

0021880

From: [Jim Lyons](mailto:Jim.Lyons@nps.gov)
Reply To: chra07@yahoo.com
To: [Darrell Echols](mailto:Darrell.Echols@nps.gov)
Cc: [Cyndy Holda@nps.gov](mailto:Cyndy.Holda@nps.gov); [Mike Murray](mailto:Mike.Murray@nps.gov); [John McCutcheon](mailto:John.McCutcheon@nps.gov)
Subject: Please Reconsider
Date: 08/22/2008 09:10 AM

8/22/08
Buxton,

Darrell Echols
Deputy Superintendent CHNS

Darrell,

John McCutcheon called me last week to inform me of your decision not to return the portion of beach north of Ramp 43 to its former vehicle-free designation. John inferred that your decision was based on the Park's new rationale that since there is currently more pedestrian access than ORV access, this section of beach would not revert back to its pedestrian-only access. This is a different justification than was originally given when access was changed in May. At that time Park managers indicated that the section of beach north of Ramp 43 was to be opened to vehicles since the Consent Decree closed many other areas of beach for resource protection. Since many of these resource closures have now been taken down, the beach north of Ramp 43 should have been closed to vehicles a few weeks ago.

According to the Park's most recent access report, a total 42.8 miles of NPS ocean beach are available on Hatteras Island. 21.8 are currently available for ORV access, 20 miles for pedestrian access and 1.9 miles closed for all type of access because of resource protection. Of the 20 miles of pedestrian access 13.7 miles of this area is pedestrian access because of a "Seasonal Beach" designation. Seasonal beach is currently only designated only from May 15 to Sept 15. Please make note that much of the seasonal beach is only available to the visitors and residents that occupy the adjacent private holdings. There is no public parking or access to these areas, a less than equitable situation for other non ORV Park visitors.. In addition, the visitor experience along these developed beaches cannot be compared to the experience of a beach that does not have adjacent development or is an ORV route and area.

This leaves only 6.3 miles of beach available as pedestrian access only on Hatteras Island. These 6.3 miles of beaches are closed to ORV use solely for vehicle safety because of narrow steep beaches. No forethought as to the recreational, logistical and esthetic needs of non-ORV visitors is considered. This type of beach designation can and has recently been open to ORV use without warning. Much of this safety beach is accessible only by parking on the side of Highway 12 and walking through vegetation and the NPS dunes to get to the beach. When visitors get to this beach it is narrow, steep, close to the highway and a less than stellar NPS esthetic experience.

Do you know how many miles of beach are currently open to ORVs under the Consent Decree compared to last year at this time under the IPSMP?

I respectfully request that you reconsider returning this beach (and all seasonal pedestrian beaches) back to what they have historically been.

Sincerely,

Jim Lyons
POB 698
Buxton, NC 27920
(252-475-0123)