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This is a rough Idea. Frank Folb and Jim Harris (me) want to try get this done. We want to provide man-power and machine. The work will be done (majority of work) in early winter, with any corrections/modifications/enhancements would be done before pre-nesting season gets underway.

“It was tried in the past

In point of fact, as per section 1.242 of the USFWS Piping Plover recovery plan vegetation control was **SUCCEESSFULLY** used during 1993 through 1995.¹ Furthermore, this conclusion, as presented by USFWS, was supported by an article coauthored by Marcia Lyons and published in the Proceedings of the 1995 National Park Piping Plover Conference.²

I have spoken to David Allen, Pete Benjamin, and some others regarding civilians providing men and machines to clear and design feeding and nesting/resting habitat between the dredge pond and ramp 45. What we would do is design several rows of shallow ditches/swales for water to collect in to enhance the vegetation would be piled into several dune structures creating partial wind break, but be far enough apart so birds feel safe going between them. Every year we would redo and improve this habitat to encourage birds to use this created area.

The primary reason we want to do that is to get the birds to move into this area, and away from the east facing beach and also to move farther up the south facing beach opening a corridor for ORVs to get to the Point and the Hook. If the birds fail to use this new area we all would study why & see if improvements could be made the following winter.

If it works at the Point doing something similar at Oregon and Ocracoke Inlets would be next.

We want to be proactive in creating good habitat. When birds congregate they poop or make fertilizer, when that happens plants grow. When plants grow, some birds will not use that previously used area. They keep moving toward the ocean, decreasing any chance for access by humans.

¹ ...a small-scale vegetation removal experiment was conducted at Cape Hatteras National Seashore in 1993. The results were encouraging, with piping plovers and other shorebirds using the treated area for nesting and immediately (J. Nicholls in litt. 1994). This program was expanded during the next two seasons, and in 1995, it encompassed 90 acres at Cape Point and 20 acres at Hatteras Spit (Collier and Lyons in NPS 1995).

² We decided, after consultation with researchers, USFWS, and a host of coastal regulatory agencies, and, and after completing the full NEPA process, to initiate a vegetation control program. As a surrogate for ocean overwash, we mowed and lightly disked a 50 acre test plot. Shorebird response to the action was sufficiently encouraging for us to expand the treatment the following year. The managed area now encompasses approximately ninety acres. This, the third year of the program, included similar treatment of 20 acres at Hatteras Spit, another favored shorebird use area undergoing the same vegetation encroachment experienced at Cape Point. Disking was completed in March, prior to nesting season.