

## Public Comment from 2007 ORL Public Scoping Meeting

### *2/26/2007 Buxton*

#### Issues

- Conflicts increasing between user groups coincide with an increase in visitors and a shrinking beach
- Long established pedestrian beaches have been opened to ORV use
- Current management of CAHA is under political pressure initiated by ORV advocacy groups
- Current established higher use season is too short
- Establish year around pedestrian access only areas
- Make sure operating rules insure safety of pedestrians and protect the resources
- Economy/communities
  - Positive/negative- decreased visitation may be due to crowds and ORV use in the beach
- Ramps at campgrounds to avoid high pedestrian use areas = more
- Econ- decreased visitation may be due to beach closures
- Effect of Sea Level Rise on ORV plans and nesting habitat

#### Alternatives

- Need an alternative on utilizing disturbed sites to develop habitat for protected species.
- NPS should lead efforts to develop a night sky/lighting program to protect wildlife and light pollution
- Need plan for SGA level increases
- If it's not broken, don't fix it
  - Everything working fine!
- Need ADA ramps
- Relocate turtle and bird nests captive breeding program.
- Garbage receptacles at all access points and parking areas
- Rangers pickup debris/trash on the beaches (all NPS staff)
- Keep access to points and spits open 24/7
- Peer review all scientific work
- Pole road/back road history
- Put timelines (specific requests) or all displays on PEPC site
- Putting specific comments regarding alternative elements out before reg neg starts could cause problems in the reg neg process by giving away stakeholders position- with that, what is their incentive to provide specific comments?
- Enlarging and increasing parking areas for safety and visitor experience

### *2/27/07 WB Kill Devil hills*

#### Alternatives WB-3

- Need more enforcement in Now and into the future for anticipated increase in visitation
- Make public ORV violations (public humiliation), Stiff fines, local newspapers

- Delaware- Cape Atlapean (sp?) at the point- check for permit example
  - Should have safety equipment, and some people from outside the area have tried to drive on the beach with a car (non-4 wheel drive) is better now that NCBBA signs are up, could include info in brochures
  - Narragansett Bay Area- 4' high snow fence with covered top to keep gulls out and holes in fence for birds to go in and out (adults could bring food in to chicks)- kept the cats, dogs, skunks out to protect the young
  - Early in AM, see if lot of cat, dog, and fox tracks- on the Hatteras Island
- Should be an expensive permit for anyone to drive on the beach (\$50-100 per year)
  - Are too many young people from out of state that come here and doing donuts and speeding and being inconsiderate to fisherman and driving bird nest closures (would be a deterrent). Safety is a concern with young people in big trucks (large wheel trucks) when children are on the beach. Large wheel trucks is more the issue than # trucks
  - Sept-April is the best fishing, could close then like Nags Head closes in summer to driving on the beach, but some like to take children and equipment (beach chairs etc.) in vehicle to beach in summer.
  - Island Beach State Park- NJ- limited # permits, when you turn yours in then it goes out to someone else also seasonal permits do full inspection of vehicle safety equipment.
  - No Wildwood 3 day permit and inspect truck
- Develop alternative park uses (off shore fishing; use west of NC-12, etc) to offset potential Regional economic impacts
- Increase National Resource interpretation to elicit dialogue to spotlight needed Endangered Species Natural processes and their importance to the regional economy.
- Most suitable bird habitat areas on the beach should be set aside exclusively
  - Ex: Cape Point and Areas near inlets
- No driving permitted in areas in front of houses
- Remaining areas should be split btw motorized use permitted and non-motorized use
- Year-round protection for sensitive species habitat areas
- All sensitive areas should be mapped within plan and clearly marked/designated
- Goal of plan should not be to minimize adverse impacts to sensitive species- goal should be 'eliminate; adverse impacts.
- Should create a permitting system for vehicles based on the quantified carrying capacity of the natural systems (carrying capacity can change over time)
- Plan should recognize that contemporary ORVs are not the traditional use
- Plan should take into account that there are fewer wild areas within the park due to sea level rise and adjacent development and larger numbers of people
- Support zoning concept in prelim Alts board
  - Zoning should be adaptable to take into account dynamic nature of park
- Access based on percentage Alt.
  - The % based on non-ORV use should not be diminished

- Size of resource mgmt zones should not be reduced to accommodate more visitors – priority should be resource
- Use the practical successful knowledge from CACO and FIIS ORV management plans which used compromise and continued a good local economy
- Use locally contracted ORV buses during heavy summer visitor use driving behind the dune line to transport visitors along the beach
- Charge an ORV permit fee that will sustain all mgmt. actions needed in this plan
- Minimizing ORV impacts may not allow for sufficient natural processes on the barrier island habitat and this may continue the decrease of end. Species leading to species extinction. Redirect the primary objective of the EIS to wildlife protection but focus on ORV use in the rules to entered into the CFR to be developed to protect wildlife
- Keep beaches open at night for rec. uses
- Stop use of fireworks in park
- Develop research study to help with turtle nest relocation program to maximize numbers and gender
- Educate visitors who use beach (weekly rentals)
- ORV training – online- with certificate of completion
- Why isn't the title Cape Hatteras National Seashore recreation area?
- Issue statements overly focus on negative impacts of ORV use. Positive impacts should also be addressed
- Feel regulations are closing in-feels like plan is to close beaches to ORV use eventually
- Would accept a permit system if it kept the people who break rules off beach at Nags Head (past 30 yrs at least) can drive on beach with a \$25 permit. Keep open what is currently open. DO NOT want to see a “ 1on 1” off capacity control system
- Permit would provide funds to help NPS operations
- Access points
  - Ramp information should include adequate information for new users. i.e. rope, tire pressure, equipment etc.
  - Make this a “do” list. Speed limits should be marked and enforce
  - Develop beach watch program to assist NPS with enforcement
  - Develop mile marker system on the beach
  - Public access walk over signs “public access”

## ***2/25/2007 Raleigh***

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CAHA>

- Effect of ORV mgmt. on local economy could be negative, positive, or no effect. We don't know yet. Drop in the # of visitors to park could be because people come and see a rutted beach, or know that's what happens there (now the national experience it used to be- villages developed, not same aesthetics-scenic views).

- Large population increase on planet increase impacts
- Everything has a carrying capacity
- Changes in width of beach- diminishing resource since creation of park
- No rangers on duty at night, we need more ranger personnel
- Need quick response 24/7 from law enf. Personnel
- Appreciate NPS listening meetings
- ORV mgmt plan needs to provide adequate rangers 24/7
- Dumpsters/trash receptacles at all access points, also bathrooms
- Install fish cleaning stations at ramp 55 area
- Why don't you use hatcheries to protect Endangered Species (i.e. birds).  
Changing Landscape, (i.e. rise in sea level, hurricanes, etc) makes practical and increases chance of species recovery
- In the scope of the plan, will enforcement of unlawful uses be addressed?
- Would like to see campgrounds remain open- maybe to December
- Humans (including their ORVs) are also part of the ecosystem and need to be considered in the plan. They also need to be responsible with what they do.
- Fisherman are important to the economy of Dare County
- Fisherman are best conservationists, police themselves – help control letter and get fish back in water quickly
- NPS should keep in mind history of the island re watermen (commercial and recreational fishermen)
- Ocean is becoming inaccessible to middle income people, piers in NC are disappearing, too far for normal people to walk to Hatteras spit.
- Different desires people with 2<sup>nd</sup> homes e.g. in Friso who don't want to see vehicles on the beach in the view from their house; people who come to the park to fish and drive the beach to get to fishing spots
- Rebuild berm ramp 43 (north) adjacent/parking lot
- Rebuild pole road (historic access)
- Construct by-pass or back roads around habitat areas
- Increase access to sound side for kayak launch sites
- Adaptive mgmt- react to breeding no pre-nesting closures
- Develop "beach watch" program need all style response
- High water line or little above to H2O should stay open, don't see an issue with plover by the water
- Long family history of coming to park and many different uses including driving on beach for access to do other activities – don't own a house there/visit every year
- No needs to restrict activity between nest and water 'til hatching (or no need to too low temp), protect nests that have flooded and have non-viable eggs. Want reasonable mgmt. practices- should protect viable nests and give up on non-viable ones that won't hatch.
- Important to keep beach access open and maintain facilities (restrooms and fish cleaning tables)- tourism is important.

#### 1. Improved law enforcement

2. Awareness of socio-economic impacts on beach closures
3. Restore pole road to pre-isabel condition
4. Provide more new ramps and access roads
5. Improve maintenance of existing ramps
6. Promptly reopen any “temporary” beach closures once “threat” has passed
7. Provide ramp amenities—restrooms, dumpsters, air pumps, fish cleaning station
8. Improve drainage in areas of ramps 44 and 49
9. Better predator control – feral cats, raccoons, foxes, etc.
10. Remember: responsible mobile surf fishermen are the best friends the NPS has!

#### Pro points

- Closures to protect bird habitat were promptly removed
- Appreciate current “2006” mgmt practices
- Access priority should remain high best fishing on points/spits
- Keep all ORV access 24/7
- ORV driven self certify/web based training program
- Handicap accessibility to beaches via ORV;s
- South side Oregon inlet open access ocean side (Pea Island)

#### Issues/Concerns

- Cultural change impacting the islands
  - i.e. greater traffic
  - more resources being used (limited)
  - greater number of residence especially larger non native investment properties
  - change in demographics fishing village – resort community
- how do you maintain the cultural identity that was there
- Air quality- question idling engines scientific data to support ORVs
- How much being brought in from other sources
- Soundscapes- there are other sounds impacting this- not just from vehicular noise any measuring of decibel levels?
- Historical and functional info needed to help evaluate issues
- Sea level rising- how will this affect impact the decision making process
- Air quality- vehicles on beach vs vehicles on Hwy 12 analysis of assessment of impact of these
- Endangered Species Act- because of development how has this impacting wildlife where hx [sic] would have been
  - What has hx nested/not nested
  - Look at all factors affecting wildlife ORV use is one piece of puzzle
  - Study impact of loss habitat in other places. How does this affect the outer banks? What fraction of role does ORV usage play in on this?
- Include park info/reg into beach rental packets

*DC 3/1/2007*

- Alternative element for beach access for elderly and disabled
- Commercial considerations? Nets? Area?
- Need more rangers
- Adding areas for ORVs on Pea Island would relieve crowding on Hatteras Island (mostly at Cape Point)
- From fisherman's point of view not all areas are equal, northern end of Pea Island is of interest for fishing and other use
- 1<sup>st</sup> 300 yds no. of Rodanthe town boundary is popular for surfing and many park on the side of the road and if could drive on beach could help separate fisherman from surfers.
- Q- how is cte. Made up? Who selects members? How many? Who chairs the meetings? Who pays for the mediators? What qualifications do the mediators have to understand and resolve the problem?
- April 1 – June 1 (Northern migration of +- Q2 popular species- in summer are further north and in bays) + Sept 15 – Nov 30 (southern migrations) are prime fishing times, summer people are probably doing more other activities, fishermen could put up with some restrictions in the summer but restrictions for critters that don't show up doesn't make sense- haven't seen any piping plovers – would be interesting to see one (piping plover). Most people don't believe they're there.
- Have had nothing but good experience with the Rangers- hope this continues

notes from flip charts at 1581  
Public mtgs

February 28<sup>th</sup> Raleigh

- No rangers on duty at night
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- Need quick response 24/7 from law enforcement
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February 27<sup>th</sup> Kill Devil Hills

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March 11<sup>th</sup> Washington D.C.

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