

North Carolina news

Coastal Studies Institute buys land for new facility on Croatan Sound

By Catherine Kozak
The Virginian-Pilot

When the goal is to build an innovative facility to study coastal processes, ideally it should be located on water.

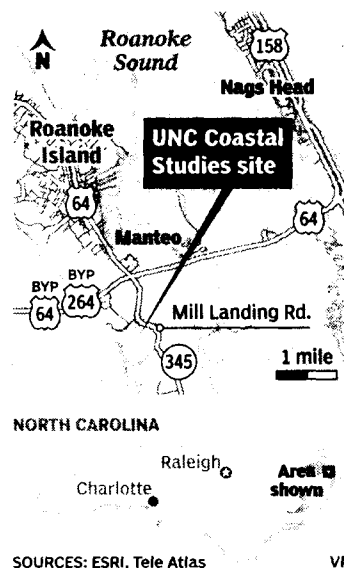
That's why the University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute in Manteo decided to pursue purchase of a 200-acre parcel in Skyco along the Croatan Sound rather than be landlocked at the initial proposed site on Roanoke Island.

The \$8.25 million deal with sellers Skyco LLC closed Friday, said Nancy White, the institute's director.

At the first proposed location, she said, "we'd still have to find a site for water access."

With deep water access and open marshland, the Skyco land, one mile south of the Midway intersection in Manteo, has 34 upland acres, White said.

Of those, 26 are buildable and 8 are preserved for a conservation easement with the



North Carolina Nature Conservancy.

The institute plans to build certified green campus buildings and landscape at the site with environmentally sustainable, efficient and low-impact

technology. A revised draft design for the \$32.4 million project is expected to be complete in about a month.

In 1994, a UNC task force identified the need for a marine research and education facility in the northeast. The institute will partner with UNC-Chapel Hill, East Carolina University and North Carolina State University.

Planned program areas include estuarine ecology and human health; estuarine and coastal processes, with an emphasis on remote sensing and satellite imagery; coastal engineering; and human dimensions.

"We're going to be very high-tech and focused on these underserved areas of coastal and marine science," White said.

Funding for the land and construction is being provided through bonds, she said.

Catherine Kozak, (252) 441-1711, cate.kozak@pilotonline.com