

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

ORV Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

Management Activity	Alternative A—No Action, Continuation of Management under IPSMS	Alternative B – No Action, Continuation of Management Under Consent Decree	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
ORV Access	<p>General Visitors accessing the Seashore by ORV must use only designated beach access ramps and soundside access roads to enter designated ORV routes.</p>	Same as alternative A			
	<p>Oceanside Ramps ORV access points are provided via 18 oceanside ramps located off NC-12. Ramps are numbered and identified on the Seashore's ORV route map as official vehicle access routes. Seashore staff maintains ramps and signage.</p>	Same as alternative A	<p>Oceanside Ramps [See Draft ORV Use Areas Table for details.]</p>	<p>Oceanside Ramps [See Draft ORV Use Areas Table for details.]</p>	<p>Oceanside Ramps [See Draft ORV Use Areas Table for details.]</p>
	<p>Soundside Ramps ORV access points are provided via 17 soundside ramps located off NC-12. Seashore staff maintains ramps and signage.</p>	Same as alternative A	<p>Soundside Ramps Existing soundside ramps would remain open. Signage/posts would be installed at the primitive parking areas and boat launch areas to prevent damage to vegetation and other soundside resources.</p>	<p>Soundside Ramps Soundside ramps to designated boat launch areas and Pole Road access to Cable Crossing and Spur Road would remain open. The remaining soundside ramps would be closed to ORV use and small parking areas would be constructed to provide pedestrian access to the water. Signage/posts would be installed at the parking areas and boat launch areas to prevent damage to vegetation and other soundside resources.</p>	<p>Soundside Ramps Same as Alternative D.</p>
	<p>Interdunal Roads One lane, interdunal routes have been designated as follows: <i>Bodie Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None. 	Same as alternative A	<p>Interdunal Roads Same as alternative A, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing interdunal roads would be maintained as needed to provide access to ORV areas. If there is not enough area to provide two lanes, a pull-off would be created. 	<p>Interdunal Roads Same as alternative C.</p>	<p>Interdunal Roads Same as alternative C, plus:</p> <p><i>Bodie Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish pedestrian route from Ramp 4 to Bodie Island Spit.

	<p><i>Hatteras Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cape Point between Ramp 44 to Ramp 45 ▪ Hatteras Inlet from Ramp 55 to the inlet (includes Pole Road and Spur Road). <p><i>Ocracoke Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None. 	<p>Same as alternative A</p>	<p>Same as alternative A</p>	<p>Same as alternative A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open the access through Cape Point Campground to Ramp 45 when both campground is closed and Ramp 45 is open. ▪ Establish new interdunal road from Ramp 45 west to, or near, Ramp 49, with beach connector routes as appropriate. <p>Same as alternative A</p>
<p>Hours of Allowable ORV Operation on Beach</p>	<p>All areas of the seashore open 24 hours a day year round.</p>	<p>All beaches open to ORV use from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. year round, closed from 10:00p.m. – 6:00 a.m. May 1 – November 15.</p> <p>Permit required for ORV use from 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. September 16 – November 15.</p>	<p>November 1 through April 30: Designated ORV routes and areas open to ORV use 24 hours a day.</p> <p>May 1 - October 31: Designated ORV routes and areas open to ORV use from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.</p>	<p>November 1 through April 30: Designated ORV routes and areas open to ORV use 24 hours a day.</p> <p>May 1 – October 31: Designated ORV routes and areas open to ORV use from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>November 1 through April 30: Designated ORV routes and areas open to ORV use 24 hours a day.</p> <p>May 1 - October 31: Designated ORV routes and areas open to ORV use from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Night fishing (“park and fish”) allowed from 10:00 p.m. to 6 a.m. subject to a permit.</p>
	<p>Visitors accessing the Seashore by ORV must drive only on marked ORV routes and comply with posted restrictions.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>
<p>ORV Routes</p>	<p>ORV beach routes are a designated area seaward of a line 20 feet east or southeast of the toe of the dunes or vegetation line or 150 feet west or northwest of the existing tide, whichever is less, or between marked posts and existing tide.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>ORV beach routes would be a designated area from 10 meters (30 feet) from the toe of the dune to the existing tide line in areas open to ORV use, provided there is sufficient beach width to allow an ORV corridor of at least 20 meters (30 feet) above the mean high tide line.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>
<p>Beach Parking</p>	<p>Parking within routes is allowed in any configuration.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>Parking within ORV routes is allowed, but only one vehicle deep. Stacking of vehicles in more than one row would be prohibited.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>
<p>ORV Use Areas</p>	<p>All areas of the Seashore are open to ORV access.</p> <p>Refer to Use Areas Table.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>ORV access would be prohibited in all areas of the Seashore except where routes and areas are specifically designated.</p> <p>Refer to Use Areas Table.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C</p>

<p>ORV Safety Closures</p>	<p>ORV safety closures established as needed to address safety conditions such as debris on the beach or narrow beaches. Narrow beaches are reopened as the beach widens. Safety closures applicable only to ORV access; pedestrian access is maintained.</p> <p>Existing ORV safety closures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ramp 1 to Ramp 2 ▪ 1.8 miles south of Ramp 38 to 0.4 mile north of Ramp 43. ▪ Buxton to Lighthouse Beach ▪ Northern boundary of Frisco to Hatteras Village ▪ September 16 – May 14: Hatteras Village ▪ 1.5 miles north of Ramp 67 to 1 mile south of Ramp 59 	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>ORV safety closures established in areas open to ORV use as needed to address safety conditions such as debris on the beach or narrow beaches. Safety closures would be applicable only to ORV access; pedestrian access would be maintained through all safety closures.</p> <p>ORV safety closures would be reopened when/if conditions improve as determined by bi-weekly monitoring by Seashore law enforcement. Park staff to establish minimum beach width that would warrant safety closure.</p>	<p>ORV safety closures would not be established. ORV drivers would need to determine conditions and safety and would drive at own risk.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C, plus: <i>When village beaches are open to ORVs...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village beaches that are at least 60 feet (18 m) wide from the toe of the dune to mean high tide line would be open to ORV use during the winter season. 	
<p>Administrative ORV Closures</p>	<p>Beach in front of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse closed to ORV access. Buxton Woods road closed to ORV access.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A.</p>	<p>No administrative closures would be established. (Buxton Woods road is a non-ORV area.)</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>	
<p>Scheduled Resource Closures</p>	<p>Year-Round Closures</p>	<p>Suitable interior habitats closed to all access year round at Bodie Island Spit, Cape Point, Hatteras Spit, north end of Ocracoke Island, Ocracoke Inlet Spit to provide for resting and foraging of piping plover. Examples of suitable habitats include ephemeral ponds and moist flats at Cape Point, Hatteras Spit, Ocracoke, and Bodie Island Spit. Actual locations of suitable foraging and resting habitat may change due to natural processes.</p>	<p>Same as alternative A</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>
	<p>Sensitive Resource Areas</p>	<p>Areas with high likelihood of concentrated beach nesting bird activity, based on past nesting history and/or annual habitat assessments</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>SRAs identified in ORV Use Areas Table to be closed to ORV use minimum March 15 – October 14 , except some that are identified as year-round non-ORV areas.</p>	<p>SRAs identified in ORV Use Areas Table to be closed year-round to ORV use.</p>	<p>SRAs identified in ORV Use Areas Table to be closed to ORV use March 15 – August 31, or until all chicks in the area have fledged, whichever is later; except some that are identified as year-round non-ORV areas.</p>
	<p>Pre-nesting Closures</p>	<p>Pre-nesting closures established per the Interim Protected Species Management Strategy. ORV and pedestrian corridors provided per the IPSMS.</p>	<p>Pre-nesting closures provided per the requirements of the Consent Decree. As season progresses, if shoreline changes no adjustment of pre-nesting closures permitted to accommodate ORV access.</p>	<p>Based on an annual habitat assessment conducted prior to the breeding season, pre-nesting areas are established within the respective SRAs, while allowing an access corridor as identified in ORV Use Areas Table.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>

<p>Temporary (“as needed”) Resource Closures</p>	<p>Temporary (“as needed”) resource closures are established in accordance with the <i>Interim Protected Species Management Strategy/Environmental Assessment</i> and associated <i>Biological Opinion</i>.</p> <p>ORV and pedestrian corridors are provided, if feasible and as appropriate around any resource related closure according to the <i>Interim Strategy</i> and <i>Biological Opinion</i> (see Table 1. Resource Related ORV Access Restrictions and Closures at Cape Hatteras National Seashore).</p>	<p>All resource closure requirements from alternative A would remain in effect unless modified by the resource closure requirements under this alternative.</p> <p>Temporary resource closures would be established as necessary if protected species behavior warrants and/or if habitat is established.</p> <p>Due to size of buffer distances used, ORV and pedestrian corridors are rarely feasible around temporary resources closures per the terms of the Consent Decree.</p>	<p>As identified in the Resources Protection Measures Table: Implement alternative SM1 at all locations, except implement alternative SM2 at the spits and Cape Point.</p> <p>“Protected species” includes piping plover, American oystercatcher, colonial waterbirds, Wilson’s plover, sea turtles, and seabeach amaranth).</p>	<p>As identified in the Resources Protection Measures Table: Implement alternative SM1 at all locations.</p> <p>“Protected species” includes piping plover, American oystercatcher, colonial waterbirds, Wilson’s plover, sea turtles, and seabeach amaranth).</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>
<p>Wintering Closures</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Based on an annual wintering habitat assessment of the SRAs conducted after the breeding season, wintering areas are established within the respective SRAs, while allowing an access corridor (pedestrian or pedestrian/ORV) as identified in ORV Use Areas Table.</p>	<p>Same as alternative C</p>	<p>Same as alternative C.</p>

Resource Protection Buffers	As identified in the Interim Strategy	As identified in the Interim Strategy, as modified by the Consent Decree.	As identified in the Resources Protection Measures Table: Implement alternative SM1 at all locations, except implement alternative SM2 at the spits and Cape Point.	As identified in the Resources Protection Measures Table: Implement alternative SM1 at all locations.	Same as Alternative C.
	ORV buffers are established for observed breeding behavior. See Resources Protection Measures table for SM1 and SM2 alternatives.				
Habitat Restoration	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Remove manmade dune ridge and allow natural overwash to occur at the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cape Point (south of Dredge Pond) to Ramp 45. NOTE: Idea needs to be vetted with CAMA and other mandatory consultants.
Permit Requirements	No permits required.	Permit required for ORV use from 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. September 16 – November 15.	Vehicle permit required.	Vehicle permit required.	Vehicle permit required.
Permit Distribution	n/a	To follow Seashore guidelines to be developed	Available in-person at various locations and on-line.	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Permit Issuance Requirements	n/a	Night driving permit application process has an educational component and the permit contains restriction on light use.	ORV owners must read the rules and regulations governing ORV use at the seashore and complete a written or online exam. The owner would sign for their permit in acknowledgement that they understand the rules and that all drivers will abide by the rules and regulations governing ORV use at the seashore, including beach driving safety, and resource closure requirements	ORV owners must sign for the permit in acknowledgement that they understand the rules and that all drivers will abide by the rules and regulations governing ORV use at the seashore, including beach driving safety, and resource closure requirements	Same as alternative C.
Permit number limits	n/a	No limit on night driving permits	No limit	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Permit types	n/a	Night driving permit for Sept 16 – Nov 15	Annual and short-term permits (e.g., weekly) available.	Annual permits would be available. Valid for calendar year.	Annual permits would be available. Valid for 12 months from date of purchase.

Permit fees	n/a	None	Fees subject to cost recovery, with lower price for short-term permit	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Permit form	n/a	Night driving permit o follow Seashore guidelines to be developed	Permit affixed to vehicle in a manner approved by the NPS.	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Permit Revocation	n/a	Night driving permit to follow Seashore guidelines to be developed	A permit may be revoked for violation of applicable park regulations or terms and conditions of the permit.	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Vehicle Carrying Capacity Determination	Vehicle carrying capacity would not be determined.	Same as alternative A.	<p>Carrying capacity would be established for all areas (to be determined) based on their linear feet of beachfront and the following physical space requirements:</p> <p><i>Bodie Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 260 vehicles/mile (20 feet per vehicle) <p><i>Hatteras Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 260 vehicles/mile (20 feet per vehicle) <p><i>Ocracoke Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100 vehicles/mile (54 feet per vehicle) <p>Exceptions to carrying capacity limits may be approved for events operating under a special use permit.</p>	n/a	<p>Carrying capacity would be established for overcrowded areas (see “areas of implementation” below) based on their linear feet of beachfront and the following physical space requirements:</p> <p><i>Bodie Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 260 vehicles/mile (20 feet/vehicle) <p><i>Hatteras Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 260 vehicles/mile (20 feet/vehicle), except: ▪ Cape Point – 400 vehicles allowed within a 1 mile area centered on Cape Point. <p><i>Ocracoke Island Ranger District</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 175 vehicles/mile (30 feet /vehicle) <p>Exceptions to carrying capacity limits may be approved for events operating under a special use permit.</p>
Seasonal Element related to Carrying Capacity	n/a	n/a	Applicable March 15 – October 14.	n/a	Focus is on peak use periods during breeding season, but may be implemented any time need arises.
Periodic Review of Carrying Capacity	n/a	n/a	Visitation, crowding, and safety monitored periodically to determine if implementation of carrying capacity is warranted. Once implemented, carrying capacity limits would be reviewed every 2 years.	n/a	Same as alternative C.
Areas of Implementation	n/a	n/a	Would apply to all areas in the seashore. Carrying capacity requirements only implemented if increased visitation results in crowding threshold being met.	n/a	Same as alternative C.
Vehicle Requirements	<p>All vehicles operating in area of the Seashore must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a valid vehicle registration, insurance, and license plate. <p>Vehicles must be street legal. ATVs prohibited from beach driving.</p> <p>Recommend “air down” of tires prior to</p>	Same as alternative A.	<p>Vehicle Characteristics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All vehicles should be registered, licensed, and insured and comply with state inspect regulations within the state, country or province where the vehicle is registered. 2. Four-wheel drive vehicles are allowed. 	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.

	driving on beach.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Two wheel drive vehicles are allowed after the operator obtains a special use permit. 4. Motorcycles are prohibited on the ocean beachfront. 5. ATVs are prohibited. 6. There is a three axle maximum for vehicles (this is the axle maximum for the powered vehicle only and does not include the additional number of axles on towed trailers). 7. Any trailers are limited to no more than two axles. 8. The maximum vehicle length is thirty (30') feet (this is the maximum length for the powered vehicle and does not include the additional length of a towed trailer). 9. Tires must be U.S. Department of Transportation listed and/or approved tires only. 		
Equipment Requirements	n/a	n/a	<p>Equipment Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All vehicles shall contain a low pressure tire gauge, shovel, jack, jack stand, trash bag or container, and flashlight for driving between dusk and dawn. • A full sized spare tire, first aid kit, fire extinguisher and tow strap are recommended. • Tire Pressure TBD 	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Speed Limits	<p>25 mph (unless otherwise posted) on park beaches for public and private vehicles.</p> <p>Speed limit in front of villages during off season (September 16 – May 14) on park beaches posted at 10 mph.</p> <p>Emergency vehicles exempt when responding to a call.</p>	Same as alternative A.	<p>15 mph (unless otherwise posted).</p> <p>Emergency vehicles exempt when responding to a call.</p>	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Parking	<p>Parking is currently provided in 64 park-maintained park lots throughout the Seashore, totaling approximately 1,000 spaces.</p>	Same as alternative A.	<p>Determine locations of new parking areas to be proposed as part of this alternative. (See ORV Use Areas Table for details.)</p> <p>Any new parking areas to be located near Vehicle Free Areas and located away from eroding areas or potential inlet areas.</p> <p>New parking areas will implement design standards to reduce stormwater runoff.</p>	Same as alternative C.	<p>Same as alternative C, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add parking (amount TBD) at all pedestrian access points.

Alternative Transportation	Alternative transportation is not provided at the Seashore.	Same as alternative A.	Same as alternative A.	Same as alternative A.	Park to encourage concessioners to operate water taxi to Bodie Island Spit and South Point Ocracoke; and shuttle service and/or vehicle escort service to facilitate access to Cape Point during the breeding season.
Visitor Waste Management	RV dump stations located near Oregon Inlet, Cape Point, and Ocracoke Campgrounds. Available when campgrounds are open. Small dumpsters or trash cans provided at most ramps and maintained by private contractor.	Same as alternative A.	Same as alternative A, plus: Use animal-resistant trash receptacles.	RV dump stations same as alternative A, but remove all dumpsters and implement a “pack-in/pack-out” policy. Provide trash bags at visitor centers and encourage pack-in/pack-out on all park beaches.	RV dump stations same as alternative A. Use animal-resistant trash receptacles at all “major” (> ___# vehicles) parking areas and access points. Relocate dumpsters away from Sensitive Resource Areas to minimize attraction of predators. Provide trash bags at visitor centers and encourage pack-in/pack-out on all park beaches.
Restroom Facilities	Existing porta-potties located throughout the seashore.	Same as alternative A.	TBD (Sandy to check with DSC on vault toilet standards)	TBD (Sandy to check with DSC on vault toilet standards)	TBD (Sandy to check with DSC on vault toilet standards)
Pets	Per 36 CFR 2.15, pets prohibited in resource closures, lifeguarded beach areas, the access boardwalks to the swim areas and Ocracoke Lighthouse, and bath facilities in the immediate areas. . Pets shall be physically confined to the occupant’s house or outside wire cage/pen. Pets shall be restrained on a maximum 6-foot leash or a leash attached to a run line when outside the residence.	Same as alternative A but pets prohibited within resource buffers.	Same as alternative A, but pets prohibited from March 15 – October 15, except in front of the villages and in designated pet areas ((TBD)).	Pets prohibited on beaches year-round, except in front of villages.	Same as alternative A, except pets prohibited year-round in Sensitive Resource Areas.
Beach Fires	Permitted per 36 CFR 2.13. Prohibited 12:00 midnight to 6:00 AM per Superintendent’s Compendium Section 2.13.	Same as alternative A.	Prohibited 10:00 PM – 6:00 AM May 1 – October 31.	Prohibited year-round, except in front of villages.	Beach fires prohibited 12:00 AM – 6:00 AM year-round. Permit required for any beach fire.
Beach Camping / Overnight ORV use	Beach camping prohibited per Superintendent’s Compendium Section 2.10(a). ORVs allowed on beach overnight only if someone associated with the vehicle is actively fishing. ORVs allowed on all areas of the seashore 24 hours a day, year round.	Beach camping prohibited per Superintendent’s Compendium Section 2.10(a). ORVs allowed on beach overnight only if someone associated with the vehicle is actively fishing. November 16 through April 30. Permit required for ORV use from 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. September 16 – November 15.	Beach camping prohibited per Superintendent’s Compendium Section 2.10(a). ORVs allowed on beach overnight only if someone associated with the vehicle is actively recreating. See allowable hours of ORV operations for this alternative.	Beach camping prohibited per Superintendent’s Compendium Section 2.10(a). ORVs allowed on beach overnight only if someone associated with the vehicle is actively recreating. See allowable hours of ORV operations for this alternative.	Beach camping prohibited per Superintendent’s Compendium Section 2.10(a). Designate a minimum amenity overnight parking area (“bullpen”) off the beach for use during the off-season. ORVs allowed on beach overnight only if someone associated with the vehicle is actively recreating. See allowable hours of ORV operations for this alternative.
Kites and Kiteboarding	Kite flying, kite boards, and ball and Frisbee tossing prohibited within or above all bird closures (per the Interim Protected	Same as alternative A, but kite flying also prohibited in resource closure areas.	Same as alternative A, plus kiteboards are prohibited at lifeguarded beaches.	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.

	Species Management Strategy)				
Boat Access	Launch sites, as designated under 36 CFR § 3.8(a)(2), are identified in the Superintendent's Compendium. Launching or recovery of vessels is prohibited within resources closures.	Same as alternative A.	Same as alternative A.	Same as alternative A.	Same as alternative A.
Commercial Fishing Vehicles	Authorized by permit to enter all ORV and pedestrian areas that are not closed for resources protection. Treated as non-essential vehicles and may not enter resource closures.	Same as alternative A, plus are subject to night driving restriction in consent decree.	Same as alternative A, plus may be excepted by permit from night driving restriction under certain circumstances.	Same as alternative C.	Same as alternative C.
Staffing					
Materials					