

Britta Muiznieks
 04/16/2008 01:12 PM
 EDT

To: Thayer Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS
 cc:
 Subject: Fw: Habitat Enhancement at Cape Point

Below is an email that Marcia wrote up regarding the discing that went on. I've never approached Suzanne Wrenn (Warren's wife) to see if she had any documentation for this.

I never had any luck finding any of the original documentation for the discing project. When I called Jaime, he referred me to the following document. I didn't find any reference to the discing.




Page from Collazo, Walters, and Parnell.pdf

----- Forwarded by Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS on 04/16/2008 12:58 PM -----



Marcia Lyons
 10/15/2007 11:58 AM
 EDT

To: Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS
 cc:
 Subject: Re: Habitat Enhancement at Cape Point 

Britta,

When PIPL monitoring began in 1989, most plover nesting and foraging at Cape Point occurred between the south side of the salt pond and the south facing beach. The area was open and sparsely vegetated. As the area became more vegetated, there was concern that the veg was claiming breeding sites along the south facing beach and acting as barrier between the nesting sites and the salt pond, where many broods foraged. Ries Collier, park biologist, had the idea of discing the site to remove the grasses, sedges and rushes. The first year (or two) Doug Blackman disced upland areas and then Ries met with CAMA and got approval to disc the lower spots. Doug disced the Cape Point site each March between 1992 and 1998. I believe Suzanne Wrenn (working with Jamie Callazo) documented one nest in the disced area and a few broods traversing the site to forage at the pond. I documented one nest in 1995. Each season, vegetation grew back before the end of the nesting season. I remember S. Wrenn recommending in a report that mowed paths be maintained between the south facing beach and the salt pond to allow brood access to the salt pond. This was never done as the activity would have been a disturbance to the birds. As years progressed the veg became very dense and Doug sometimes had to mow the site before discing it. The tractor also left behind deep ruts in the poorly drained soils that did not disappear from one season to the next. No plover activity was found at the Cape Point site between 1996 and 1998. It was felt the vegetation became too dense to remove properly by discing and what was removed grew back quickly. It was also felt that the deeply rutted terrain could hinder brood movements. Several of the breeding plovers had also started to nest on the east facing beaches and use newly developed foraging flats which formed to the east and southeast of the salt pond.

Between 1995 - 1997, Doug also disced a recently vegetated area at Hatteras Inlet to reopen access between nesting sites and a soundside foraging pond. No plover activity was ever documented using the managed site. Broods foraged in small interior flats. The soundside pond disappeared after a storm in 1998 and new flats closer to the inlet were formed. The PIPL started to use these new flats as well as the interior sites.

One reason the park started the habitat manipulation at Cape Point was to try to keep a suitable

breeding habitat available where it did not conflict with ORV use. The discing project were abandoned because it was a lot of work with little or no positive results. A FWS person said we might even have enhanced vegetation growth by aerating the soils through discing. Additional foraging flats formed naturally as the old ones became inaccessible.

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Britta Muiznieks

Britta Muiznieks
10/10/2007 12:02 PM
EDT

To: Marcia Lyons/CAHA/NPS@NPS
CC:
Subject: Habitat Enhancement at Cape Point

Marcia-
The issue of habitat enhancement has come up one more time. Jaime was referenced in the 1998 PIPL annual report but there was no lit cited section in the report. Do you know what the citation refers to? Do you know if these were separate annual reports that he provided to the park service for work he was conducting here? Why do you think the project failed? Should something different be attempted or should we just leave it alone and let nature take its course?

Any insight would be appreciated!

Thanks,
Britta

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"Habitat Enhancement 1998 PIPL Report

In attempts to improve plover nesting\foraging habitat, vegetation was mechanically removed from Cape Point and Hatteras Inlet spit sites in March. A prime reason for disking was to reopen access to brackish ponds where plover broods had foraged in previous years. For the sixth consecutive year, approximately 90 acres was disked at Cape Point. At Hatteras Inlet, approximately 22 acres was disked from 1995-1997. In 1997, both sites were initially mowed to augment disking operations.

Dense vegetation, up to 18" high returned to the disked sites by mid-July making them unsuitable habitat.

Between 1992 and 1995, two nests and several broods have been sighted in the Cape Point

enhancement site (Collazo 1992, 1993, 1994, Lyons 1995). No nests or chicks have been seen in the past three years. Broods forage in adjacent sand flats. Vegetation growth has increased at the Cape Point site making discing efforts less effective. No plovers were ever found utilizing the Hatteras Inlet enhanced site. In 1998, experimental manipulation at this site was not possible due to shoreline changes. Another suitable foraging habitat has recently developed closer to the inlet.

Habitat enhancement project at Cape Point has not produced the intended results in recent years. No plover activity was ever observed at the Hatteras Inlet site and shoreline changes have negated any need to continue there.

At present, it is not recommended to continue the habitat enhancement projects at Cape Point and Hatteras Inlet.” -Marcia Lyons, Natural Resource Specialist 1998.