

# Ferried along to Emerald Isle: Coastal nature preserve offers cool, green alternative to the beach

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The trip from Ocracoke to Emerald Isle is a long one, with a ferry ride and some beautiful countryside along the way. We left Ocracoke early Tuesday and continued along the coast on day four of our trip to find some of the coolest and sometimes unknown places in North Carolina.

## **Creekside Cafe, Ocracoke**

We found a local hangout when we had dinner Monday night at Creekside Cafe in the village. A singer-songwriter named Jeff Miller was playing original and cover acoustic songs under an umbrella outside of the screened in bar where we sat. The food, typical bar fair, was really good and the locals who were sitting around the place were funny to listen to.

## **Teeter's Campground**

We stayed the night in tents at Teeter's Campground, a private spot only a few blocks from the main drag in Ocracoke. It costs \$20 to put up tents at Teeter's and the atmosphere is fairly laid back. It is a good spot to stay if you want to walk to town for the nightlife on Ocracoke, but the island seems to die at about 10 p.m.

## **Cedar Island Ferry**

The N.C. Ferry System is having problems right now. When we decided to stay until Tuesday on Ocracoke we tried to call the 1-800-BYFERRY number to reserve a ticket for the ferry to Cedar Island.

We could not get through until after hours. So we called at 7 a.m. Tuesday morning to book a ticket for the 10:30 a.m. ferry but the lady on the phone said it was booked for the day. So we decided to just drive up to the ferry station and try to get on standby. The ferry workers said we could buy a ticket at 8:30 a.m. so we waited and bought a ticket, no problem.

## **Morehead City and Atlantic Beach**

We met up with Mary Kurek, an author and visibility consultant who does public relations work for Atlantic Beach and Morehead City. She has followed us on our CheapBeach Twitter account and recommended some great places to visit.

**[We also met Linda McGregor, who operates Yoga for You, a yoga center in Morehead City.](#)**

Kurek and McGregor told us to recommend the White Swan between Atlantic Beach and Emerald Isle for good barbecue on the coast. Kurek also mentioned a place called the Tackle Box which

features a large bar in the shape of a ship's bow and the Monkey Bar in Atlantic Beach where all the locals hang out.

### **Hoop Pole Creek**

We stopped by the Hoop Pole Creek Clean Water Preserve in Atlantic Beach to investigate a trail that leads out into the woods and over the creek. We passed a family of kayakers who were taking advantage of the protected waters of the preserve. It is one of the last natural refuges for fish, plants and wildlife at Atlantic Beach and is owned by the N.C. Coastal Federation.

The self-guided tour through the coastal marsh takes you through some beautiful overhanging plants and the site serves as one of the few places where shellfish are still harvested commercially in the area because most shellfish areas have been destroyed or harmed by pollution. The trail can be accessed right beside the Food Lion along the main drag at Atlantic Beach. And it's free.

### **Wednesday**

Today we are going to try to make our way to Carolina Beach south of Wilmington, where several people have recommended local spots to check out. We will then head further down the coast toward South Carolina and start making our way back to Greenville on Thursday completing a long trip from Corolla to the South Carolina line.