

## **Methodology**

A professional Reconnaissance Team visited Currituck County, North Carolina at the request of the Currituck County Department of Travel and Tourism. The dates of site visitation were June 8 through June 14, 2007.

The goal of the Reconnaissance Team was to experience the Currituck County area from the eyes of the visitor. Therefore, the team made all of its schedules and arrangements using the tourism marketing materials made available by the Currituck County Office of Travel and Tourism, the State of North Carolina's state visitor guide, materials found at the State of North Carolina's various welcome centers and the Currituck County Office of Travel and Tourism. Attractions listed in these materials were located and visited. The team also explored restaurants, shopping and lodging where possible. The area was seen in excellent conditions, and over a good period of time including winter, spring, and summer.

Dr. Larry Gustke, Ph.D., N.C. State University developed the professional method of selection, evaluation and analysis used in this process. The report does not follow any chronological order since we visited many areas more than once and tried to enter and exit the area from all of the possible routes used by visitors. It is important to note that Currituck County encompasses 261 square miles of land area, and contains the sixteen (16) sizeable communities of Coinjock, Currituck, Moyock, Grandy, Jarvisburg, Maple, Point Harbor, Powell's Point, Harbinger, Barco, Poplar Branch, Corolla, Knotts Island, Corova, Aydlett and Shawboro. The following is a documentation of the Reconnaissance Team's findings.

This reconnaissance report is the first step in a comprehensive market research and analysis. Thus, while conducting this research, great care was given to examine the attractions and amenities within the destination area for market potential among all segments. The RTM team made every effort to locate all of the key attractions, lodging, dining, shopping and activities of interest to the traveling public.

## **Summary of Currituck County Reconnaissance**

Currituck County is located in the northeastern most part of North Carolina and is divided into two sections, the mainland and the coast. The two sections are divided by a small section of Dare County to the south, and the Intercoastal Waterway to the west. The coastal area of Currituck is comprised of Corolla, Corolla Light, Knotts Island and the beach community of Corova, with Corolla being the main center of commerce. The mainland area consists of a chain of cities along Highway 158, which splits off and continues on Highway 168 up to the Virginia border. The vast majority of lodging is rental houses with almost 3,000 units available in Currituck County. In addition to the large number of rental houses, there are approximately 200 hotel/motel rooms and two bed and breakfast inns in Currituck County. There is a good variety, but not an abundance of restaurants in Currituck County. There are numerous outdoor activities for children and adults to participate in for little or no cost. While Currituck County does not attract a large number of business travelers, it is a popular vacation destination as well as a popular stop as part of a longer trip. Thus, the customer segments primarily served in Currituck County include:

- **Sports, Hunting/Fishing, Wildlife:** With the abundance of wildlife refugees in the area, and close proximity to large bodies of water, Currituck County is a popular destination for hunting, fishing, sports, and wildlife.
- **Passers Through:** Highways 158 and 168 offer visitors either traveling through or to the coastal area an assortment of appealing shops, fresh produce markets, and restaurants.
- **Family Reunions/Gatherings:** The Currituck County coastal area is popular for large groups/families with many rentals accommodating 14 guests or more.
- **Leisure:** The majority of visitors to Currituck County are leisure travelers. With the large number of rental properties and scenic, peaceful beaches, Currituck County provides an ideal beach vacation setting.

RTM examined Currituck County in light of these market segments. We investigated amenities such as lodging, unique local dining, shopping, attractions, outdoor activities, meeting and event facilities, and business travel needs. We looked at how easily the typical traveler finds visitor information. Simply put, we looked at how well Currituck County facilitates travel for visitors. We examined closely the barriers between the typical traveler and local cash registers. We looked for ways to improve visit facilitation and how to assist travelers in “finding the good stuff” that will result in longer stays and greater spending. Our critical assessment of Currituck County follows.

## **Overview of Currituck County**

Currituck County is located in northeast North Carolina and is one of the original five ports of North Carolina. Currituck County, which was named for an Algonquin Indian term meaning, "The Land of the Wild Goose", was established in 1668 and is one of the original North Carolina counties as well as one of the five original ports for the state.

Beginning in the early 1880s, Currituck County became a popular destination for hunting and fishing because of the abundance of waterfowl and the relaxing way of life. Many wealthy businessmen frequented the area and established a number of hunting clubs that not only offered the wealthy a relaxing vacation, but also a livelihood for many of the locals who worked for these clubs. Because of this popularity, the area is rich in heritage which is displayed proudly in Heritage Park located in Corolla.

As reported in the 2000 United States Census, Currituck County has a combined population of approximately 18,190. The township of Currituck is the county seat.

USA Today selected Corolla as one of the top 10 beaches in the nation and also dubbed the Currituck area beaches some of the "best undiscovered beaches on the East Coast".

Highways 158 and 168, which run north-south, are the primary gateway and travel routes through mainland Currituck County. Highway 12 is the main road for the coastal section of the county taking one through the Dare County communities of Southern Shores, Duck, and Sanderling before reaching Currituck County, and then finally Virginia. Taking any of these routes south will lead to the popular Outer Bank destinations of Kitty Hawk, Kill Devil Hills and Nags Head.

## **Gateways, Signage and Wayfinding**

The ancient Egyptians understood the importance of gateways. Nomadic travelers emerged from the desert and found huge avenues lined on both sides by massive golden Sphinxes leading them to huge, gated entrances into the walled cities. It was impossible to arrive at the ancient Egyptian cities without having a sense of awe at the city before you.

Most cities in modern America have lost the sense of importance for gateways. This is perhaps due to the fact that most cities in America have grown in a concentric pattern with growth coming on the outer rings of the city. Thus what happens over time is that the traveler basically arrives at the “back door” prior to seeing the more impressive areas of the destination. An effective gateway announces to the traveler that they have arrived in an area and provides a sense of place. Similarly, directions to visitor information, wayfinding and signage are critical elements in assisting travelers and making them feel welcomed. Effective attention to these elements can result in longer guest stays and better conversion, thus greater economic impact.

### **Overall Gateway Analysis for Currituck County**

Overall, Currituck County has failed in creating a memorable gateway into the county at the Virginia state line, but has done an adequate job of providing an effective gateway into the coastal area of the county.

One is welcomed to the coastal section of Currituck County by a lovely and very visible landscaped sign located on the left of Highway 12 as one enters from the Town of Duck. The sign is well lit to allow visitors arriving at night the same pleasurable welcome. There is a small directional plaque to the visitor center attached to the sign. We also noticed that there is no sign informing that one has left Currituck County, heading back towards the mainland through Duck.

The more serious gateway failure is on the mainland entering from Virginia, where one finds the only indication of entering Currituck County to be a small green DOT sign. This is considered a failure since such a large proportion of visitors to Currituck County arrive from this direction. A visible, well-lit and well-landscaped sign should be placed to inform visitors that they have entered Currituck County. This would also be the perfect location for a visitor center since it is a main artery running from the north into the Currituck area and would allow more exposure for the large number of mainland retail, dining, and attraction stops along the path to the beach. As mentioned further in this report, one must travel as far south as Morris Market to find *anything* that promotes amenities in Currituck County. This is a disservice to all those located on the upper mainland.

We did later learn that there are outdoor information racks located at the Border Station at the state line with Virginia, and another one at Grandy Farm Market in addition to the

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one we found at Morris Market. According to staff these racks must be replenished frequently indicating a good pick up rate for the information.

**Primary Routes into Destination**

**Highway 168 (traveling south from Virginia)**

One sees the “Welcome to North Carolina” signs and only a small standard green DOT sign indicating the county line when driving into Currituck County. There is no state welcome center nor is there a Currituck County welcome center. One continues to drive until arriving shortly in Moyock. This would be an ideal location for a visitor information center as there are many cash registers to be found traveling south on Highways 168 and 158. Without a visitor center to help travelers be aware of these cash registers, it is solely up to the business proprietors to lure travelers off the highway. Our team is confident that a visitor center at this primary point of entry would be beneficial to the mainland areas as well as the beach areas. Traveling south along this route, the first opportunity our team found to pick up visitor information is at Morris Market. When investigating this, the cash register attendant at Morris Market reported she estimated that less than 3% of all their customers find and pick up the Currituck County visitor information. Thus, travelers are well into Currituck County before they encounter any viable visitor information. *NOTE: There are a total of three information racks on the mainland.*

**Highway 158 (traveling north from Dare County)**

One enters Currituck County along this route midway across the Wright Memorial Bridge. A standard green DOT sign is located halfway across the bridge announcing that one is entering Currituck County and leaving Dare County. There is no other sign for visitors to help them locate visitor information.

**Historic Albemarle Highway Signs**

Approximately one-half mile from the Wright Memorial Bridge one finds a brown DOT sign indicating that Highway 158 is part of the “Historic Albemarle Highway.” The sign includes an icon of what appears to be a castle. There is no other information about this highway. One of our team happens to know about this historic trail and that this was a group of historic sites and places that was promoted in the 1980s and 1990s. We are unsure if this promotional program is still in existence. Are there any brochures or trail maps for this highway to be found? The CCDTT needs to include reference to this trail in its visitor guide in order to capitalize upon this heritage.

**Fly-in Routes: Norfolk Airport and Currituck Regional Airport**

Most of those who travel by air to Currituck County arrive via Norfolk International Airport.

One can also take a shuttle from Norfolk airport into Currituck County Regional Airport via Sea Air. This airline also serves other shuttle markets to Currituck County including Raleigh, Richmond, and several others. The airport also serves private planes as well. Our team visited Currituck County Regional Airport but found no visitor information visible.

**Signage and Wayfinding**

RTM evaluates signage and wayfinding in a destination to determine how easily typical travelers will be able to find their way around and to major facilities. Most destinations which have significant volume of visitors have learned to provide sufficient signage in order to help facilitate travel. That is sadly not the case for Currituck County. Signage is poor throughout the county. Our team found precious little signage that would be helpful in finding one's way from place to place.

This is a failure that costs local residents considerable revenues and tax relief. Local elected officials need to understand the connection between properly facilitating visits and increased economic impact. Appropriate signage that leads travelers to meeting places, dining, shopping and other service and product venues will undoubtedly result in greater spending. Research has documented repeatedly that if a traveler knows facilities such as shopping and dining areas are available they will stop and spend.

This one category is especially problematic for the mainland section of Currituck County. The issue of appropriate signage and wayfinding must be addressed and remedied if travel revenues and resulting tax relief on the mainland is to increase. Although the Currituck County Department of Travel and Tourism provides maps, one must visit the visitor center at the beach in order to find these maps. Thus, the traveler has already driven through the vast majority of the county *before* they can find a map.

## **Welcome/Visitor Centers**

Travel research shows many travelers orient themselves to an area they are visiting by beginning their trip at a welcome or visitor center. These information centers are usually funded by the state or local governments and are intended to provide travel and trip planning information for the traveling public. Staffing at these information centers is usually full-time, along with some part-time or volunteer assistance. Some local visitor centers are staffed entirely by volunteers. The traveler usually forms the all-important first impression of an area while they are in the visitor center. Visitor centers should be professionally staffed by friendly well informed people who enjoy using the brochures, maps and guides in stock to help the visitor plan their stay. A visitor center is a front-line sales agency that should proactively place visitors in lodging, dining, attractions and retail. This is the opportunity to make direct economic impact on an area. Thus, a visitor center should function as a true sales center for the area.

### **Aycock Brown Welcome Center (Dare County)**

The Aycock Brown Welcome Center is located at the junction of Highways 12 and 158. We found the center to be well maintained with clean bathrooms and a neat appearance. Upon entry, our team member was not immediately greeted but was acknowledged after a moment or two and asked if any help was needed. Our team member was helped by a staffer who was very friendly and knowledgeable about Dare County. When asked about Currituck County she mentioned only the Corolla Lighthouse and the Whalehead Club. She then directed our team member to their section of information on Currituck County which consisted of only a few attraction brochures.

### **Currituck Visitor Center in Corolla**

We mystery shopped the Corolla Visitor Center on several occasions during the course of this study.

Our first visit to the visitor center in Corolla left much to be desired. Arriving at the visitor center, our team member was not acknowledged by the attendant. We found another visitor already there looking through brochures who similarly was ignored. After a few minutes our team member approached the attendant and inquired about recommendations on where to stay or eat. The attendant pleasantly directed us back over to the brochures and suggested we look there for ourselves stating that "You can find everything there." This person was obviously busy with tasks that prevented her from paying attention to visitors. This is most unfortunate, and can only be rated a failure. We waited a few moments and noted that the other visitors eventually walked out with whatever brochures they had acquired. The attendant did not acknowledge their leaving or wish them a pleasant trip.

Our second visit yielded a different experience. This time our team member was greeted by a friendly attendant who greeted us upon arrival and offered to provide us with information. She immediately took out a map of the area and guided us through it circling a number of places to visit, eat and stay, all within Currituck County. She was

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enthusiastic, informative and charming. She inquired as to where we lived and made us feel welcomed. She made it a point to know that we had lodging and ensured that we knew about the various opportunities to spend money and engage in activities.

On our third visit, we found a middle-aged woman who also provided an excellent orientation. On this visit we were accompanied by an older teenager and we sent him in first. The staff person immediately greeted him and actively engaged him by asking what kind of activities he liked and then found outdoor recreation, parasailing and water activities that interested him. She also told him about the historic sites and worked to make them relative to his interests. We were particularly impressed when he asked about things to do in Dare County and she subtly re-directed him to things to see and do in Currituck County without ever saying anything negative about Dare County. She was clearly well-trained in selling the benefits of Currituck County! Her performance was outstanding. She also made sure he had lodging for the evening and offered a variety of suggestions for dining, shopping, etc.

Later during that same trip, our professionals revisited the center and encountered this same staff person. Again we were greeted immediately upon entry and engaged quickly in finding things of particular interest to our stated needs. She had performed so well on our earlier visit that we put her through a substantial number of test points and she responded beautifully each time. She made sure we had lodging. She tempted us with unique dining. She made certain we found out where the shopping was and told us about many unique places and items. Overall, she could not have done much better and we rate her enthusiastically A+.

## **Towns and Communities in Currituck County**

Currituck County has a total estimated 2006 population of approximately 23,770. There are over thirty-five (35) communities in the county, with the majority of residents living in the larger communities of Moyock, Knotts Island, Grandy, Powells Point and Corolla. Currituck County is located in northeastern North Carolina and is considered a sportsman's paradise. It was formed in 1668 and named for an Algonquin Indian term meaning Land of the Wild Goose.

The majority of the towns in the county are on what is considered to be the mainland, bordered by the North River to the west, Albemarle Sound to the south, and Currituck Sound to the east. Knotts Island and Corolla are located on the narrow peninsula that faces towards the Atlantic Ocean and is backed by the Currituck Sound.

Population estimates for some of the larger towns are listed below:

- **Moyock**- 4647, all rural
- **Grandy**- population 1,573
- **Corolla**- about 625 permanent residents, about 120 horses
- **Knotts Island**- about 2,245 permanent residents, home of abundant wildlife
- **Maple**- estimated residents: 514
- **Barco**- population 770
- **Jarvisburg**- population 667
- **Powells Point**- population 1,483
- **Coinjock**- population 623
- **Poplar Branch**- population 571

## **Attractions**

Typically we find attractions listed in tourism promotion materials in alphabetical order. This is done to be “politically correct” and to give all attractions equal attention. Unfortunately this is not in the best interest of the customer. The tourist wants to know the “attractors” or those things that are “must sees” while in the area. Other attractions are important to the visitor and should be identified but should be described accurately and in context. Also, it is critical to include accurate hours of operation, street addresses (rather than mailing addresses) and cost of admission. Any other charges, such as parking fees, should also be noted. A suggested amount of time required for a visit to a particular attraction is an excellent feature. If the attraction is targeted at children or perhaps more appropriate for adults, it is good to include this in the description. Also, if an attraction is not open on the weekend, the attraction should probably not be included. Weekends are the busiest time in tourism and if a particular attraction is not open on weekends those tourists who have misread the hours of operation and arrive to find a closed facility will be disappointed. Doing these things prevents customer frustration and helps the guest facilitate a visit.

Those attractions that achieve excellence usually offer:

- Excellent signage and wayfinding to the attraction.
- An orientation for each visitor to help them understand why the attraction is worthy of their time, what they will learn, see, do and/or experience and how best to spend their time at the attraction.
- Clean and accessible restrooms.
- Guided, narrated tours and interpretive experiences (or user-friendly self-guided materials). Incorporating the senses (visual, hearing, touch, smell, taste) is important in creating an interactive experience. Static “read the plaque and look at the artifact” type museums or attractions suffer complaints from today’s demanding tourism customer.
- Benches, chairs and other resting spots where a weary traveler can pause for a moment’s rest.
- Suggestions from the attraction for other things to see and do in the area as well as lodging and dining recommendations to better help the customer plan their visit.

During the reconnaissance, the team differentiates between attractors and attractions. Attractors are the events, facilities, and “things to see and do” that motivate people to buy an airplane ticket or get off the interstate and visit a place. Attractions are “things to see and do” that compliment or supplement the major reason or purpose for travelers to visit a place. We differentiate between these because of the importance they play in attracting visitors. Our observations and impressions focus on the value and pull power of attractors and attractions.

**Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge**

This refuge covers 8,138 acres and is located 1.2 miles from the North Carolina/Virginia State line. The refuge, along with the Knotts Island Causeway (North Carolina Route 615) provides observation points for many of the bird species present in the Back Bay and Currituck Sound area. The refuge is located on the peninsula which juts southward from Virginia into northern Currituck Sound. It is bound by the sound on the south and west and Back Creek on the northeast.

Upon entry into the refuge, one finds an interpretive kiosk indicating the location of an office and visitor center as well as the trails and observation places within the refuge.

Our team entered the office and visitor center. We found several other visitor parties looking to see what may be found at the refuge in the mid-morning time period. There were no staff attendants to greet us or to offer any interpretation. There were a few visual displays with photos. We noticed a sign indicating that an upcoming fly-fishing workshop was being offered. Basically, we and the other travel parties in the center were left to our own devices (as well as the print materials and displays) to figure out what to do and where to go. More effective interpretation, a listing of recent bird/wildlife sightings, and other engaging techniques would make this much more appealing.

We drove through the remainder of the refuge and found several interpretive stations. We particularly enjoyed the display at the **Charles Kuralt Trail** stop. Apparently, from reading the brochure, this is part of a trail of wildlife refuges located throughout eastern North Carolina. A brochure is available that identifies the location of each of the participating refuges. For naturalists and birders, this is an awesome trail product as it links ecosystems, wildlife, and overall flora and fauna of the region. We were pleased to find this trail listed in the CCDTT visitor guide and website.

Overall, Mackay National Wildlife Refuge appears to offer primary appeal to fishermen, hunters and avid naturalists who are willing and knowledgeable in locating wildlife and exploring nature. The lack of effective and engaging interpretation limits the appeal of this facility for the casual visitor, who could easily conclude that this was a long way to drive from the beach for very little “edu-tainment.”

**Currituck Sound Ferry**

This is a free ferry that runs from Currituck (the town) to Knotts Island. The ferry runs several times each day and has a schedule based on the time of year. We rode the ferry from Knotts Island to Currituck. The ferry is very smooth, the staff is professional, and the ferry ride lasted approximately 45 minutes. It is a nice way to get out onto the waterways as well as being a critically important means of transportation from one part of Currituck County to another. One forgets that riding a ferry is a unique experience for many visitors and this can be considered an attraction!

### **Currituck County Historic Courthouse and Old Jail**

This historic site is located just off of Highway 158 and conveniently adjacent to the Currituck Island Ferry facility making it easily located by travelers. Also, there is good signage along Highway 158. Thus, it is likely that travelers will be able to locate and visit this historic structure. Parking is also readily available. The Courthouse has some historical significance as it was used as a confederate recruiting center during the Civil War. However, when our team walked in to “tour” the building we found ourselves in what appeared to be an office setting. After wandering about briefly, a woman looked at us and asked “Can I help you?” She seemed surprised that we were stopping in to tour the building. This made us think that this building probably receives limited or very little visitation. We explained that we were looking at the Courthouse and she encouraged us to walk through and view the building. We were not offered or able to find any printed interpretation or displays.

The Old Jail is located next to this still-in-use historic courthouse. However, there is no access to the Old Jail because the building is deteriorating. One can view the exterior of the Old Jail from the adjacent walkway, but the building itself has been roped off for safety purposes. Additionally on the exterior grounds one finds a monument in honor of the confederate soldiers who died during the Civil War located in front of the jail.

While some visitors may be disappointed in the limited experience offered at this site, it is at the very least interesting viewing for those waiting to board the adjacent ferry from Currituck to Knotts Island. RTM recommends adding more interpretation for the courthouse building. Something perhaps on the exterior of the building that briefly interprets the history of the courthouse and its use today. This would result in approximately a five-minute visitor experience, again, most likely to be used by those waiting to board the ferry to Knotts Island.

### **Grave Digger**

This monster truck garage is home of the infamous Grave Digger Monster Truck, which is parked right on Highway 158. The facility has a small gift shop, named the Digger’s Dungeon, as well as a small stadium where visitors can watch the monster trucks crush cars from a small set of bleachers. Although the garage is roped off preventing visitors from touching the trucks, the doors are left open so that one may see the crew working on the various vehicles. This is a must see for any monster truck enthusiast as well as families with small children who would be impressed with the larger-than-life trucks. We noted several families with small children stopping during our visit.



### **Historic Jarvisburg Colored School**

Our team noted this listing in the CCDTT visitor guide. We found the school house while driving along Highway 158 and noted that it was still under construction and development as a heritage site. There was no access to the building or any visible interpretation at the time of our visit. We assume this is a work in progress that will have signage, parking, appropriate interpretation, etc. when complete. It would make a nice stop for those traveling along Highway 158 with heritage interest.

### **Maple Post Office**

Driving along Highway 158 our team noted the small and charming post office building in Maple. The building was so cute that we stopped to take a picture. Rural North Carolina at its best!

### **Intercoastal Waterway**

Currituck County is fortunate to have the famed Intercoastal Waterway coursing through the county. This provides a good opportunity for economic development in services and products for the watercrafts traveling this route. Our team visited several businesses and parks that are available to these water route travelers.

### **Veteran's Memorial Park**

This park is a tribute to American fighting men and women and celebrates the freedom of our nation. It is located in Coinjock directly on the Intercoastal Waterway. Our team noted that it is well-maintained and clean. It was a lovely setting for outdoor recreation on a warm summer afternoon. We can imagine that the travelers along the Intercoastal Waterway appreciate it as well.

### **Harbinger Lavender Farm**

It took us several attempts to finally locate this lavender farm. We actually drove past it several times without ever knowing we had arrived. The farm is actually just a small plot located next to a house. The only way we knew we were at the right place was a small sign in the front yard of the house. We looked around but found no shop or person with whom we could talk. Seeing as how the farm is difficult to find and offers little visitor appeal, we recommend removing this from the Currituck County list of attractions.

### **Heritage Park**

Heritage Park Education is a park setting that allows crabbing, fishing, and general leisure relaxing. It is scenic, inviting and comfortable. Also located on site are the Whalehead Club and the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife. Public restrooms are available and parking is plentiful. The Corolla Lighthouse and Historic Corolla Village are adjacent to Heritage Park.

### **Whalehead Club**

In 1922, Edwards Collings Knight, Jr. began to build an impressive home as a winter retreat for himself and his wife on Northern Outer Banks. The Knight's, who were both avid waterfowl hunters, found this location on the Currituck Sound to be ideal. This 21,000 square foot magnificent art nouveau structure with an Arts and Crafts style was the first home on the Outer Banks to have a basement, elevator and swimming pool. The "cottage" was completed in 1925 and named "Corolla Island".

Later named the Whalehead Club in 1940 by Ray T. Adams, the second owner leased the club to the United States coast Guard during World War II. After the war ended Mr. Adams used the home for entertaining guests and waterfowl enthusiasts. Currituck County purchased the Whalehead Club in 1992 in order to preserve its historic significance. In 1999, The Whalehead Preservation Trust was formed to direct a major restoration project of the structures and grounds.

One can soak in all of the history through a walking tour for \$7 with the aid of a listening device which tells the story of the famous structure. There are also guides available to escort groups through the house and interpret its history. They also offer a ghost tour of the property which we were unable to participate in due to timing. Currituck County has done a wonderful job of restoring and preserving the historic significance of the building.

We visited this site on a couple of different occasions and found the attendants to be consistently pleasant, helpful and enthusiastic. We enjoyed this historic site tour very much. During the course of this study we also were able to monitor the growth of several bird hatchlings on the roof of the house!

### **Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education**

As we entered the Education Center, we were greeted by a large stuffed black bear and an Outer Banks Center employee making wooden decoys by hand. We then toured the walk-through exhibit depicting the history and wildlife of the area including a tank filled with local fish and a display showing the progression of the fishing boat engine. A 10-minute film covers the history of waterfowl hunting and a good overview of the historic nature of the Currituck area. A small gift shop is located near the entrance/exit of the center. As with the Whalehead Club every employee we encountered was helpful, engaging and pleasant. They encouraged us to watch the film, asked if we need any help or recommendations, and answered our questions about the surrounding waterways, wildlife and activities. The staff at this park is clearly well-trained.

### **Historic Corolla Village**

The Historic Corolla Village contains the Currituck Beach Lighthouse, a BBQ restaurant, the Old Corolla Trading Company, the Corolla School House, Wild Horse Museum and a bookstore. The village is accessible from Heritage Park and from Highway 12. Although cars can fit down the narrow gravel roads, we recommend

parking at the Heritage Park and walking through the little village. It is a charming and delightful way to spend a leisure hour or two wandering through the buildings and shops. It is perfect for a beach vacation diversion. However, we were concerned during our reconnaissance, intercept interviews and observation that many visitors were not finding the more secluded parts of the village. In deeper conversation with these visitors they did not realize some parts of the village existed. Better signage and wayfinding can perhaps alleviate this unfortunate circumstance.

### **Currituck Beach Lighthouse**

First lit in 1875, the Currituck Beach Lighthouse is located in Heritage Park. This brick lighthouse is one of the few lighthouses in America to still have its original first-order Fresnel lens. This two hundred-fourteen (214) step lighthouse is still in use today from dusk until dawn. Some of our team members climbed the entire two hundred-fourteen (214) steps and were rewarded with an awe-inspiring view. The lighthouse is a treasure as are the other lighthouses along this part of the U.S. coastline. They are icons in the hearts of many travelers and each and every one should be considered an attractor and “must see”.

### **Corolla School House and Wild Horse Museum**

This classic, small one-room schoolhouse is located in Historic Corolla Village. During our first stop at the schoolhouse it was closed but we found a number of wooden horses outside. During a later stop we learned that these horses had been painted by children in a class held at this location every Tuesday from 11:00 to 2:00PM and that the museum closes daily at 4:00PM. Inside the museum one can tour the historic school house and learn more about the efforts to protect the wild horses of Corolla. It is a pleasant stop if only to see the painted horses! And, we imagine, it may be the only chance for many visitors to really learn about the unique, legendary wild horses of Currituck Island.

### **Corolla Chapel**

Built in 1885 and restored in 1987 this quaint little interdenominational chapel is located in Historic Corolla Village and holds services every Sunday at 10:00AM throughout the year. During the busy summer months (July and August) an additional 8:30AM service is added. Corolla Chapel is open weekdays with a varying schedule by appointment.

### **Corolla Grass Golf**

Corolla Grass Golf is the only miniature golf facility on the coastal section of Currituck County. We found it to be very crowded when we stopped by on a Tuesday during the summer season. It offers a new spin on the traditional miniature golf experience as the entire course is natural grass that has been shaped like a regular golf course green. This offers children a chance to play while giving the serious golfer a relaxing environment to work on their putting. It costs \$8 for those aged 9 and older, \$7 for those aged 4 to 8 and \$4 for children 3 and younger. Corolla Grass Golf is open from

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10:00AM to 10:00PM Monday through Saturday, and from 12:00 Noon to 10:00AM on Sundays.

### **Spa at Corolla**

The upscale Spa at Corolla had a soothing waterfall that is visible as soon as one enters. Here one finds all the expected spa amenities as well as a nice selection of jewelry, toiletries and other retail goodies for sale in the lobby. We found the prices to be comparable to other spas. The spa appeared to be a very popular destination when we visited. When we stopped by on a Tuesday, we found that the first available appointments were on Friday and there were only a few of those. This matches national trends that indicate that spas are very much appreciated by the traveling public. This spa is a nice addition to the traveler amenities found in the Corolla area.

### **Weeping Radish Brewery**

The first thing we noticed as we entered here was the pet goats that were kept in a pen in the front. After visiting with the goats, we entered and found the tasting room where all of the home-brewed beers and sodas can be sampled and purchased. We found an authentic Bavarian café inside that serves a good assortment of sausages and other authentic Bavarian dishes. We also saw a group of people filling up their cooler with some of the specialty beers with the anticipation of enjoying their selections in the nice weather on the beach. This brewery offers a unique setting and is a fun place to stop along the way to the beach to grab a bite to eat or purchase one-of-a-kind beverages.

### **Outer Banks Health and Racquet Club**

Located in the Kilmarlic Community off of Highway 158, the Outer Banks Health and Racquet Club has a pool, composite and hard tennis courts, a workout facility, and a baseball training area. The private club offers daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal memberships to their facilities. Daily memberships were a very reasonable \$20 per person and weekly family memberships were only \$125 and granted access to all of the facilities. They also had a tennis professional and offered baseball clinics and classes for those diehard baseball players.

### **Island Revolution Skate Park**

This skate park was located in the Corolla Light Town Center right in the middle of all of the shops and restaurants and is enclosed by a fifteen (15) foot high chain link fence. The park is open from 9:00AM to 8:00PM and costs \$10 for access for the entire day. Pads are available for rent for \$5 and are required for everyone that is 18 years of age and under. The park is supervised during hours of operation. Skate parks are quite popular and this facility makes a nice asset for families vacationing in the area.

### **Segway of the Outer Banks**

Segway of the Outer Banks is the only tour of its kind in Currituck and offers a

a two and one-half hour tour of Historic Corolla Village and the four hour tour of the Spanish Mustang Reserve on the unique Segway vehicles.

Prior to the tour, a thirty (30) minute Segway Certification Training course is required to ensure comfort and safety for all visitors. The training course is included in the tour time. In order to participate one must be within the ages of 13 to 60 and weigh between 100-260 pounds. The tours are very popular and when we stopped by on a Tuesday during the summer they were almost completely booked for the week.

**Back Country Outfitters**

Back Country Outfitters offers two types of tours. One is a four-wheel drive “off-road” excursion onto the northern part of the beach where a naturalist guide leads through beaches, dunes and sands while viewing wildlife including horses, birds and dolphins. Another tour features a unique kayak excursion beginning with a trip up Highway 12 onto the beaches (4-wheel “off-roading”) near the Virginia border where participants then launch kayaks and paddle back down the Currituck Sound. The tours fees are \$39 for adults, \$19.50 for children ages 4 to 11, and \$10 for children 3 and under.

**Bob’s Wild Horse Tour**

Bob’s Wild Horse Tour features guided four-wheel drive vehicles that travel out onto the beach section of Highway 12 and north into the beach community of Corova. The tour guide provides a brief history of the Corova area and a little of their own personal experiences while searching for the wild horses.

Our tour began around high tide, lasted approximately two (2) hours and was rather bumpy. We were forced onto the rough loose sand near and among the dunes since it was high tide and there was little beach for driving. However, we were lucky enough to see a pair of stallions run within feet of our vehicle as they sped off to fight. Viewing the pair of magnificent stallions more than made up for the bumpy ride we endured. Those who prefer a smoother ride might want to opt to tour the northern beaches during low tide when there is more beach to drive.

**Maple Park**

Maple Park is located about three (3) miles off of Highway 158 in the same complex as the Currituck Regional Airport. The park consists of a small area with a playground, limited playground equipment, a grassy area and a pond. Our team found this area of the park empty. Further down the road our team located a few people utilizing a small concrete skate park.

**Sound Park**

Sound Park is about 1.5 miles from the end of the Wright Memorial Bridge entering the mainland of Currituck County. The park is very poorly marked. The only sign for it is about 200 yards down the road once one has already made the turn to enter. The park is a haven for the young and young at heart as it has tennis courts, a playground, soccer goals, baseball fields, a paved walking path and volleyball courts. The park has plenty of parking and even has spaces for RVs and buses. We also noticed that the park has public boat access to the sound, one of the few public boat accesses we found.

**Richard A. Brindley Sports Complex**

The Richard A. Brindley Sports Center located at Corolla Light Resort Village includes the following indoor amenities to all guests: a state of the art fitness room, full size weight room, 25 meter three (3) lane indoor pool, twelve (12) person spa, racquetball and volleyball courts, locker rooms, two (2) indoor clay tennis courts (fee to reserve these courts), a gameroom and the Corolla Light Sportswear Gift Shop.

**Fishing, Boating, Water Activities**

Fishing, boating and water activities are abundantly available in Currituck County and throughout the Outer Banks. The close vicinity to both the sounds and the ocean make this a great spot to fish for a variety of aquatic wildlife. One can throw a line into the surf, take a small boat out into the sound, or even hire a charter boat to go as far out as the Gulf Stream for larger sport fish.

**Birding, wildlife watching and naturalist activities**

The beautiful wildlife and scenery of Currituck County has been attracting visitors since the first settlers arrived. With the large amount of protected land for wildlife, Currituck County is a wonderful place to come see nature uninterrupted.

**Lodging Property Meeting, Convention, Event Facilities**

**Hampton Inn**

The Hampton Inn has four (4) rooms for meeting space that can be set up to your preferences. The rooms can be combined into two larger rooms if desirable, each of which may comfortably fit around forty (40) people.

**Sanderling (Not in Currituck but very close)**

This facility has meeting capacity for 10 (ten) to one hundred (100) people and provides an executive suite which houses up to sixteen (16) people. Sanderling was named one of the top thirty (30) conference centers in the United States by *Successful Meetings Magazine*. All rooms feature ergonomically-designed chairs; hard writing surface tables; and state-of-the-art audio visual and sound systems.

**The Currituck Club**

The Currituck Club has a meeting capacity of forty (40) seated and one hundred fifty (150) standing. The buffet capacity is for one hundred twenty (120) persons while plated capacity can accommodate sixty (60) persons.

**The Inn at Corolla Light**

The Inn at Corolla Light provides meeting space for approximately forty (40) persons. With views of the Currituck Sound, the Currituck Beach Lighthouse, and the Whalehead Club, this is a very scenic meeting venue. A gazebo is also available for small weddings.

**Currituck Beach Lighthouse**

The Currituck Beach Lighthouse can accommodate weddings for five (5) to one hundred fifty (150) guests. Usage fee is \$500. Restrooms can be found nearby.

**The Whalehead Club**

The Whalehead Club, located at Currituck Heritage Park, offers an outdoor lawn area for weddings. Usage of the actual home facility is not allowed. The Whalehead Club offers transportation for event guests by way of golf carts for an additional fee. Electrical power sources are available. No public restrooms are available at the club, although public restrooms are available at the park.

**Moonrise Bay Vineyard**

The vineyard is a social gathering place and offers a wedding reception venue. Informal seating is available for approximately one hundred fifty (150) people.

**The Corolla Chapel**

This historic chapel is a popular venue for destination wedding ceremonies and can accommodate between 250 and 300 people. Reception facilities are not available. Rental fees range from \$300 to \$350.

## **Golf in Currituck County**

Golf is available in Currituck primarily on the mainland with one private course located on the coast. Currituck County has a total of six (6) golf courses.

One of our team members is a former general manager of a large golf resort and is experienced in golf marketing. As such, we visited the golf courses in the county in search of the following criteria: availability of tee times for the traveling public, price and quality ratio, availability of packages, proximity of accommodations and dining as well as unique aspects to the golfing experience.

It must be noted that golfers prefer courses that offer a challenge, a unique setting, excellent conditioning and reasonable rates. Many golfers will pay very high fees for a unique golfing experience.

Our overall impression of golf in Currituck County is that the product appeals to a variety of skill levels. The courses range from bargain courses to extravagant wooded courses that would entertain even the most serious golfer. In touring the courses, our team found an assortment of license plates mainly from the mid-Atlantic region. The golf courses found in Currituck County that we observed included:

### **Carolina Club**

One of the nicer courses in the area, the Carolina Club offers golfers a small pro shop and a well-maintained course. The course has a driving range and offers challenging 18 holes with numerous water hazards and bunkers. The attendant at the pro shop urged us to schedule tee times in advance as the course does tend to get crowded.

### **The Pointe Golf Club**

The sister course of the Carolina Club, tee times can be scheduled for both of these two courses at either location. The Pointe offers a similar quality course as the Carolina Club with a few more water hazards in play.

### **Goose Creek Golf Course**

Goose Creek provides golfers with a slightly more laid back experience than the Pointe and Carolina Club while still providing 18 holes of challenging golf. The course has a pro shop and small parking lot.

### **Holly Ridge Golf Course**

Holly Ridge is the bargain course of the area. It not only has the cheapest greens fees at \$55, but they also place coupons in area publications that can bring the price down below \$40. Holly Ridge provides golfers with a relaxed neighborhood course feel without the huge prices.

**Reconnaissance Report****Kilmarlic Golf Club**

Kilmarlic is the “cream of the crop” of the courses open to the public in the area. This semi-private course is located off Highway 158 in the neighborhood of Powell’s Point. This beautifully tree-lined course with natural landscapes would entertain even the most serious golfer. Multi-round and multi-day golf discounts are available. A 7,000 square foot clubhouse featuring a full-service restaurant, bar, pro shop, and event facilities is being constructed and is due for completion in the summer of 2007.

**The Currituck Club**

This semi-private course is the only course that is located on the coastal section of Currituck County and is in Corolla.

<b>Golf Course Club</b>	<b>Paved Parking</b>	<b>Clubhouse</b>	<b>Golf Cart</b>	<b>Paved GC Trail</b>	<b>Pool</b>	<b>Type Golf Club</b>	<b>Rates</b>	<b>Include Cart</b>	<b>Restaurant</b>	<b>Holes</b>
The Carolina Club	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	PB	\$87 before 1PM, then \$70	Y	N	18
The Pointe Golf Club	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	PB	\$87 before 3PM, then \$70	Y	Y	18
Goose Creek Golf Course	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	PB	\$59 before 1PM, then \$46	Y	N	18
Holly Ridge Golf Course	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	PB	\$55 before 1PM, then \$45	Y	N	18
Kilmarlic Golf Club	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	SP	Prices vary seasonally w/ multi-round discounts	Y	N	18
Mill Run Golf Club	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	PB	\$38 weekends, \$30 weekdays	Y	Y	18

## **Shopping**

Nationally, shopping is the most popular activity while traveling. In fact, recent studies have shown travelers rate their vacation experience higher based on higher levels of retail spending. In other words, the more money spent shopping the better the vacation. Large outlet malls have been cropping up along major interstates and at major leisure destinations in America to take advantage of this trend. That first rainy day of vacation delivers overflow crowds to the large malls where vacationers accomplish back-to-school, household, gift and Christmas shopping. A full year's worth of shopping can take place in a matter of days. This is in addition to the traditional souvenir buying that remains popular for travelers. Similarly, travelers along interstates and highways stop at malls and specialty stores to give themselves a break from driving. Again, major purchases are often accomplished at such shopping places. Therefore, shopping is an important attractor for a community and a major area of economic impact for the local economy. Simply put, if the shopping is available and travelers can easily locate it, they will spend the money.

For an area such as Currituck County, shopping is especially critical. It provides vitally needed local sales taxes that help to offset property taxes. Simply put, the more Currituck County can encourage visitors to spend money on retail spending, the better for every resident of the county. Given this, our team found it interesting that there is not a more concerted effort to recruit retail for visitors into Currituck County. One would think that county leaders would be aggressive in offering the best shopping in the Outer Banks along Highway 158 since this is THE primary route for the majority of travelers to the Outer Banks. This is a missed opportunity!

### **Farm Markets along Highway 158**

The majority of visitors to the Outer Banks are families renting vacation homes for a week-long period, and these farm markets are a perfect retail opportunity. On the several occasions that our team drove along Highway 158 during the second week in June we found good sized crowds at all of the markets. Our team stopped at several and were impressed with the variety of fresh produce, baked goods, and tempting edibles.

At **Morris Market** we also found our first information on Currituck County after crossing the Virginia/North Carolina state line. It was in a back corner of the market. We asked the young woman at checkout how many customers pick up that information and she estimated that approximately 3% of all customers leave with Currituck County information. *Note: We later learned there are three information brochure racks on the mainland.*

**The Cotton Gin**

We stopped at both the Corolla store and the mainland Jarvisburg store. Interestingly, we found the retail mix to be somewhat different at the two stores, and we thoroughly enjoyed both places. We were sure to leave some economic impact of our own at these popular retail stores. Our team also noticed a sign at the door of the Jarvisburg Cotton Gin for Sanctuary Vineyards. The wine from this vineyard is apparently sold in the Cotton Gin stores. We noticed at the Jarvisburg location that there were grape vines growing adjacent to the retail store and guessed that is part of the Sanctuary Vineyards as well.

**Beach Bum's**

This is a specialty store located along Highway 158. It contained a good variety of merchandise including home décor and housewares, clothing, music and books, jewelry and novelty items. It was fun shopping. Interestingly, the exterior made it appear to be more of a furniture store. The owners/managers may want to include some banners that indicate clothing, gifts, jewelry, etc.

**Moonrise Bay Vineyard**

This is a delightful vineyard and winery located in the Knotts Island area. We stopped in while touring this area of Currituck County and found that the wine tasting room is open daily from 12:00 Noon until 5:00PM.

We entered the tastefully decorated tasting room facility and found a small gift shop, a nice lounging area, and an attractive wine-tasting bar setting. We were greeted upon entry and allowed to look around for a few minutes before we were asked if we could be helped. Our attendant offered us several wines for tasting for a small fee of \$5 which included a Moonrise Bay tasting glass. She was knowledgeable and talked enthusiastically about the wines and how they might be served and with what kind of dishes, etc. She did not get overly technical in describing the making of the wines, and gave us just the right balance of information and wine tasting experience. We bought two of the wines as well as some of the retail merchandise before we left.

We asked her about her business and explained that we were surveying the region for the CCDTT. She told us that approximately 30% of her winery customers come from the Outer Banks and that 70% come from the Virginia Beach area. This makes sense and we were impressed to find that a percentage as high as 30% come from the Outer Banks area. This is a fairly remote location unless one can catch travelers on their way to and from the Outer Banks. We later noted from the Inquiry Mail Survey that approximately 21% of converted inquiries stated they take the Knotts Island Ferry during their trip to Currituck County, and this fairly well matches what the winery reported.

Overall, we found this to be an excellent winery and definitely worthy of a visit.

### **Martin Orchard and Vineyard**

After touring this facility our team determined that this is more of a growing farm than it is a winery/vineyard. While there is a small visitor facility located on the grounds, everything from the signage leading visitors into the center to the rudimentary tasting bar indicates that this is not a full feature winery, but rather more of an orchard and growing facility. For instance, when our team entered the facility the staff person looked up and said “Oh, are you looking for a bathroom?” This indicates to us that few visitors actually come into this facility. The orchards appeared very nice and fruitful. Perhaps the CCDTT visitor guide can do a more comprehensive job of describing these two facilities and how they are different. I am not sure it is accurate to refer to Martin’s as a winery.

### **Native Vine Cellars**

Native Vine Cellars, located on the left directly after exiting the Wright Memorial Bridge, is also home to the Big City Warehouse and Bean Drop Café as well. Big City Warehouse offers visitors with a large selection of specialty beers and wines and a number of beer and wine drinking accessories. The Bean Drop Café offers a variety of coffee beverages and small coffeehouse snacks. The wine tasting area itself is a large bar type setting with space for about 20 people to stand around comfortably.

### **Ann’s Crafts and Supplies**

This craft store and wire art gallery is located right next to Native Vine Cellars on Highway 158. It has a large outdoor area filled with wire art and a smaller indoor facility where the craft supply section is located. The store is only open from 9:00 AM to 3:00PM and was closed for the day when we stopped by to visit.

### **The Duck Shack**

We saw this listed in the CCDTT visitor guide, and upon locating Brumley Road in the Knotts Island area, we investigated. We found the “Duck Shack” to be literally just that.....a small building beside a private home, where Mr. Roy White lives and carves decoys. A small, handmade and faded sign sits by his home indicating that this is the right location for the Duck Shack. We found Mr. White and he explained to us his lifelong passion for decoys and that he has slowed down a bit in his latter years. There were about twenty decoys and various carved shorebirds on display. He also mentioned that he used to do several shows a year, but now has slowed that down as well. He seemed to be a man content in his age and his accomplishment. We enjoyed meeting him and hearing about his decoys and other pieces.

However, in spite of his outstanding reputation, we are not sure that this site should be listed in the CCDTT visitor guide. While it is an original craft studio, it seems unfair to burden Mr. White in his later years with having travelers stop into his home. Perhaps it is more fitting for his work to be shown at some typical retail outlet such as the Cotton Gin. That might provide a bigger, more consistent audience without requiring Mr. White to play the role of host as well as artist.

**Monteray Shopping Plaza**

Located across Highway 12 from the TimBuck II Shopping Center in Corolla, the Monteray Shopping Plaza offers visitors with a number of small shops and restaurants. There was also a small movie theatre located in the back of the shopping center.

The majority of the stores we found sell the same types of items: souvenirs, knick-knacks and beachwear. However, Ocean Annie's did offer a variety of handmade crafts and pottery which was unique from the other shops located at this plaza.

Interestingly we found that the restaurants located in this shopping center were more casual and fast food type of dining than we typically see in a destination such as Corolla.

## **Restaurants & Dining**

When visiting an area we always look for the unique dining experiences that would appeal to travelers. When in Maine most folks look for lobster, pineapples in Hawaii and TexMex in the southwest. During reconnaissance, we asked local people on the street, at attractions and at other encounter points where to find good local food. The dining spots mentioned most often when we requested recommendations were restaurants offering home cooking or chain restaurants.

It is impossible for our team to experience every restaurant in the area. We try to dine at those advertising themselves the most or are most visible to the traveling public. We also concentrate on those which receive the most recommendations from local residents and front line employees in the travel industry. Our goal is to locate the establishments most likely visited by travelers to the area.

In asking local residents to recommend a good local flavor restaurant the overwhelming majority of recommendations were for the following restaurants:

- Currituck BBQ Company
- Grouper's

### **Greentails Restaurant and Marina**

Overlooking the sound, Greentails is located on the mainland side of the Wright Memorial Bridge. This casual dining establishment boasts both an inside dining area and a screened in porch overlooking the sound. Open from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily, Greentails would be a great spot to stop by and have lunch or a quick dinner as it is one of the few restaurants that has waterfront seating.

### **Currituck BBQ Company**

This delicious BBQ restaurant boasts your standard menu of chicken and pork BBQ and home-cooked sides like green beans and cole slaw. But the quality of food is far from standard as it tastes like it came straight out of your grandmother's kitchen. The desserts were especially good. We had to indulge in the homemade peach cobbler which was fantastic. The employees were friendly and added to the comfort level of the cozy restaurant. They also had a map on the wall allowing visitors to post a pin indicating where they lived.

### **Grouper's Grill and Wine Bar**

One of the few casual yet upscale restaurants we found in Currituck County, Grouper's offers a variety of fresh fish entrees and a number of delicious appetizers. The restaurant is located in the heart of Corolla at the Timbuck II Shopping Center. The restaurant provides a full range of pampering with their quality of food, fully stocked bar, and wine selection.

## **Reconnaissance Report**

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Currituck County does not have an abundance of higher-end restaurants. Corolla has only a few restaurants, and the mainland restaurants are sparse except for the usual fast food competitors. A number of the mainland restaurants are hard to find if they are not located right along Highway 158 or Highway 168.

We also noticed a lack of fried seafood on the menus in the restaurants in the area. We found this very strange because of the popularity of fried seafood in North Carolina. We also noticed that there was not much sea or sound front dining, another favorite among Outer Banks destinations.

**Reconnaissance Report**

**RV Parks & Resorts**

The following RV parking/camping facilities were noted during our reconnaissance in Currituck County:

RV Parks and Resorts	# of Sites/Rooms	Full Hook-up	Water/Electric Hook-up	Primitive Site	Restaurant	Wireless Internet	Public Restroom/ Shower	Cable or Satellite	Septic Hookup
Bells Island Campground	63	39	24	0	No	No	Yes		Yes
Sandy Point Resort Campground	150	80	30	40	No	Yes	Yes		Yes
Hampton Lodge Camping Resort			Yes		No	No			Yes

## **Lodging**

When conducting reconnaissance in an area, the team always looks for lodging that would most likely appeal to the vast majority of the traveling public. Therefore, the Reconnaissance Team selects its lodging for the reconnaissance trip using the marketing materials provided by the local tourism promotion agency, as well as state promotional literature. Once in the area, the Reconnaissance Team looks at all available lodging properties to determine the range of lodging options available in the area. The team also looks to see if the national chain properties are well maintained and locally owned properties are adequately advertised and represented correctly in promotional materials. The Reconnaissance Team makes an effort to stay in a range of lodging properties typical of the area to ensure our understanding of the experience from the visitor perspective.

### **Palmer Inn Bed and Breakfast**

This is a lovely, white colonial two-story bed and breakfast found along Highway 158 in the Barco area. We noticed good signage and very nice landscaping for this inn. It is a good location for those interested in staying on the mainland in Currituck County.

### **Trish's Bed and Breakfast**

Our team found this small, white two-story colonial style inn in a fairly congested area on Highway 168 near the Virginia state line. It appears quite nice and would be a good option for those who want to stay in the northern part of the Currituck County mainland.

### **Pearl's Bay Villa Marina and Restaurant**

This is a fishing camp style lodging property located in Knotts Island. It includes a boat launch, several rental cottages, RV parking sites, boat trailer parking, and a small camping store and restaurant.

### **Bay Breeze Lodge Bed and Breakfast**

Our team found this small bed and breakfast inn sign while driving to Pearl's Bay Villa Marina and Restaurant. However, there was a sign in the yard that stated that no one should enter other than guests of the inn. Thus, we did not investigate further.

**The Inn at Corolla Light**

This cozy Inn located right on the sound in the resort community of Corolla Light, provides the feel of an extravagant beach home. There is a long wooden boardwalk that leads one from the parking lot to any of the forty-three (43) rooms located within the Inn. They offer a variety of rooms, ranging from a deluxe two (2) bed suite with a kitchenette and living space to smaller “Innsaver” rooms that still boast the basic essential creature comforts. Movies and bicycles may be rented from the Inn by guests for no additional fee and there is a pool with a hot tub that overlooks the sound. The Inn has a long dock that leads out into the Currituck Sound with a gazebo on the end which provides an incredible place to watch the sunset.

When we visited we were greeted by the friendly employees working in the office. We were given a tour by the night manager who was incredibly knowledgeable about the facility and provided us with a detailed history of the Inn back to its conceptualization back in 1994. Because of the wide range of rooms the Inn has to offer this is a great stop for small families and couples.

**Hampton Inn**

The Hampton Inn located on the Beach in Currituck County is relatively new, has an ideal location, and is one of the few hotels/inns to be found in the county. During the several visits we made to Currituck County it appeared to be at full capacity.

**Vacation Rentals**

The following rental agencies provide vacation rentals in Currituck County:

<b>Lodging Property Name</b>	<b># of Rooms</b>
<b>Rental Units</b>	
Atlantic Realty	21
Brindley Beach	203
Carolina Designs	92
Corolla Classic	21
Elan Realty	70
GSH	2
Joe Lamb	5
Karichele Realty	147
Kitty Dunes	204
Kitty Hawks Rental	230
Outer Banks Blue	140
Prudentail Resort	156
Resort Quest	324
Seaside Vacations	265
Shoreline Preferred	29
Southern Shores	49
Stan White Realty	93
Sun Realty	287
Twiddy	512
Village Realty	254