



THE Louis Berger Group, INC.

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1513
CAAA

CONVERSATION

Date 12.16.08 Time _____

RECORD

Name: Carl Zimmerman

Organization: **Assateague**

Phone: 410-641-1443x213

- a. Was there a **major issue** that precipitated the ORV management plan? Ecosystem protection? The ORV management plan was developed as a response to the executive order regarding ORVs in national parks that was issued during the 1970s. The initial plan reflected the requirements of the executive order. Mr. Zimmerman is not completely familiar with the issues that were most important at that time. Note that ORV use on Assateague Island precedes the establishment of the park itself; there was ORV use from the earliest days of the seashore, which goes back to 1975. In the first decade after the park was established, there was a need to control and manage ORV use. The route was the single most important aspect of the regulations, as it delineated exactly where ORV use was permissible.
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- b. Did you establish a **carrying capacity** to determine a cap on ORV use? If so, what type of area (i.e. a specific destination, a large area with multiple visitor destinations, etc) The special regulations in 36 CFR do limit the number of ORVs within the two routes that occur within the national seashore. There are 2 ORV-use corridors within the Assateague Island seashore, one within the MD district, one within the VA district, which is part of a national wildlife refuge. Mr. Zimmerman is not entirely certain how the carrying capacity numbers were arrived at. During the 1970s, when the regulations were being developed, such things were not determined by way of a scientific study. They were instead based on expert opinion of the park management. The carrying capacity was based on how many vehicles could be accommodated between the 2 corridors, based upon a desired condition of keeping the park from being crowded. The park allows roughly 12 vehicles per mile.
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- c. How were the requirements on the **size, weight and length of the vehicle** chosen? The requirements on the vehicle properties were based on what would allow the most common ORV models at the time the regulations were written. There was a maximum vehicle width, minimum ground clearance, number of axles, maximum number of wheels per axle. Unusual vehicles weren't allowed because, for instance, dual-wheel vehicles would have resulted in greater ecological disruption. This was based on opinion, not on a study. The regulations were developed during the 1970s, but they have worked well for the park over the years.
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- d. How was the **speed limit** chosen? Mr. Zimmerman is unsure of how the speed limit was chosen. The vehicle limit was appreciated by the visitors for visitor safety reasons. It was also appropriate from a resource protection/ecological standpoint. Ecological aspects that are protected by the speed limit are: disturbance of foraging, loafing shorebirds, other birds on the beach, disturbance of benthic fauna occurring in that section of the beach, disruption of sediment processes, and disturbance to beach-dwelling plants.
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- e. How were **permit costs** derived? Were they based on carrying capacity or other data? Permitting costs were arrived at by undertaking an analysis of what it costs to operate an ORV in the ORV zone. The special use permit used requires that the NPS recoup the costs of ORV management in the permits; it therefore is designed to account for the costs of patrolling, resource management, equipment (including NPS vehicles), enforcement, the costs to collect the permit fees themselves, and et cetera.



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Written by _____