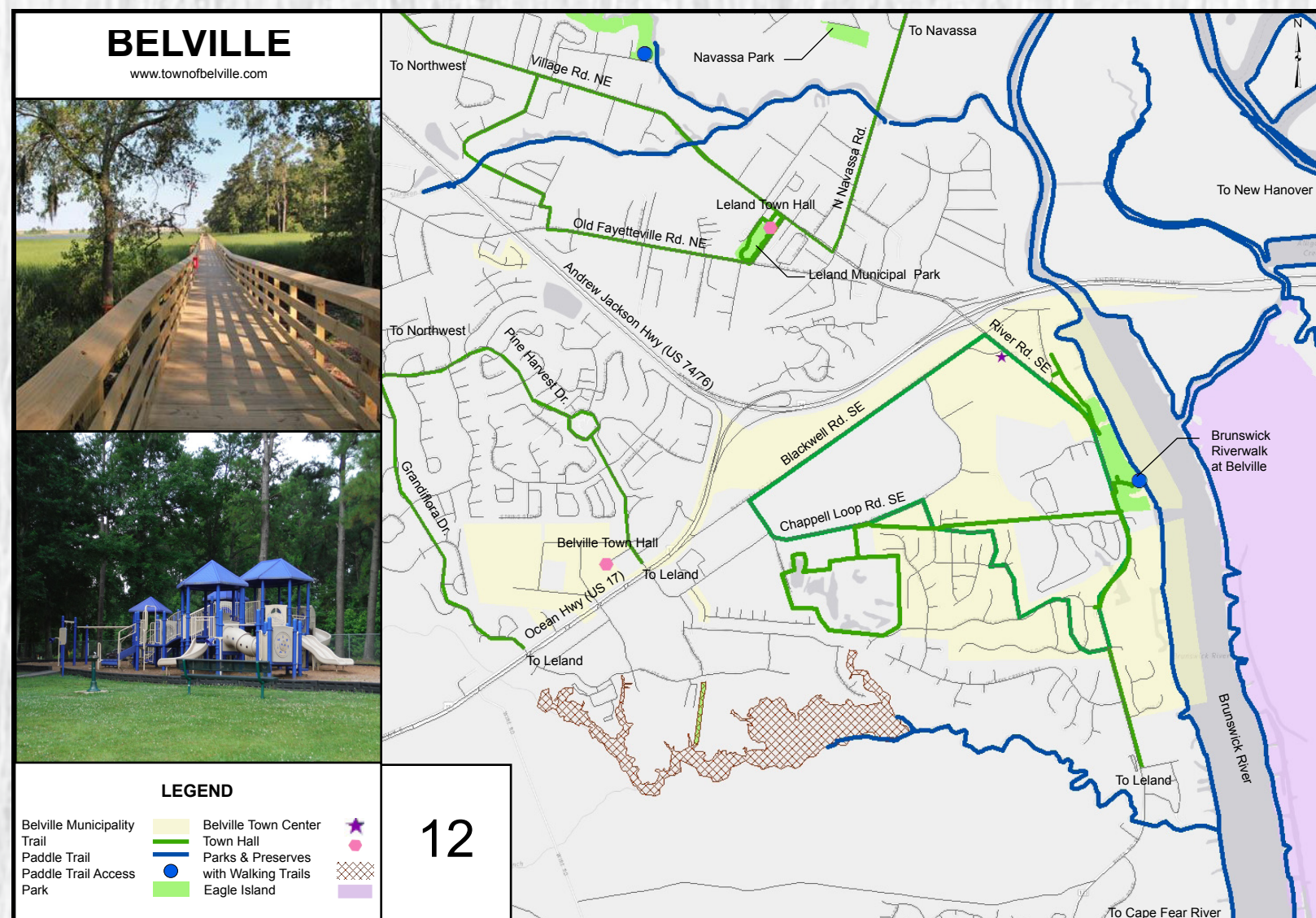
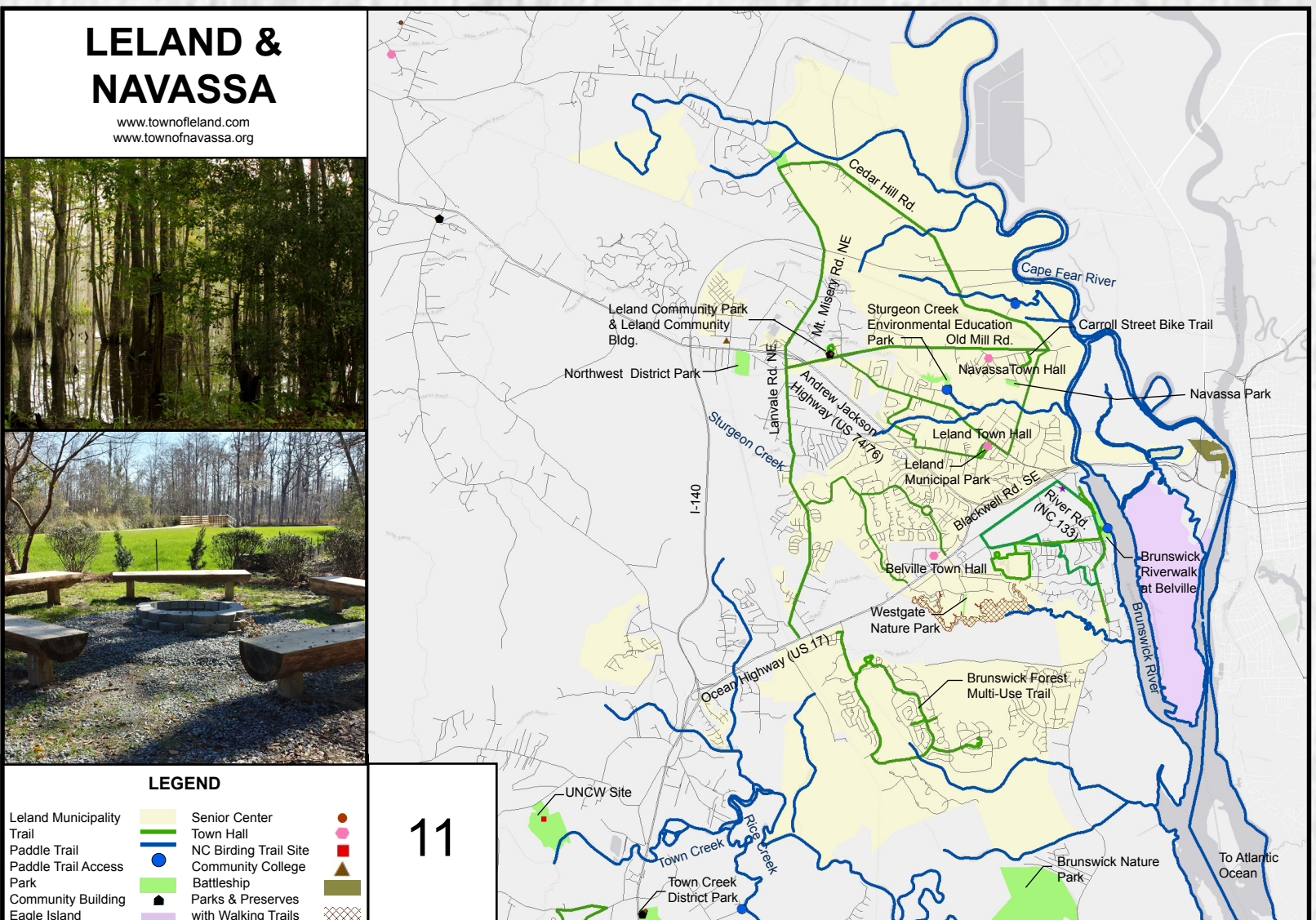
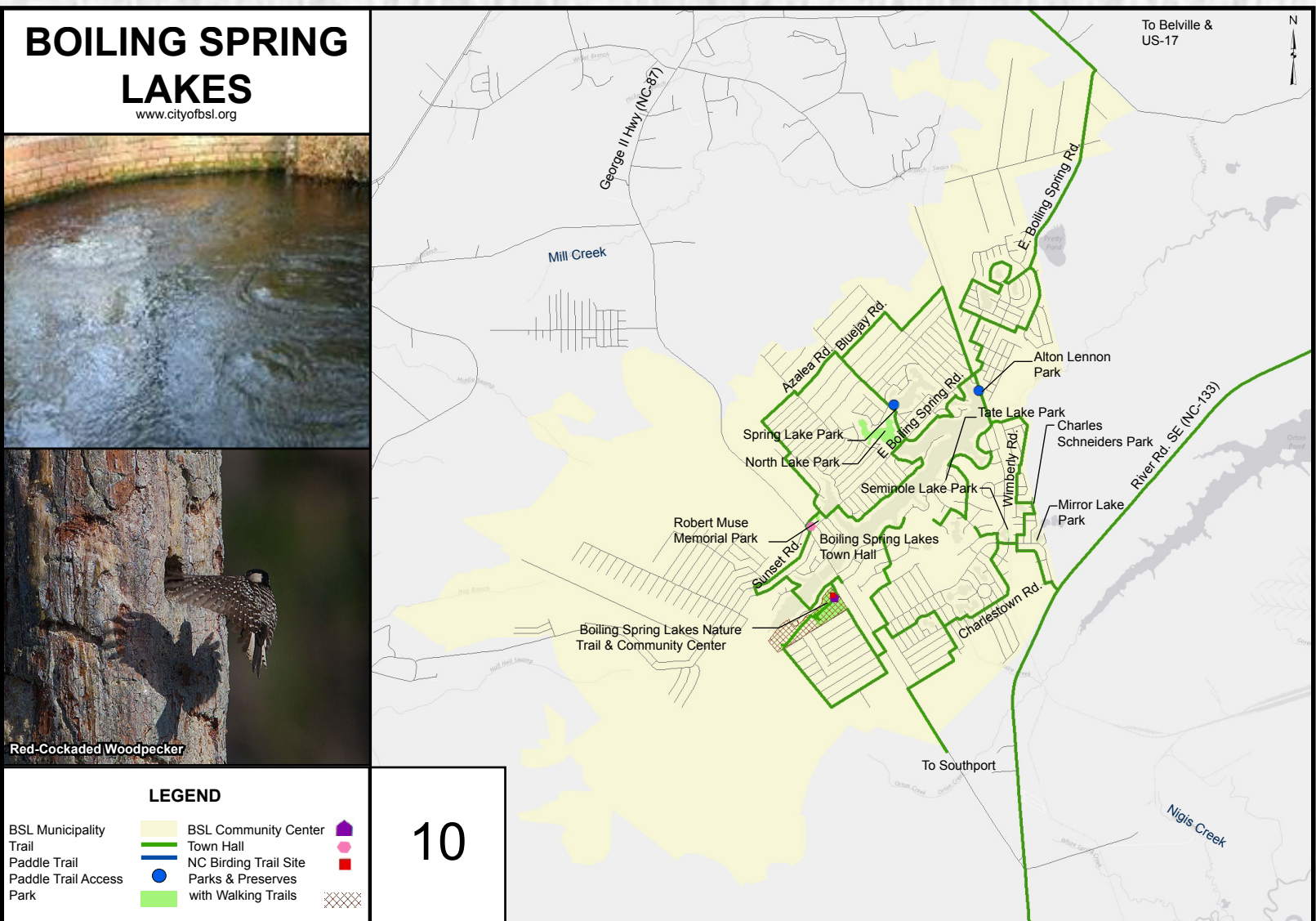
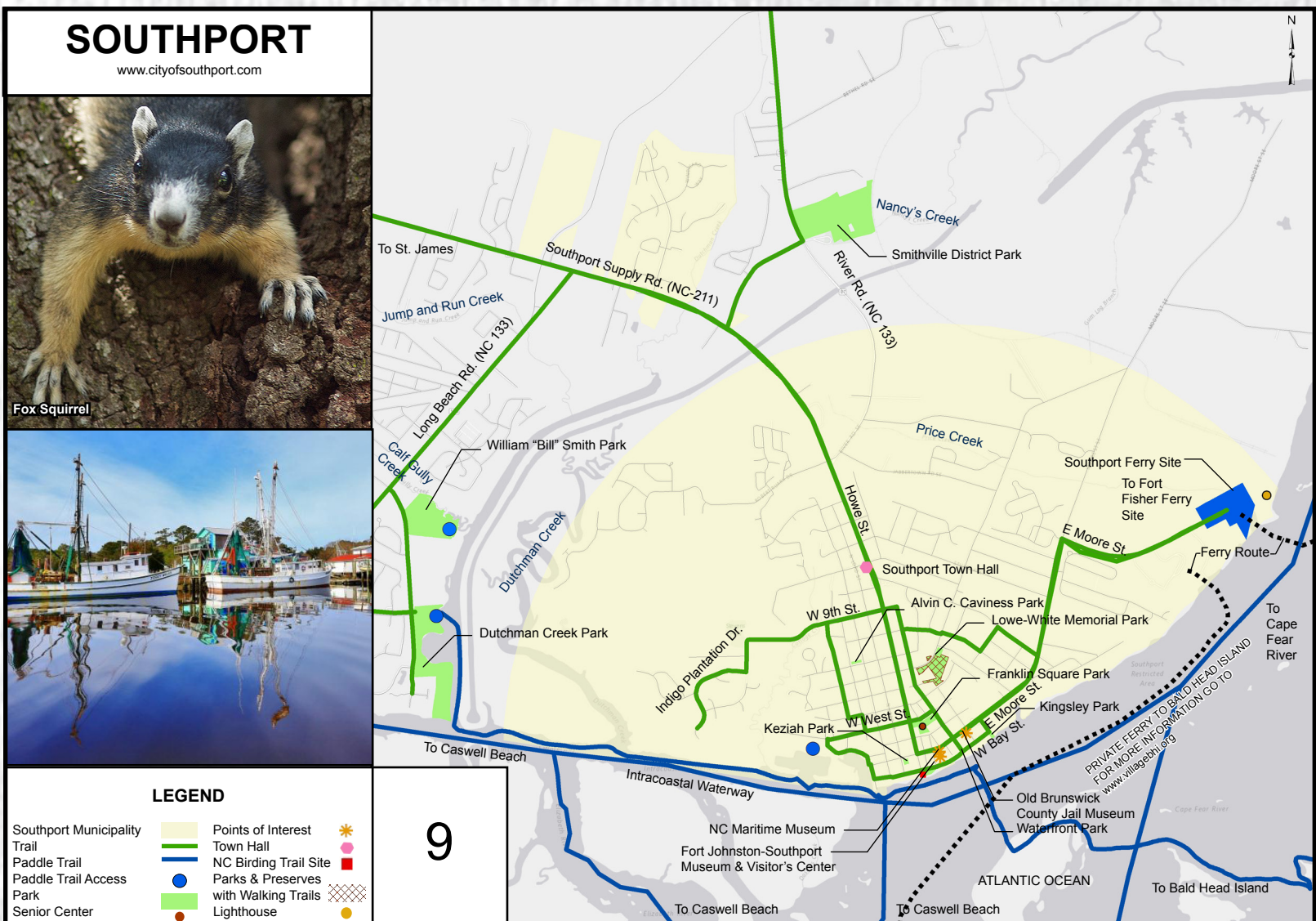
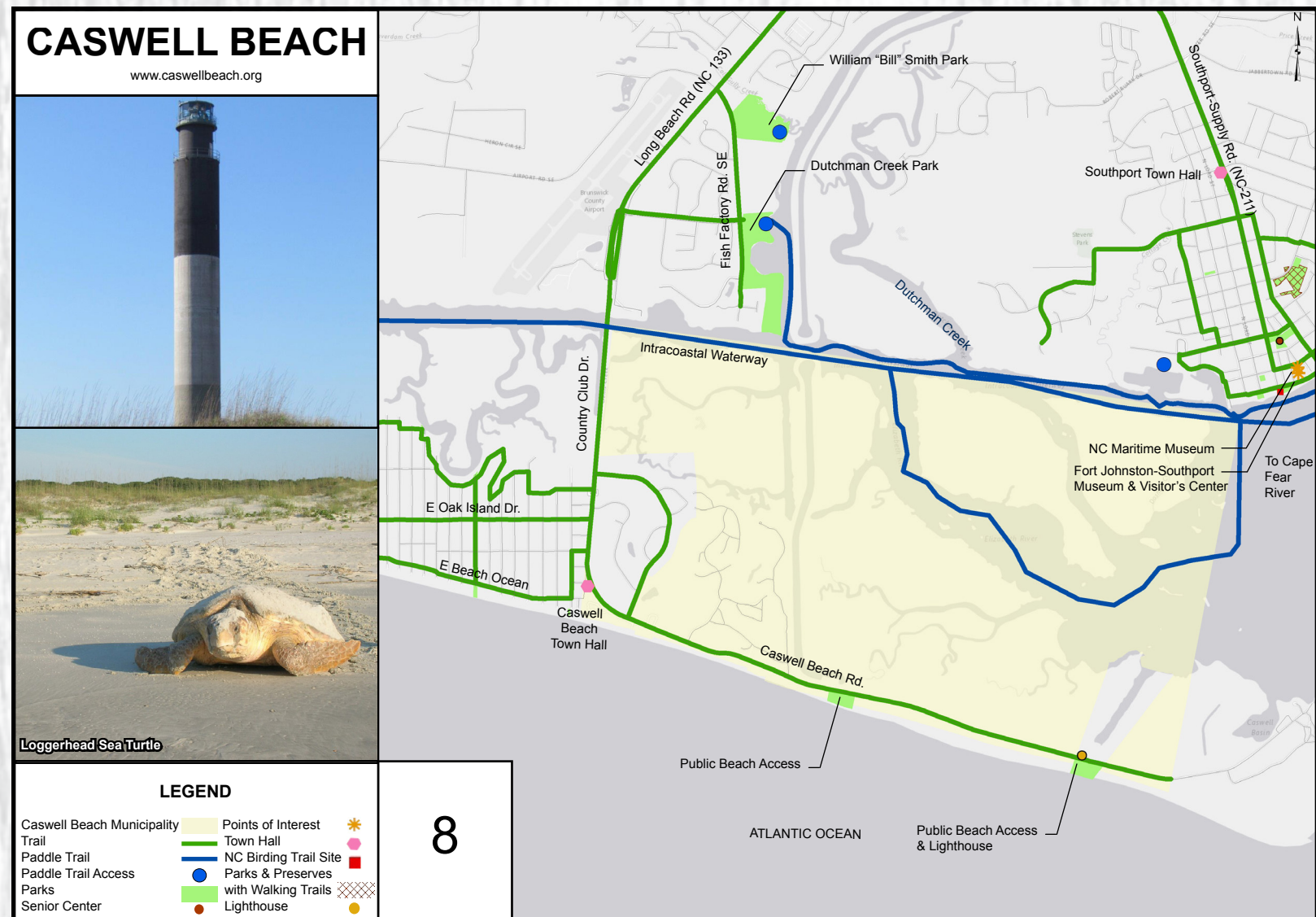
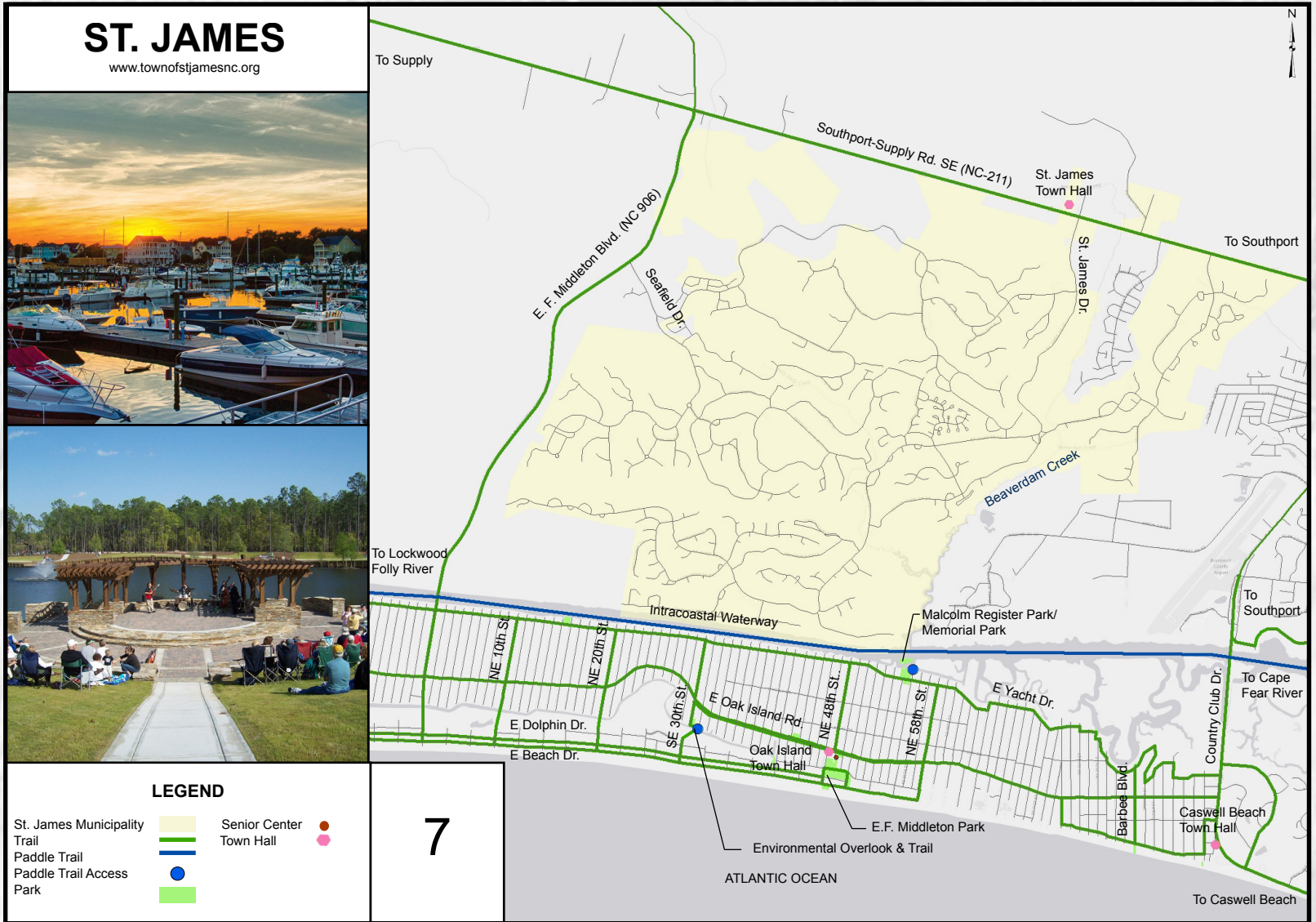
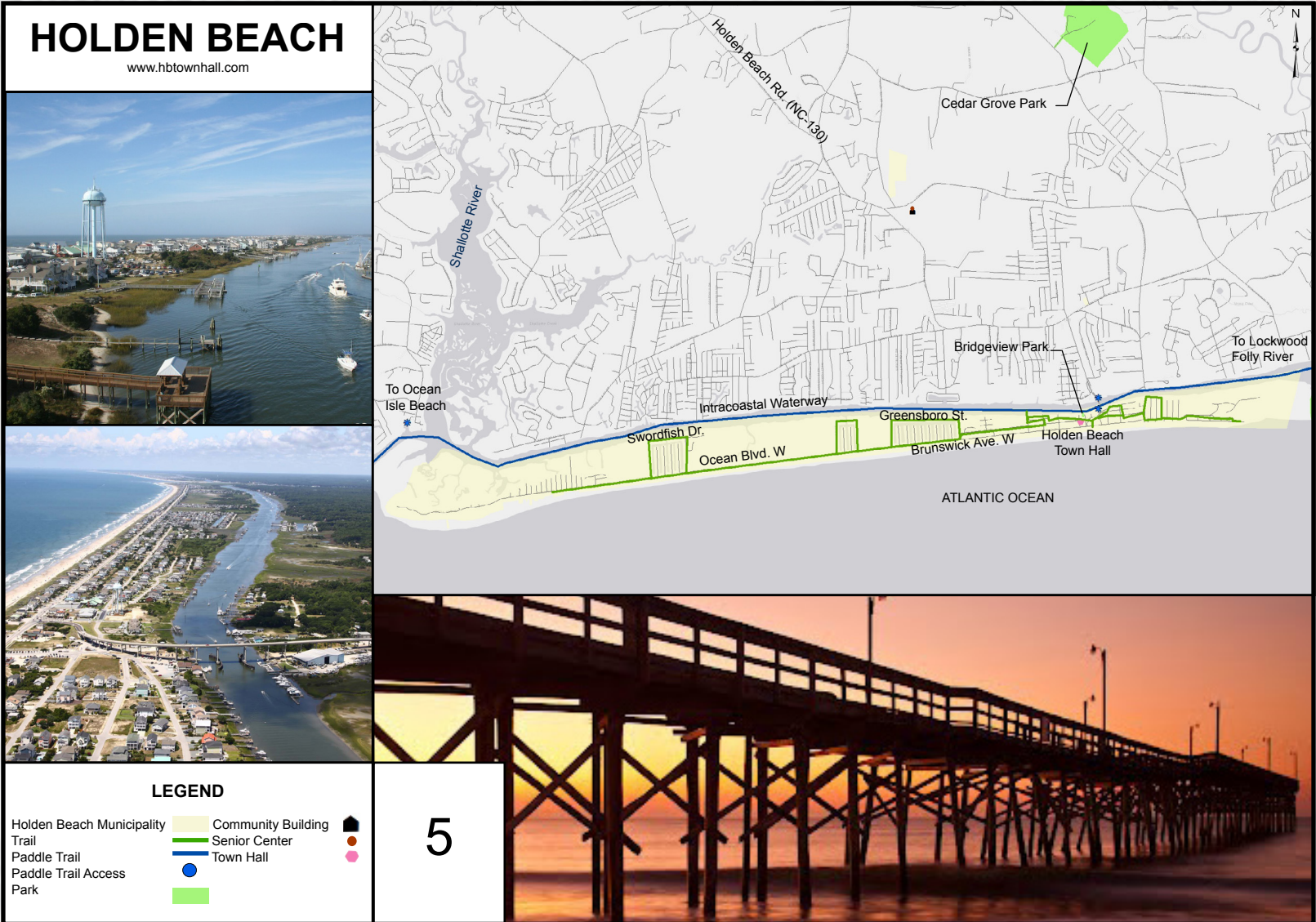
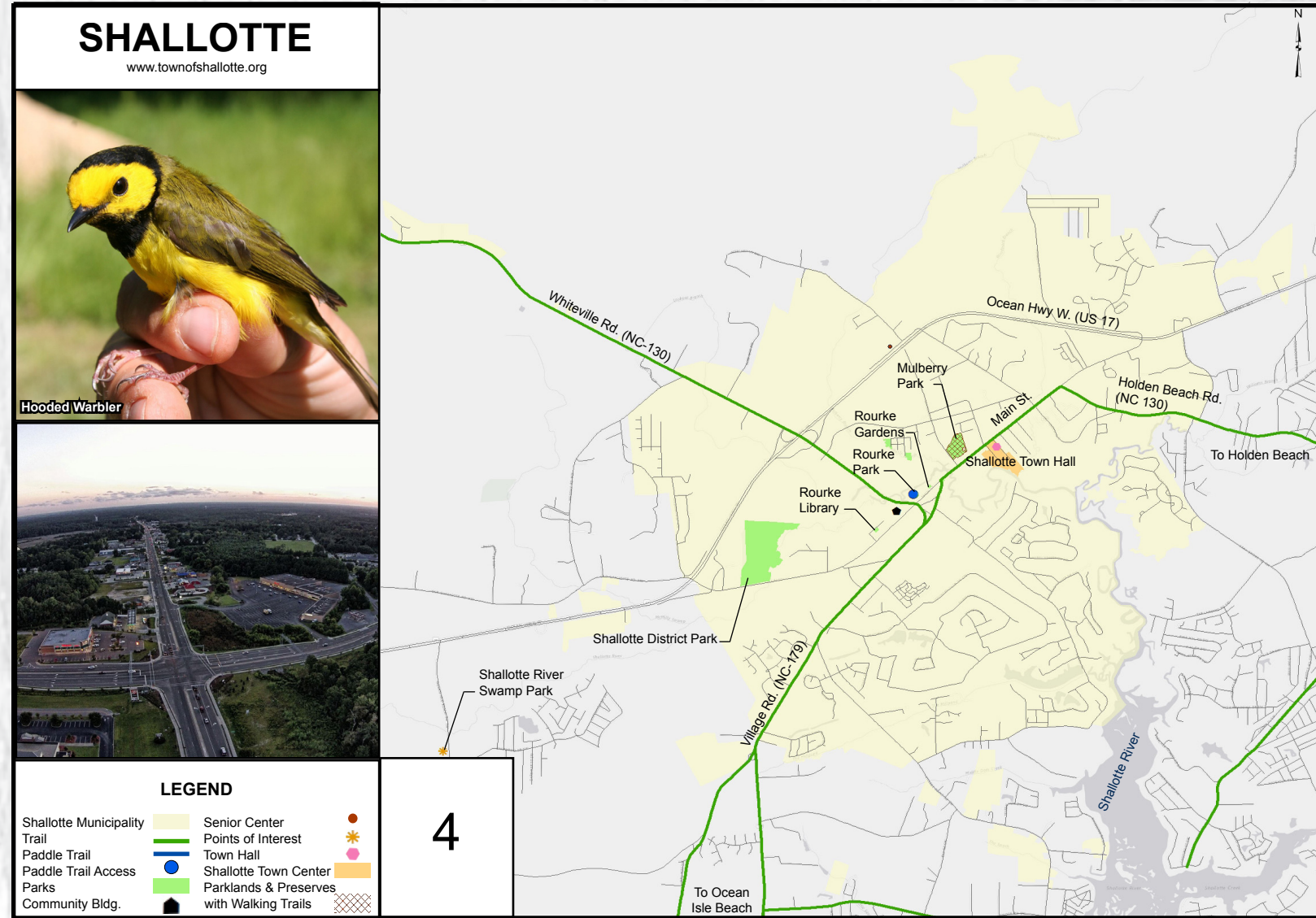
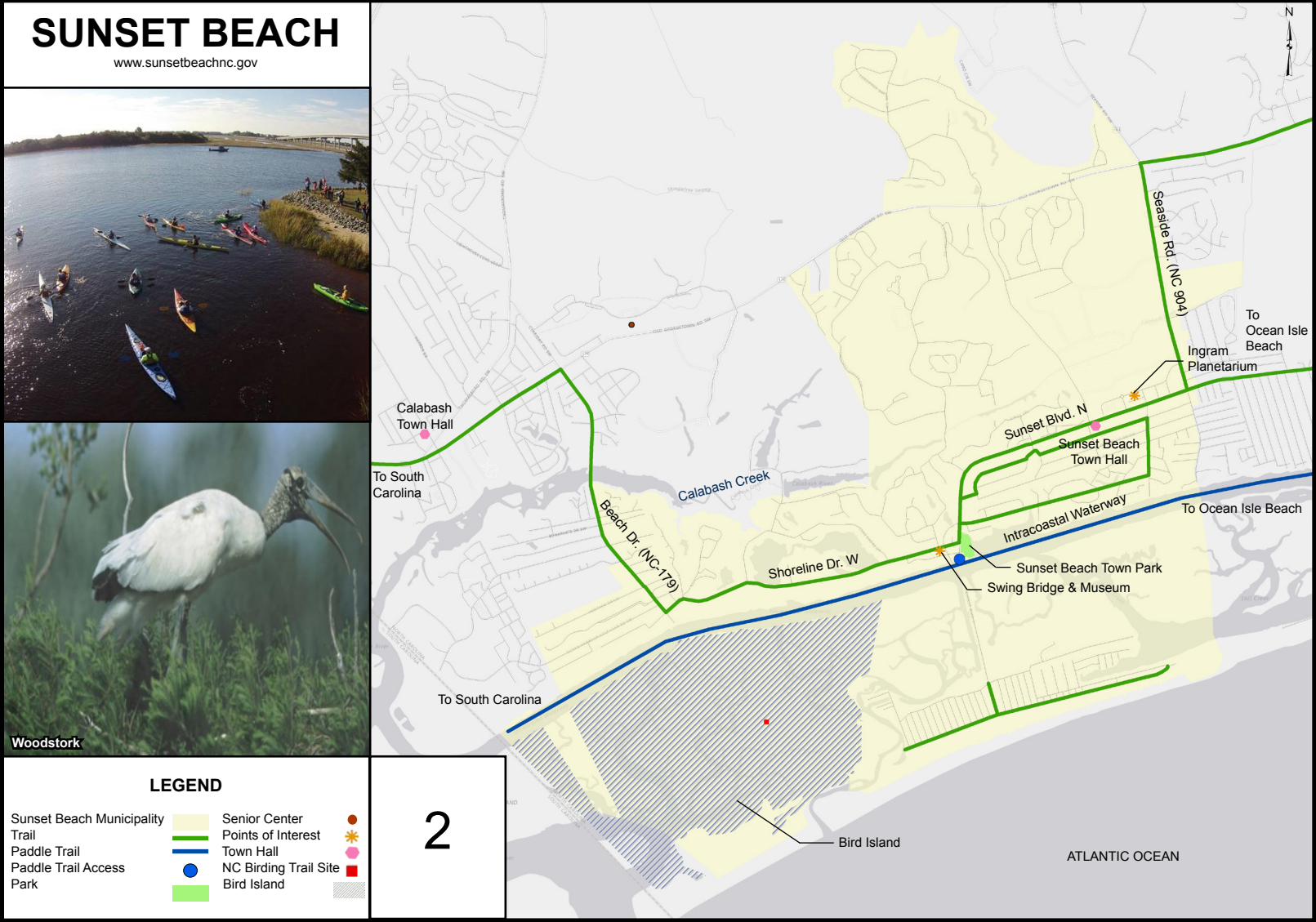
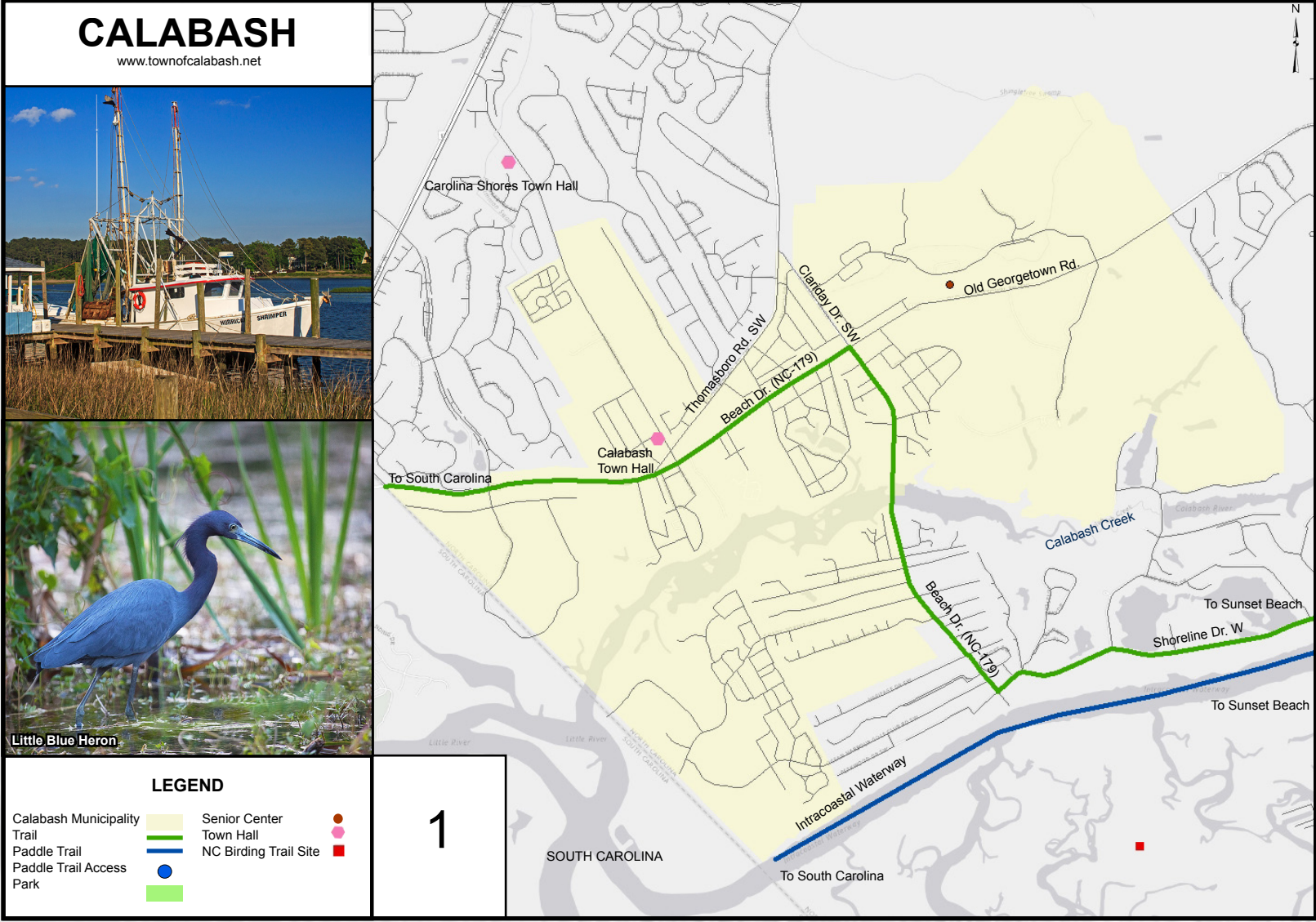


More THAN A Trail

Brunswick County
Existing Walking Trails, Bike Routes, & Paddle Trails



CONSERVING WILDLIFE THROUGH TRAILS

Trails are a great way that communities can protect wildlife habitats as well as promote water and air quality in North Carolina, over one-third of our 1,000 wildlife species are declining. Brunswick County is considered an ecological gem with many areas of high environmental importance and a diverse landscape that offers a dynamic mix of vegetation, wildlife, ecosystems, vistas, wetlands, and waterways. Brunswick County and the Cape Fear Region are part of a unique geologic region called the Cape Fear Arch (<http://capefeararch.org/about/>) with over 50 endemic species of plants and animals found nowhere else in the world and home to the tenth highest diversity of bird and reptile species in the nation. Most conservation lands in Brunswick County work to preserve and manage the longleaf pine ecosystem which has tremendously declined. Along the western edge of the Brunswick County runs the mighty Waccamaw River that is home to 10 endemic aquatic species (<http://www.winyahivers.org/>). People from all over come to experience and enjoy Brunswick County's beautiful and unique landscape. This has led to tremendous growth over the last few decades. With this growth, Brunswick County is balancing population growth and the need for new development to be sensitive to the environment. Several endangered plant and animal species are located in Brunswick County such as the Venus Fly Trap, Pitcher Plant, and the rare Pine Barrens Tree Frog.

Brunswick County uses various tools to achieve this balance. Among the newest tools is the creation of a network of proposed greenways and water trails that interconnect various destinations that could aid in conservation and increase the overall quality of life for residents and visitors. This trail network will serve the needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, and paddlers. To maintain important habitats along the trails, it is ideal to encourage conservation of wild areas through the use of wide trail corridors, native plantings, trail placement on the edge of natural areas, tree canopy across the trail, and minimize disturbance along the trail. Through foresight in the planning and design, an excellent network of connected facilities as well as habitats for wildlife is provided. It will also provide better protection for waterways. Another tool that Brunswick County has is the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that promotes quality development by providing flexibility with site design requirements that encourages preservation of natural features, the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) techniques such as Low Impact Development (LID), tree conservation, and wildlife-friendly development practices and the Green Growth Tool Box (<http://www.ncwildlife.org/Conserving/Programs/GreenGrowthToolbox.aspx>).

TRAIL SAFETY & ETIQUETTE TIPS

The safety for all users on the Brunswick County's trail network is paramount. Remember, the trails are located within a shared public space. Safety and courtesy make for a positive trail experience for everyone. So, please read the below tips and respect your fellow trail users.

Trail Use for Bicyclists:

- Many of the existing trail routes in Brunswick County are on-road and require the cyclist to share the roads with vehicles and are often on major roads that experience high traffic volumes.
- Stop, look and listen for motor traffic before proceeding across any roadway! There are locations where the trail goes along a roadway or crosses a roadway with vehicular traffic. The existing network is not completely signed warning drivers of bicycle traffic. Pass others on the left. Just like out on the road, faster trail users should pass slower users on the left. Give an audible warning with a bell, or call out, "Passing on your left!"
- Don't litter along the trails. Leave only footprints (or tire tracks); take only pictures.
- Warn slower moving traffic that you are passing. Sound your bell loudly or say loudly before you get to the other traffic, "On Your Left." The speeds of a bike make it possible to startle other trail users, so don't wait to give your warning until you are right next to the walker or runner. Please give enough time.
- Be prepared to change a bike tire.
- Please be aware that in North Carolina, the bicycle has the legal status of a vehicle. This means that bicyclists have full rights and responsibilities on the road and are subject to the law and regulations governing the operation of a motor vehicle. North Carolina laws require the following:
 - All bicycle operators under 16 years of age wear a bicycle helmet on public roads, public paths, and public right-of-ways.
 - All child passengers under 40 pounds or 40 inches must be seated and secured in a child seat or bicycle trailer.
- Ride on the right, in the same direction as other traffic.
 - Obeey all traffic signs and signals.
 - Use hand signals to communicate intended movements.
 - Equip their bicycles with a front lamp visible from 300 feet and a rear reflector that is visible from a distance of 200 feet when riding at night.
- The Child Bicycle Safety Act of 2001 requires:
 - All bicycle operators under 16 years of age wear a bicycle helmet on public roads, public paths, and public right-of-ways.
 - All child passengers under 40 pounds or 40 inches must be seated and secured in a child seat or bicycle trailer.

Trail Use for Pedestrians:

- Walk on the right side of the trail. Slowest traffic should keep right and pass on left.
- At busy areas on the trail, avoid walking three abreast. Two people walking side-by-side fills up a lot of trail. When faster traffic comes up from behind, switch from walking abreast to in-line to give them room to go by you safely.
- Pay attention to others along the trail.
- Walkers are encouraged to use off-road trails.
- Be sure that pets are under control at all times. Please remove pet wastes.

PADDLE SAFETY TIPS

SAFETY EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST:

- Fotation gear such as a lifejacket. Regulations require a Coast Guard approved (Type I, II, III, or IV) personal flotation device for each passenger.
- First aid kit and include insect repellent and sunscreen.
- Extra paddle.
- Bow and stern lines.
- Flashlight and extra bulbs.
- Sound distress signal (i.e. whistle or horn).
- Chart or map of the area.

KNOW THE WATER:

- Check with the locals regarding rip currents, tidal currents, waves, shoreline conditions, and wind patterns.
- Beware of water currents and off-shore winds that make it more difficult to paddle.
- Check recent and predicted weather conditions.
- Find out about water conditions (i.e. flooded, low, or normal).
- A flooded river or creek is often dangerous and should not be paddled.
- Low water may expose logs and stumps and other debris, requiring many lift-overs or portages, which make the trip slower and more difficult.
- Coastal streams are affected by tides which can create flow in both directions.
- Windy conditions can affect watercraft, especially on wide coastal rivers and streams.

PLAY IT SAFE:

- Secure your car and take keys with you.
- Paddle in a group or with a buddy.
- Watch for motorboats and yachts. Stay to the right and turn the bow into the wake.
- Let someone know your plans, including where you are paddling and when you plan to be back.
- Place food and gear in water-tight containers and tie them securely to the watercraft.
- Carry drinking water.
- If paddling at night or in limited visibility, use a light to make your vessel more noticeable to other boat traffic.

RESPECT PROPERTY:

- Don't litter or pollute the water with trash or other waste.
- Don't cut living trees or harass animals.
- Access to private land should be by invitation only.
- Camp only in designated areas to avoid trespassing.

Another important component of this network planning effort is the identification of future trails for planning purposes. Persons interested in information concerning the location of future trails, including developers or environmental groups are encouraged to contact the Brunswick County Economic Development and Planning Department at 910-253-2025.