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### **Governor Perdue Supports Students' Drive for a State Horse**

Students from Currituck, Dare, and Carteret Counties will be asking their state legislators to support their request to designate the Colonial Spanish Mustang as the North Carolina State Horse. Governor Bev Perdue supports the effort and letters from both the Governor and Lt. Governor will be read at a special legislative event on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at Shawboro Elementary School. The event is sponsored by the Corolla Wild Horse Fund, Currituck County Board of Education and Board of Commissioners.

Representative Bill Owens; Representative Tim Spear; Secretary Dee Freeman (NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources); Katie Hall (for Senator Marc Basnight); Chairman of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Steve Windham; President of the Foundation for Shackleford Horses, Carolyn Mason; CWHF staff and Board President, Kimberlee Hoey; Currituck County Commissioners and members of the Board of Education will attend. A letter of support will also be read from United States Congressman Walter Jones.

In March of this year, as part of their state mandated writing assessment, the entire fourth grade in the Currituck County School District participated in an effort to designate the state's two historic wild herds of Colonial Spanish Mustangs as the North Carolina State Horse. Students in fourth and second grade as well as kindergarten took part in an educational program presented by the Corolla Wild Horse Fund that also included a rescued and once wild horse on site. They conducted research on other state symbols, studied North Carolina and local history, and wrote individual letters based on what they had learned. The program then expanded to include additional grades in Currituck, Dare and Carteret counties.

Select students from the three counties will have an opportunity to meet their state legislators and other elected officials as they present Representative Owens with nearly a thousand letters during a special assembly at Shawboro elementary school. This new school opened in the fall of 2008 and students were given the opportunity to vote for the symbol that they felt would best represent their school as a mascot. The student body selected the Mustang.

The January 22<sup>nd</sup> program also includes a power point on the history of the wild horses of the Outer Banks and weather permitting, a special riding demonstration of a Colonial Spanish Mustang that once lived wild on the beaches north of Corolla.

CWHF President, Kimberlee Hoey states, “This is such an exciting moment for everyone who loves the wild horses. North Carolina is so blessed to have two historic herds of wild Colonial Spanish Mustangs. They reflect the history and culture of our state and are symbols of strength, beauty, and resilience.”

In her letter of support, Governor Perdue wrote, “They have graced our shores for generations, bringing visitors from across our state and beyond, to North Carolina’s outer banks to witness this marvel. We are privileged to have these horses as part of our heritage . . . Long after they arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they continue to thrive and inspire writers young and old with their tale of survival.”

If successful, North Carolina will join ten other states with state horses and the Colonial Spanish Mustang will be added to the list of other state symbols such as the state dog and the state mammal.

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The Corolla Wild Horse Fund is a 501 1 (c) 3 not for profit. All contributions are tax deductible as IRS regulations allow.