

27 February 2024

Jill Fusco
Eastern Field Representative
NC Land and Water Fund
Division of Land and Water Stewardship
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
121 W. Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27603

RE: Town of Nags Head - NC Land and Water Fund 2024 grant application

The Town of Nags Head, NC is submitting a grant application to NC Land and Water Fund for the sale of conservation easements on 3 tracts of undeveloped land adjoining The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Nags Head Woods Preserve. The tracts are as follows:

- 2112 S. Pond Avenue, Nags Head, NC, 27959 (Parcel 026404001, 284.7 acres)
- 3125 S. Old Nags Head Woods Road, Nags Head, NC, 27959 (Parcel 005946000, 4.3 acres)
- 308 W. Nags Way Court, Nags Head, NC, 27959 (Parcel 006114000, 7.7 acres)

It is our understanding that the Town will place an easement on parcels 005946000 and 006114000 and on approximately 258.8 acres of parcel 026404001 while reserving approximately 25.9 acres for municipal uses. These lands connect to other protected properties within the Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve and serve as a gateway to a larger area of conservation.

Since 1985, the Town and TNC have had an agreement for the management of these tracts as part of Nags Head Woods Ecological Preserve. The Town owns several other properties in Nags Head Woods including a 376-acre tract jointly owned with TNC which have been placed under conservation management using a similar conservation easement. The Town and TNC have worked together to preserve Nags Head Woods by acquiring properties separately and jointly. Approximately 72% of the 1,200 acres are permanently protected. The Town's three parcels that make up their grant request are 22% of the unsecured areas within the Preserve.

Nags Head Woods is the largest contiguous area of globally rare, deciduous maritime forest on a barrier island along the East Coast. There are seven plant community types in the Preserve and in all, over 550 species of plants have been documented, including eight species that are considered rare in NC. The Preserve hosts more than 150 species of birds with over 50 species of which nest there. The area is bounded to the north by the Run Hill State Natural Area and to the south by Jockey's Ridge State Park. Together, these natural areas have been designated a National Natural Landmark by the US National Park Service.



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The Nature Conservancy fully supports application by the Town of Nags Head to the NC Land and Water Fund for funds to ensure permanent protection of these properties. We look forward to assisting with the project and to our continued collaboration with the Town on management of Nags Head Woods Preserve.

Best Regards,

Deputy State Director, The Nature Conservancy – North Carolina