

Fall Trip to False Cape State Park
November 11-15, 2012
By Bruce Julian

This was another fun trip to False Cape St. Pk. and we accomplished almost everything we set out to do. With storms on the two weekends before we were scheduled to be there I wasn't sure if we would be able to do some of the work we had plan. The storms came by heading north and did a number on our beach, taking a lot of sand out to sea. The interior did not receive very much damage, only a few trees uprooted and the lost of power for 3 days. It was good that the first storm was out in the Atlantic Ocean several miles from our beach, with what it did to New Jersey and New York, it could have been a lot worse.

As always, we met at Little Island City Park at 3:00 P.M. and everyone was on time and we loaded the bus and headed down the gravel road to the Environmental Education Center (EEC). We were about one mile down the road when someone hollered out, I need to go back to my car I forgot my camera ! We won't say who it was but she took a lot of pictures, guess it was good we went back. Driving into the yard there at Wash Woods' EEC building around 4:00 P.M. we talked over where each person would be sleeping, some upstairs and some downstairs. Most of the ones that have been coming on this trip for a number of years have their favorite bunk. After this we began unloading our gear and filling up the double door refrigerated with all the food everyone brought.

On this trip I decided to have the GPS Course, which I had laid out two days earlier first. Doing it this way everyone would be fresh and not too tired after working for 3 days and would be able to climb the sand hills there in the park. I had all the Waypoints in the 2 GPS Units with fresh batteries so we divided into two teams, A Team and B Team. We had John G, Margaret J, Mark C, Diana R and Scott B on the A Team and Milton B, Lee G, Dottie A, Sandy B and Bob S on the B Team. Dennis F. and I stay out of the two teams. The 2 teams started off around 5:00 P.M. and it was getting dark by the time both teams finished the course. They all had fun doing the course and I had a box of candy waiting back at the center for the winners, which they all shared with everyone. This was after we had our pizza for dinner which I had brought from Pungo Pizza.

On Monday, after a waffle and sausage breakfast we loaded into the Clampett Mobile and drove up to Barbour Hill Road. We started cutting back some of the Live Oaks and Pine Trees that had grown out into the road over the passed two years. We started out close to the beach and ended at the Visitor Center, here we stopped for our lunch. After about an hour we got back into the truck and drove down to False Cape Landing Road and cut back the trees which took us about 2 hours, then we headed back to the EEC. Monday night Milton was having Bar-B-Que, while some stay in and watched movies four of us drove out of the park to a chainsaw store there in Virginia Beach to get some needed parts for our saws. On the way there we saw a hiker on Sandbridge Road which we had talked to earlier that day there on Barbour Hill Road. He was from Germany and was hiking North America, so we thought he may want a ride, which he did. We dropped him off where he had made plans to spend the night about 10 miles away. We left him and after picking up our saw parts headed back to the park, just in time for Milton's Bar-B-Que.

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On Tuesday morning I tried something new for breakfast and with help from Dottie and John we had an egg dish with a little of about everything you can think of. Most everyone liked it and Milton said he loved it. After cleaning up the dishes we loaded onto the truck and headed over to the shop to pick-up our chainsaws and then we started there next to the old trailer and cut back the trees along the Vir-Mar Trail. This took till lunch time because we had rain on and off all morning. Twice we jump into the truck and drove over to the EEC and waited till the rain stopped, to the enjoyment of some. We did finish the area we had started, about 200 yards by lunch time and we had a long lunch because of the rain coming down once again. About 1:30 P.M. we headed down to the south end of the park and began cutting the Live Oak Trees which were trying to over take the road. We worked until about 4:00 P.M. and all were getting tired so we drove back to the center. On this night Diana was having stew and it sure smell good each time you would walk up the steps into the kitchen and it tasted even better.

We had a guest on this night, Diana had invited the park manager Kyle Barbour. As we ate and mostly after we had eaten we had a meeting with Kyle about things we could do in the near future, there at the park. Here I asked Kyle if we could cut a new trail down to William Perry's gravesite, which I had just found the week before with the help from one of the deer hunters and he (Kyle) gave us the O K. After we cleaned up the dishes three of us went for a hike to retrieve my Game Cameras and when we return everyone was asleep, so we turn in also.

On our third morning I went back to Waffles and Sausages but this time I added Blue Berries, which Mark had brought, they went over very good. The ones with Blue Berries went fast and the ones without took a little longer to be eaten. Next time Blue Berries will be in all of them! Cleaning up the dishes we headed outside with the sun shining and the temperatures a little cooler than the day before, but just right for the work that we were doing. After picking up our tools we drove over to Wash Woods Road, this is where the gravesite is located, we mapped out a good area for the trail and some started cutting while others went to the gravesite and started cleaning up around it. Diana had attended a class the week before on restoring old gravesites and Kyle had given her the O K to do this on William Perry's site. After we finish the trail and gravesite work we started on Wash Woods Road and this took till about 11:00 A.M., not wanting to stop for lunch so early we headed down to the Cemetery Trail to show this site to the 2 new volunteers and trim a few tree limbs back as we walked to the Church Site. Around 12:15 we drove back to the EEC and had our lunch and some rest which we all wanted. This day was beautiful so around 1:30 we packed up our gear and headed back to the south end of the park to finish cutting the rest of the Live Oaks. We worked here until about 4:00 P.M. and headed back to the EEC. This was our fourth night and it was Dennis night to have our evening meal and he had Bake Chicken. Those chicken breasts were so big you thought you were eating a whole chicken. The meals just kept getting better each night, some didn't want to go home on Thursday, but all good things must come to an end. Not sure if it was the good meal or the hard work but after the dishes were wash and put away some watched a movie while Bob and I drove up to Back Bay Wildlife Refuge to get the bus so we could load the next morning, but when we returned at 9:30 everyone was asleep with all the lights out, so Bob and I turn in also. This for sure was the earliest a group has ever turn in, in the 8 years I have been doing this, are we getting older ?

On Thursday morning we ate some of the egg dish, with biscuits and Scramble eggs and a few things left over from the last four days. We clean-up the center and loaded the bus with all our gear and once again loaded into the Clampett Mobile and I drove the group down to the state line and we had a short hike and a tour at the beach. Back at the EEC around 10:00 A.M. we all got back on the bus and I drove north stopping at two locations for short hikes and then we headed out to Little Island City Park where our vehicles were waiting for all. Of course a trip would not be complete without a trip to Pungo Pizza & Ice Cream Parlor. All but three met there for lunch and of course some had ice cream. This was another good trip and all had fun and I would like to thank everyone for helping out there at the park. Thank You !