

BUSINESS

Creekside restaurant a retreat for seafood lovers

By JOANN FROHMAN
Correspondent

SUFFOLK — Tucked back in the recesses of scenic Bennetts Creek, Linda and Tommy Frazier have created a retreat for seafood lovers.

Called the Bennetts Creek Marina, Creekside Seafood Restaurant, the sunny, plant-filled dining room offers view of the water as well as culinary delights.

The husband-and-wife team opened the restaurant just two weeks ago as the third phase of their marina operation, which also features a boat landing, dock and combination snackbar and bait-and-tackle shop.

Their menu features all types of seafood — shrimp, crab, fish, oysters and scallops.

"We use only fresh seafood," boasts Linda Frazier, the chief cook and bottle-washer. Her husband manages the marina.

The Fraziers moved to Bennetts Creek about a year ago and have been working night and day since. The property, which had been neglected for years before the Frazier's renovation project began, has been in her family for four generations.

"Our ownership dates back to about 1898," Linda Frazier said. "My great-grandfather operated

a little store and gas station here many, many years ago."

And it was that structure the young Fraziers used as their foundation when the marina was rejuvenated last year. Now, the boat ramp is used constantly, and about 50 boats are docked at the Fraziers' piers.

Last winter, as marina business began to dwindle with the cold weather, the Fraziers began tossing around the idea of opening a restaurant to generate year-round business.

Neither of the pair has had any previous restaurant experience, she said, so they are starting small and taking it one step at a time.

A proposed project to deepen the creek at the marina will influence any additional plans the couple has to upgrade the creekside area.

"All of our plans depend on the dredging," she said, adding that right now, many of the larger boats can only come in and out of the creek during high tide.

The dredging plan has been approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and is tentatively scheduled to begin next spring.

The restaurant has drawn large crowds during its first two weeks of operation, she said, despite its location off the beat-



Staff photo by J.T. McClenny

The Fraziers serve fresh seafood in their waterfront restaurant

en path.

"Last weekend the road washed out up there across from the nursery and we were rerout-

ing traffic through the field to get down here. We had a big crowd," she said.

The restaurant, closed on

Mondays, is open for lunch and dinner six days a week. It is on Ferry Road, just off U.S. Route 17 in Bennetts Creek.