PHOTO COURTESY TERI NORRIS, BEAUFORT COUNTY PLANNING DEPT.

Also, the property is attractive because of the possible presence of Indian campsites, maybe even village sites.

Meanwhile, the 100-foot conservation easement – or buffer– will provide a swath of green between the headwaters' eastern shoreline and future commercial and residential development. There are no trails in the buffer, "but in the agreement, the developer will deed the property to the county on or before 2010 and, at that time, the county can build a trail connecting the park back to U.S. 278," Marane said.

A major side benefit of the purchases is an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 future daily vehicle trips that will be eliminated from U.S. 278. The western portion of the property was slated for 15 acres of commercial development, along with 500 residential units, and the southern portion had the potential for 150 multifamily residential units.

Overall, when combined with the county's earlier purchase of contiguous Barrel Landing on the north side of U.S. 278, more than 150 acres of pristine, bucolic Okatie headwaters are now protected. Importantly, this, in turn, protects the Colleton River, the recipient of the Okatie's gentle flow.

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Front row: Ed Pitoniak, Renate Emilia, Diane Sala, Vickie Arbogast, Joan Sherwood, and Victoria Anderson. Second row: LaBrina Hamby, Eric Stafford, Mike Quigley, Tom Singer, Rich Sebastian, and Randy Sparks.

*Source: Mainstreet data provided by First American Real Estate Solutions. Year to date as of June, 2004.

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