

**South Point Alternative.DRAFT.v092608**  
**\*\*DRAFT DELIBERATIVE DOCUMENT\*\***

**DRAFT**

**ORV Management Alternative E for South Point (Ocracoke)**

**GOAL**

- Protect natural resources and maintain some sort of access to South Point, to the greatest extent possible, year-round.

**DEFINITION OF AREA**

- South Point is defined as from \_\_\_ miles south of where South Point Road reaches the beach, and from that point south to the inlet. South Point includes the ocean, inlet and sound shorelines and all the land in between..

**MEASURES**

- Designate South Point as a “restricted access” ORV area from March 15 to August 31. Entire area is closed to ORV use during this period, except for a designated ORV access corridor running more or less along the ocean shoreline to the inlet and along the inlet toward the sound. (Exact terminus and configuration of access corridor TBD by NPS resources management staff based on an annual habitat assessment).
- By March 15, establish prenesting closure and modify access corridor from the non-breeding season configuration. The corridor would be no more than 33 m wide above the intertidal zone wherever it does not conflict with breeding adult PIPL foraging areas that have been documented in the past 3 years. In locations where there is an expected conflict with the foraging areas along the ocean shoreline, there would be an ORV “pass through” zone approximately 10 m wide located approximately 50 m above the intertidal zone. Exact location and distance from the intertidal zone of the “pass through” zone to be determined by NPS Resources Management staff based on an annual habitat assessment and observed bird activity.
- Stopping, parking, or disembarking passengers, and pedestrians and pets would be prohibited in the pass-through zone.
- Once the access corridor, including pass-through zone, is established, it will not be significantly modified or relocated to accommodate access, except for minor adjustments that do not affect park resources.
- During the breeding season, follow SM2 monitoring procedures.
- PIPL: Implement prescribed buffers as needed for breeding activity, nesting and unfledged chicks. If breeding adult PIPLs forage outside of the established resource closure(s), adjust buffers and lengthen pass-through zone as needed to protect foraging sites.
- AMOY and CWB prenesting and nesting: Within or along the ORV access corridor provide a minimum 50 m buffer and daily monitoring of observed pre-nesting and nesting behavior for non-listed species. Expand buffers if needed to minimize disturbance during incubation.
- PIPL, AMOY and CWB chicks: Follow prescribed buffer distances for unfledged chicks of all species.
- Close access corridor, including pass-through zone, if needed to implement or maintain prescribed buffers (including those identified above), or to otherwise protect park resources.
- Pedestrians, as well as ORVs, are prohibited in resource closures.

**South Point Alternative.DRAFT.v092608**  
**\*\*DRAFT DELIBERATIVE DOCUMENT\*\***

- Boat access: Once the prenesting area and access corridor are established, designate and post boat landing zone (“drop-off”) near inlet that could be used to drop off pedestrians if/when inlet shoreline is not otherwise closed to protect park resources. NPS to encourage water shuttle for this purpose; however, drop-off point is subject to closure on short notice if needed to protect park resources.
- No pets allowed at South Point during this period, regardless of how they get there (e.g., ORV, boat, etc.).
- All access south of the pass-through zone (whether by ORV, boat, etc.) is restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Reopen the area for access as described in the SM2 resource protection measures.
- NPS retains the right to impose further restrictions than described above if necessary for resource protection.

**South Point Alternative.DRAFT.v092608**  
**\*\*DRAFT DELIBERATIVE DOCUMENT\*\***

**HABITAT ASSESSMENT**

- Conduct annual habitat assessment of Cape Point interior (i.e., west of the access corridor) to determine best available site for targeted CWB nesting habitat enhancement prior to the breeding season, which may include:
  - Improvement of CWB nesting substrate (shell, cobble, etc.) by introducing or relocating shell/cobble and disbursing it across the site.
  - Use CWB decoys and audio-attraction to help establish colony at the targeted site.
- Develop adaptive management objectives and conduct monitoring/research to determine effects of management actions described above (access corridor, chick fencing and habitat enhancement). After analysis, modify measures if needed, to meet objectives and improve results.

**HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

- In general, rely on natural processes to create and maintain nesting and foraging habitat, except for the following:
  - Develop a plan to improve habitat and wildlife access to available habitat in the dredge pond area. The objective would be to develop a self-sustaining system to the extent possible that would not be dependent upon heavy duty annual manipulation by the NPS. The most desirable approach would be to create a “system” that connects the dredge pond to the beach environment south of the dredge pond and allows for natural processes such as overwash and fluctuations in water level to set back or slow plant succession and maintain early successional nesting habitat as well as MOSH for foraging. Options could include: modifying the landscape to allow inter-connectivity of the westerly end of the dredge pond with the upper beach south of it; and shaping the landscape to create ephemeral pools on the upper beach that are directly connected to the dredge pond water supply.

**INTERDUNAL ROAD**

- The interdunal road should be maintained and open for two-way traffic.

**ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR ACCESS**

- Open Ramp 45 from campground during off-season? As needed? Not at all?
- Open parking area at Ramp 45 during the off-season.
- Develop a pedestrian access route to the dredge pond with suitable nearby parking to facilitate access for bird watching enthusiasts.
- Expand parking at Ramp 43 and provide toilets in an appropriate site nearby. (*The Ramp 43 parking area is subject to overwash and flooding and may not be an appropriate site for toilets.*)
- Increase the width of pavement in the approach to Ramp 44 for airing down.
- Improve the design/construction of Ramp 44 (west of the dune crossing) to increase usability and reliability of the access route during wet or flooded conditions.