Roanoke River Partners Camping Sites
Martin, Bertie,Washington and Tyrrell Co.s, RRP currently offers numerous creek and river camping sites in these counties. The process is underway to include Spruill Farm waterfront in this system. www.roanokeriverpartners.org
Goals in Detail

1. Restore pre-agricultural native habitat and dynamic edges by expanding existing natural systems.

Several acres of former farmland adjacent to the swamp have been replanted with red maple, sweetgum, cherrybark oak, water oak, laurel oak, persimmon and other transitional wetland / upland species.

Currently, the agricultural ditches that border and cross the property are minimally cut, and support a diverse community of herbaceous species. In some areas, it may be possible to restore these ditches to a more meandering form, and create stormwater wetlands to serve as farm runoff treatment, as well as habitat.

Habitat patches and corridors are important units of refuge, especially where there are opportunities to connect these units to a larger habitat system. The wooded areas at the southern corners of the property are a continuation of the 2nd growth woodland across Spruill Loop Road, and could be connected across the site to the cypress-gum swamp at the eastern border. Similarly, new habitat buffer plantings along the western border, also known as ‘the Big Lead Ditch,’’ could provide more habitat continuity between the sound shore and woods to the south.

The Spruill Family have vivid recollections of a thriving herring run along the sound shore of the property. The ‘Big Lead Ditch’ historically provided a source of herring and roe for resident families, and may provide an opportunity to study restoration possibilities. Spawning and nursery areas may also be a possibility within the cypress-gum swamp.

“Currently the Division of Marine Fisheries has expanded sampling to evaluate, protect, and enhance potential spawning and nursery areas, as well as assess blockages of historical spawning habitat throughout the Albemarle Sound and its tributaries. Spawning area surveys have already been conducted along Mackey’s Creek by NC Division of Marine Fisheries.” - North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
Goals in Detail

2. Create a welcoming and safe place to learn.

Convenient access from Hwys 32 and 64 make it simple for school buses and the general public to reach the site.

The best way to explore this site is on foot. Boardwalks through wet areas could connect habitats. An observation tower might be incorporated for canopy and sub-canopy viewing and interpretation.

Gathering areas and shady places to pause are desirable for educational programs and group use.

Identification of unique site features and historical uses with consistent signage and interpretation techniques enliven visitor experiences.

“There visiting wilderness areas is the most popular nature-based land activity (29.8 percent) in the state of North Carolina. Hiking is also a popular activity (29.7 percent), with almost a third of state residents indicating participation within the last year. Visiting a farm or agricultural setting continues to be a popular activity with just under a third of residents doing this within the last year.”

-North Carolina State Parks
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Education Plan,
NC Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2009-2013
Goals in Detail

3. Improve water quality and energy efficiency across site.

The site is surrounded by small-to medium-sized farms. Low areas along the perimeter and across the site accept drainage from agricultural fields and roads, and with some improvements, these areas could be used to demonstrate new methods of stormwater runoff treatment. These efforts will also contribute to habitat improvements.

Presently, farm ditches are straight, and are cut only in winter. They host a diverse array of native (and non-native) species. The fig trees receive no chemical fertilizers, insecticides or herbicides.

Exploration of agricultural best management practices, energy-efficient strategies and alternative energy sources is encouraged.

Part of improving water quality is reducing or eliminating use of pesticides and herbicides in agricultural practices. Here are some interesting ideas from ATTRA - National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service.

“Planting milkweed along a field margin supplies nectar and pollen for a wide range of beneficial insects that provide free pest control.”

-Rex Dufour, NSAIS

“U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher Dr. Glynn Tillman found that rows of sorghum planted between cotton and peanut fields will act as a trap crop for stinkbugs that migrate out of the peanuts during harvest.”

-Rex Dufour, NSAIS
Goals in Detail

4. Provide public water access to Albemarle Sound.

This site will provide a much-needed public water access directly to the Albemarle. Currently, there are only two places on the sound where there is direct public access: the waterfront of Edenton on Edenton Bay and the Palmetto Peartree Preserve in Tyrrell County. The Albemarle is the largest freshwater sound in the world. Eleven rivers flow directly into it. Many other rivers, countless creeks and swamps flow into these eleven rivers. Nine counties have direct frontage on the Sound.

Possibilities could include a kayak and canoe launch with portage route from Spruill Loop Road, enclosed swimming area, benches, picnic tables and a short pier for crabbing, fishing and nature activities. Some of these activities currently exist in a very informal way.
Goals in Detail
5. Create opportunities for local employment.

There are a number of ways that this site could provide local employment. Organic farming, facility maintenance, and educational instruction are conceivable, and other possibilities may include habitat and building restoration, research and cultural history presentations and events.

Bringing local students here to study will expose them to their own unique natural and cultural history, and will also introduce them to a variety of professions.

“Environmental education can provide hands-on environmental learning experiences that translate into job skills—whether or not this knowledge applies to a career in science. Charles O. Holliday Jr., chairman and former CEO of DuPont, declared that ‘an environmentally sustainable business is just good business, given the growing concern for environmental problems across America. A key component of an environmentally sustainable business is a highly educated work force, particularly involving environmental principles.’ —North Carolina Environmental Education Plan, orig. from No Child Left Inside initiative. Why is Environmental Education Important? http://www.cbf.org/site/
Expenses

Start-up costs may include:

Soft costs:
- topographic/vegetative surveys
- planning and design services
- landscape architecture, architecture, civil and structural

Hard costs:
- restoration - material and labor costs for plants, live stakes, seeding, installation
- stormwater management - grading, erosion control, slope stabilization, revegetation for disturbed areas
- roadbed preparation, parking lot (soft, pervious paving) - grading, erosion control, barriers/fences, and signage
- trail and campsite preparation - grading, surface preparation, edging
- general construction - structures such as:
  - boardwalks
  - docks
  - kayak/canoe launch
  - toilet facilities (composting)
  - picnic shelters/tables
  - storage sheds
- utilities:
  - septic/sewer (if plumbed)
  - electricity (renewable, on-site)
  - potable water/wells
- interpretive programming - educational signage, wayside exhibits, outdoor classroom areas
- operating equipment and supplies - MARKETING, garbage recycling containers, etc.

Operating expenses may include:

- Insurance
- Property taxes
- Ongoing marketing
- Garbage/recycling collection
- Vegetation control
- Electricity
- Sewer (if not septic/composting)
- General housekeeping
- Maintenance supplies
Thanks

A huge THANK YOU to the following people and groups, who were generous with their time and resources, and whose enthusiasm for this project is substantial:

Dian Spruill Williams, Jenny Spruill, Fiona Spruill and David Gallagher, Bob and Georgia Spruill, Ray and Helen Spruill, Marvin and Terri Spruill, Melissa Parnitzke, Doward Jones, Tom Stroud, Dr. Ellen Colodney, Tracy Woods, Mary-Margaret and Dwight McKinney, Dr. Suzanne Dorsey, David Emmerling, Cary and David Paynter, Todd Miller, Carolyn and Bob Hess, Cypress Group of the North Carolina Sierra Club, Friends of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, and the Washington County Waterway Commission.

References:

Web sources for images, content, and map information:
- Albemarle Resource Conservation & Development Council
- The Conservation Fund
- Conservation Trust for North Carolina
- EPA.gov
- Go Wild Washington County
- Natural Resource Conservation Service, Web Soils Survey
- Nicolette and Mark Cagle, Duke University
- North Carolina Botanical Garden
- North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
- North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
- North Carolina Division of Coastal Management
- North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- North Carolina Office of Environmental Education
- North Carolina Public Access Foundation
- North Carolina Sea Grant
- North Carolina State University, Watershed Education Community Outreach
- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- One NC Naturally
- Partnership for the Sounds
- Red Wolf Coalition
- Roanoke River Partners
- Tar-Pamlico River Foundation
- Washington County, NC
- Washington County Soil and Water Conservation
- United States Geological Service
- Virginia State Parks

Print sources:
Golden Pond

Did you ever stroll
Along the old sound shore,
And marvel at the scene
That’s yours to adore?

Did you ever sit
In the chilling breeze,
And lose yourself in quietness
Just thinking what you please?

Did you ever hear
The north wind sigh
And watch an opal soar
While hunting way up high?

Did you ever watch the water
Rolling gently over the sand,
And witness natural beauty
Undisturbed by man?

Did you ever see a mullet jump
Like a dancing ballet,
And wonder if he was feeding
Or just his style of play?

Everyone needs a Golden Pond
Amid the worldly noise and din,
Where he can witness the beauty of nature
And life makes sense again.

Marvin Spruill, December 2007
Appendix A - Property Information

Parcel Information

The Spruill Home Place Farm as described in this document is located on Spruill Loop Road, NC State Road 1318, Roper, NC 27970

It is composed of 3 parcels, listed below:

PIN numbers:  
- Jack’s lot 7810.00 -76-6229
- Main farm 7810.00-74-1399
- Former hog lot 7810.00-62-4779

Washington County, NC
PROPERTY MAP

[Diagram showing parcel information]
Appendix B
A resource for Washington County

The goals for Spruill Home Place Farm support and enhance Washington County’s ‘Go Wild’ program, which promotes eco- and heritage tourism.

A few excerpts from Washington County’s government website

“The Ideal Habitat for a Wide Variety of Species.

Washington County, North Carolina is a locale of unparalleled natural beauty, where thousands of acres of pristine forest and miles of shoreline and low country streams provide sanctuary for a breathtaking variety of species. Most are native to our area, but one in particular has been migrating here in ever-increasing numbers — the legendary Relocatus Executivus. Explore our site to learn why — for red-winged blackbirds and wing-tipped tycoons alike — Washington County is The Natural Choice.”

“Water and wildlife are among the county’s most valuable assets. Recreational and scenic waterways, natural lakes and old growth forests support a rich diversity of wildlife as well as a thriving outdoor recreation industry. Thanks to these natural resources and our many historical landmarks, Washington County has become a popular destination for eco- and heritage tourism.”

“Washington County is a natural for businesses centered on historical and nature-based tourism. After all, tourism is a $10 billion+ industry in North Carolina, with much of that spending occurring in the coastal counties. And studies show that visitors to historic or cultural attractions tend to spend more money and stay longer than other types of travelers. Washington County is home to a Civil War-era plantation, and in fact, has a rich Civil War heritage, with four sites that are part of the three-state Civil War Trails. The towns and back roads of the county are dotted with numerous historic sites, many dating to pre-colonial times. The spectacular natural resources of the county — including the Albemarle Sound, the Roanoke River and abundant wildlife — draw visitors to eco-tourism, water recreation, and hunting and fishing pursuits. As the “Main Street” of Washington County and the primary route funneling visitors to North Carolina’s Outer Banks, U.S. Highway 64 offers tremendous potential for tourism development as well.”

“According to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment results for North Carolina, participation in passive outdoor recreation has increased substantially from 1995 to 2006. Educational/viewing activities have increased by 43.4%. Fishing has increased by 66%, and outdoor adventure activities have increased by 87.5%.

And, according to the NC Department of Commerce, in a 2007 study, over 50% of visitor activities in North Carolina include passive outdoor recreation, such as rural sightseeing, beach visits, state/national park visits, wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking and backpacking, nature travel/ecotourism, and camping.”

-North Carolina State Parks, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, section I-13