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CAPE HATTERAS ACCESS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

January 20, 2009

Peter Sandbeck
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Archives and History
4610 Mail Service Center
Raleigh NC 27699-4610

RE: Identification of Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area Spit and Inlet Beaches as Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) Potentially Eligible to the National Register of Historic Places and Request for Study List Application

Dear Mr. Sandbeck,

This letter formally identifies the spit and inlet areas and adjoining beaches of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area as Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) held in importance by historically established Outer Banks communities. Further, these landscapes are thought to be potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

We have fully and carefully reviewed the *North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office Guidelines on the National Register in North Carolina* (2008), and the *National Park Service National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* (rev. 1998), as well as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as Amended. Based on our review, the landscapes in question are held:

- 1) to constitute a historic property; and
- 2) to constitute a TCP; and
- 3) potentially eligible to the NRHP.

The landscapes identified as TCPs include, but are not necessarily limited to: 1) Bodie Island Spit and adjoining beaches; 2) Cape Point and adjoining beaches; 3) South Point of Hatteras Inlet and adjoining beaches; and 4) the North Point and South Point of Ocracoke Island and adjoining beaches. These are held in importance by Outer Banks communities and their use is central to maintaining the traditional life ways and identity of these communities.

The National Park Service National Register Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Properties (Guidelines) clearly state that landscapes may be considered a historic property and thus potentially eligible to the NRHP:

... a property may be defined as a "site" as long as it was the location of a significant event or activity, regardless of whether the event or activity left any evidence of its occurrence. A culturally significant landscape may be classified as a site, as may the location where significant traditional events, activities, or cultural observances have taken place.

The Guidelines also explicitly state that TCP designations are not to be limited to properties held in importance by Native Americans or other minority groups:

Americans of every ethnic origin have properties to which they ascribe traditional cultural value, and if such properties meet the National Register criteria, they can and should be nominated for inclusion in the Register [NRHP].

In setting forth criteria for determining what constitutes a TCP and evaluating a specific property's significance, the Guidelines define potentially NRHP-eligible TCPs as:

A rural community whose organization, buildings and structures, or patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its long-term residents;

A location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important in maintaining its historic identity.

Based on the guidelines promulgated by the Department of the Interior National Park Service, the landscapes in question clearly meet at least two definitions for a TCP potentially eligible for inclusion to the NRHP.

As TCPs, the landscapes and their historic patterns of use not only help maintain the traditional identity of Outer Banks communities (themselves unique cultural entities) but these same communities have historically been shaped by the long standing use of the beach landscapes. Outer Banks culture has historically been inextricably tied to the surf zone, and remains so today. The surf zone has traditionally sustained the island economy and culture through commercial seine net dory fishing, and also by way of recreational fishing and tourism all of which are accessed via personal motor vehicles. These latter activities have been ongoing for more than 50 years and are therefore considered to be of historic age. More importantly, the landscapes in question are held in importance by Outer Banks communities in a way that transcends heritage and the traditional economy. The Cape Point stands as a defining physical feature of the Outer Banks, which consist of narrow strip of land perched as much 30 miles out in the Atlantic Ocean. The other landscapes equally comprise the transitional realm between island home and the sea. As such, they continue to provide island folk with a profound sense of place and function to help sustain the collective identity of their communities.

It is requested that the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, on behalf of the Outer Banks Preservation Alliance, recognize the identification of said inlet and spit areas and adjoining beaches of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area as a TCP potentially eligible to the NRHP and provide a Study List Application as a first step towards a formal NRHP-eligibility determination.

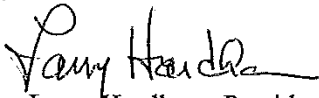
Sincerely,



John Couch, President
Outer Banks Preservation Association



W. James Keene, President
North Carolina Beach Buggy Association



Larry Hardham, President
Cape Hatteras Anglers Club

CC: Secretary Linda A. Carlisle, NC Dept of Cultural Resources
State Senator Marc Basnight
Representative Timothy L. Spear
Representative Bill Owens
Senator Richard Burr
Senator Kay Hagan
Congressman Walter B. Jones
Chairman Warren Judge, Dare County Board of Commissioners
Mayor Renee Cahoon, Town of Nags Head
Superintendent Mike Murray, Cape Hatteras National Seashore

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