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State Adds 2,224 Acres to Buckridge Reserve

07/22/2019 by [Staff Report](#)

TYRRELL COUNTY – The state has acquired more than 2,000 acres to add to a reserve home to rare, threatened and endangered species including bald eagle, Atlantic sturgeon, shortnose sturgeon, red-cockaded woodpecker and American alligator.

The U.S. Air Force, the Nature Conservancy and the state Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Coastal Management partnered to purchase the 2,224-acre Woodley Tract to become a part of the [Emily and Richardson Preyer Buckridge Coastal Reserve](#) situated between Alligator River and Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuges.



The Emily and Richardson Preyer Buckridge Coastal Reserve is in Tyrrell County. Photo: DEQ

A part of the East Dismal Swamp spanning Dare Tyrrell and Washington counties, the 29,335-acre Buckridge Reserve is about 15 miles south of Columbia.

The Woodley Tract protects more than 10 miles of frontage on the Alligator River and its northwest fork, and a mostly undisturbed low pocosin.

Pocosins, or shrub-dominated habitats, in Tyrrell County can be found in slightly raised or domed peatlands. The vegetation is usually less than 5 feet tall, partly due to the low fertility and wetness produced by the saturated peat.

“At one time, pocosins were prominent ecosystems in the southeastern United States, but they are now globally imperiled,” according to DEQ’s announcement.

“The Buckridge Reserve protects the resilience of coastal North Carolina by ensuring the long-term protection of coastal wetlands and the benefits they provide” said Division of Coastal Management Director Braxton Davis. “The addition of the Woodley Tract will help maintain the outstanding water quality of the Alligator River and protect the water quality of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuary.”

The Nature Conservancy facilitated the purchase with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s [National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Program](#), and the Air Force funding was through the [Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program](#), a funding arm that secures operational buffers in support of military training.

“The Woodley Tract is a great example of a multi-faceted, partnership approach to acquisition,” said Fred Annand, director of conservation resources at the state chapter of the Nature Conservancy. “In addition to habitat and water quality protection, this acquisition also helps secure the operational airspace of the U.S. Air Force’s Dare County Range.”

The Buckridge Reserve is one of the 10 sites of the [North Carolina Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) that protects natural areas for education, research and compatible traditional uses. The program has preserved more than 44,000 acres of unique coastal environments since beginning in 1989.