

Chapter 146.

State Lands.

SUBCHAPTER I. UNALLOCATED STATE LANDS.

Article 1.

General Provisions.

§ 146-1. Intent of Subchapter.

(a) It is the purpose and intent of this Subchapter to vest in the Department of Administration, subject to rules and regulations adopted by the Governor and approved by the Council of State as hereinafter provided, responsibility for the management, control and disposition of all vacant and unappropriated lands, swamplands, lands acquired by the State by virtue of being sold for taxes, and submerged lands, title to which is vested in the State or in any State agency, to be exercised subject to the provisions of this Subchapter.

(b) Further, it is the intent of this Subchapter to establish within the Department, a method for obtaining easements for State-owned lands covered by navigable waters that includes compensation, recognizes the common law rights of riparian or littoral property owners, and balances those rights with the State's obligation to protect public trust rights for all of its citizens. The North Carolina General Assembly finds that the State is unable to provide the necessary access for its citizens to exercise public trust rights and, therefore, recognizes the role that publicly and privately owned piers, docks, wharves, marinas, and other structures located in or over State-owned lands covered by navigable waters generally serve in furthering public trust purposes including:

- (1) Providing citizens with access and ability to exercise public trust boating, fishing, and swimming activities;
- (2) Enhancing the value of appurtenant upland property values with the resulting increased collection of ad valorem taxes;
- (3) Enhancing tourism which is essential to the economy of the State and, in particular, to the coastal counties; and
- (4) Increasing local participation in boating and fishing activities with the resulting increase in taxes paid for fuel, fishing tackle, boat equipment, and imported boats and motors which taxes contribute to the sound economy of the State, and some of which are paid into the federal Wallop-Breaux Fund for redistribution to the State for water resource enhancements and water access improvements.

(c) Nothing in this Subchapter shall apply to a privately owned lake or any hydroelectric reservoir licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

(d) Nothing in this Subchapter shall be construed to limit or expand the full exercise of common law riparian or littoral rights. (1959, c. 683, s. 1; 1995, c. 529, s. 1.)

§ 146-2. Department of Administration given control of certain State lands; general powers.

The power to manage, control, and dispose of the vacant and unappropriated lands, swamplands, lands acquired by the State by virtue of being sold for taxes, and submerged lands is hereby vested in the Department of Administration, subject to rules and regulations adopted by the Governor and approved by the Council of State, and subject to the provisions of this Subchapter. The Department of Administration shall have the following general powers and duties with respect to those lands:

- (1) To take such measures as it deems necessary to establish, protect, preserve, and enhance the interest of the State in those lands, and to call upon the Attorney General for legal assistance in performing this duty.
- (2) Subject to the approval of the Governor and Council of State, to adopt such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary to carry out its duties under the provisions of this Subchapter. (1959, c. 683, s. 1.)