

The Community Square Project Effects



Photo by Candice 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 the traveling public. With the exception of the National Pak 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. Replacing impervious asphalt with semi-pervious concrete and redirecting drainage away from the harbor will provide much needed filters for storm water, and add to protecting Silver Lake’s threatened waters, as well as increase harbor-side greenspace. 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.



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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 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 “Traditional Uses” will also be preserved to ensure The Community Square truly remains an Ocracoke community asset. These include: space for locally owned small businesses, dockage watermen and water-based local businesses, free public access to the waterfront for relaxing and viewing the harbor, and community gatherings. 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 and our Project Partners.



Photo by Ocracoke Foundation, 2011.



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. Despite tourism and land values, Ocracoke is classified under Hyde County as a rural, tier 1 [low-income] community in the state, and thus relies on its citizens and nonprofits for everything from special events to childcare. Once the interim loans are retired, OFI will ensure that the income from the Community Square becomes a permanent endowment for the Ocracoke community.