

# The Community Square Project Effects



Photo by Candace Cobb, 2014.

**WATERFRONT ACCESS & PUBLIC USE** Ocracoke is a historic maritime community. Access to the water is crucial for water-based businesses, and the enjoyment of residents and visitors. With the exception of the National Park Service property, Silver Lake is completely surrounded by private property – both commercial and residential. Our focus is ensuring that access will be available in perpetuity. The repair of the docks, piers, platforms and kayak launch ramp will continue to provide a base for maritime business, local watermen and recreational boaters. Future generations of watermen will be assured of a base for their livelihood.

**ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP** Storm water and wastewater improvements are necessary. In 2017, with help from a Golden LEAF Grant, we will install wastewater upgrades and repave the parking lot with water-absorbing *pervious* concrete. This costlier, environmentally significant option will vastly reduce stormwater run-off into Silver Lake to improve water quality, as well as enhance waterfront access and greenspace that is so welcoming to our residents and visitors. In partnership with the NC Coastal Federation, a “living shoreline” of wetland grasses and a rock wash wall of oyster bags will be designed as a demonstration project to aid in storm water management. Enlarged shoreline platforms will enhance OFI’s Outdoor Environmental Education summer classes and provide space for other events.



Photo by Bill Birkemeier, 2015.



Photo by Ocracoke Foundation, 2013.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION** Architecture is a historic community’s best advertisement, a testament to the strength of its past. It keeps locals and visitors alike connected to the community, both presently and historically. This cluster of 5 National Register structures, the docks, and the shoreline will be restored to a setting typical of historic Ocracoke circa 1950’s. The purpose/uses of The Community Square are the same today as they were in 1918 – goods were bought and sold, fishermen came and went, boats brought visitors and cargo, and people visited with one another. The historic town square atmosphere with its festive gatherings bring vitality and promotes a hometown feel, which is one of reasons vacationers continue to come to Ocracoke.

**PRESERVED IN PERPETUITY** The historic, environmental and maritime importance of the Community Square will be preserved with easements and other legal protections. The creation of a Harbor Front Garden featuring benches, picnic tables and native plants will honor those who have worked to preserve the Community Square over past decades.



Photo by Ocracoke Foundation, 2013.



**ENDOWMENT FOR OCRACOKE ISLAND** Since 2008, when the Ocracoke Foundation began to focus on acquiring the Community Square, the core goals were to protect, preserve and put this valuable asset to work for the community. Rather than paying \$50,000 a year for 20 years in bank payments, once the interim loans are retired, OFI will ensure that the income from the Community Square becomes a permanent endowment for the Ocracoke community by directing rental income into a Community Fund. This can be a model for rural communities to harness their local assets for social entrepreneurship to benefit their community.