

From: [Joe DeVivo](#)
To: [Mike Murray](#)
Cc: [Sandra Hamilton](#); [Jerry Mitchell](#); [Sherri Fields](#); [Darrell Echols](#); [Thayer Broili](#); [Timothy Pinion](#); [Greg Eckert](#); [Britta Muiznieks](#); [Joe DeVivo](#); [Cyndy Holda](#)
Subject: Re: FWS recommendations (FINAL)
Date: 02/10/2009 06:18 PM
Attachments: [20090210_CAHA_RegNeg_Summary2.FWS.pdf](#)

Mike (and everyone else)--

Forgive the lengthy email, but I wanted to share a couple of updates on the SECN contribution to the mix. And lend a few thoughts on how our efforts could play into a larger adaptive management framework, at least with respect to the wintering and migratory shorebirds.

Updates:

- The monitoring protocol has been updated and was sent out for official peer review today. The methods haven't changed since the park started monitoring, but we've been holding off on publication until we had the data management system in place since it's a requirement of our program to include data management, analysis and reporting in the protocol. The protocol can be downloaded from the NPS FTP site from the following path: SER-IM/SECN/ShorebirdProtocol/. A copy of our pilot-year implementation summary report is also included in this folder, as it is referred to frequently in the protocol and may be useful for reference. The FTP site information is:

Public FTP Site address: ftp://63.220.43.40
Username: npsftpwin
Password (case-sensitive): FTP04npswin
Please note: it is a zero, not an 'O'.

We welcome any comments, and have given reviewers a March 10 deadline to reply, and we plan to have the document revised and ready for digital distribution no later than March 20.

- As a part of the data management side of the protocol, the park now has a shorebird information portal. Basically, it's a one-stop shop where park staff can enter monitoring data and anyone with intranet access can immediately see the results and analyses from the data. The summary page can be located at: <http://inpserosecn2/Pages/Shorebirds.aspx>
There is also a link on the left sidebar to explore the data further, with reports that look at observations as a function of cars, dogs, people, tide, habitat, location, and a few more to boot.
This is limited to NPS-only for access; we are prohibited from exposing the SECN server to the public, so any data or results that you want to share need to be copied and pasted elsewhere. We have tried to design everything to be copy-friendly.

Thoughts on Adaptive Management

I think developing a formal adaptive management framework is definitely a good thing for you guys, and would likely result in far *less*work for the park, and far *less*controversy with

regard to your stakeholders in the future. We designed the monitoring protocol for the shorebirds with the assumption that we'd be feeding information into an adaptive management framework, though obviously none yet exists. When we first met with folks at the park, we set out to identify the types of decisions that would/ could be made by managers, the types of data that would be needed to credibly support those decisions, and the frequency at which data would have to be collected, analyzed, and reported back to the park to pull it off. Our starting point was to develop a monitoring protocol that would provide data that told the park:

- what species are using what parts of the park (areas and habitats) during what times of the year, and
- how those trends are affected by other factors such as ORVs, people, tidal cycle, dogs, weather, etc.

Our thought was that in a perfect world where we could manage the system without complaints, managers would have sufficient information to control the factors in the second bullet (ORV density, people, dogs) to the benefit of the species/habitats/areas of concern at times when it made sense. However, we never did develop a full adaptive management framework as it was beyond the scope of our project. And, since we started the monitoring objectives for CAHA have drifted a bit over the years.

Looking at the guidance, I think between the network and the park's multiple planning efforts, we've laid quite a lot of the groundwork for developing an adaptive management plan though. For the shorebirds, what I think is needed next is a second look at what decisions you're making on the ground, identifying the information you need to support those decisions, and ensuring that you're collecting data frequently enough to be useful.

This brings up one area of concern. In my opinion what Pete is advocating isn't something that can be handled by one person ala an Adaptive Management Specialist, but rather is a complete paradigm shift in how all of the resources are managed and decisions are made by staff at all levels. To quote the handbook, adaptive management isn't appropriate if:

“a firm commitment to funding and institutional support for monitoring is lacking. Adaptive management should not be employed without a clear commitment to monitoring over the life of the project. If a commitment for monitoring is in question, it may be necessary to take another approach to decision making that does not rely on monitoring, such as expert systems, management intuition, or non-technical understanding of the system.”

My experience over the last five years of working on this project is that such a commitment has been tough for the park to make. The wintering/ migratory monitoring design began with a firm commitment on FTEs available to implement it, and due to the park's diminishing staffing and funding, that commitment has been continuously reduced. The end result is that we have changed the monitoring effort from one that was based on what the park needs to support adaptive management, to one based on gleaning as much information as possible from minimal sampling effort while maintaining scientific standards and meeting FWS requirements.

Don't get me wrong, we're doing far better now than where we were five years ago, when we were largely managing by intuition. With regard to wintering and migratory shorebirds, the park is certainly collecting the right types of data to be informing management decisions. And data are being entered as they're collected, so we should be at the point where we're

looking at and using the monitoring data daily/weekly rather than relying on annual summary reports as we have done in the past. I'm just not sure that we're collecting data in enough places and at a high enough frequency to support adaptive management of ORVs as opposed to just monitoring the status and trends of plovers at the selected indicator sites. To get to a point of adaptive management will likely take some considerable effort in developing a sound, defensible, decision-making system, and an ongoing commitment to monitor the status of the resources and progress/ deviations from expected results across a broader scale than what we're doing now.

All that said, I am of course willing to lend whatever I can to helping out on this, and if a call is necessary to think things through, I'm available on both of the suggested dates.

And again, sorry for the long email.

Joe.

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▼ [Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS](#)

**Mike
Murray/CAHA/NPS**

02/10/2009 02:24 PM

To Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS@NPS, Sherri Fields/Atlanta/NPS@NPS, Jerry Mitchell/FTCOLLINS/NPS@NPS

cc Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Cyndy Holda/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Darrell Echols/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Greg Eckert/FTCOLLINS/NPS@NPS, Joe DeVivo/Atlanta/NPS@NPS, Thayer Broili/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Timothy Pinion/Atlanta/NPS@NPS, Jami Hammond/Atlanta/NPS@NPS, mike.stevens@sol.doi.gov, jason.waanders@sol.doi.gov

Subject FWS recommendations (FINAL) 

All,

Pete Benjamin made a few edits in the previously sent version (primarily, he expanded upon the paragraph relating to light management throughout Dare County). Please consider the attached file as the FINAL version of his

recommendations.



20090210_CAHA_RegNeg_Summary2.FWS.pdf

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▼ [Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS](#)

**Mike
Murray/CAHA/NPS**

02/10/2009 11:43 AM

To Sandra Hamilton/DENVER/NPS@NPS, Jerry Mitchell/FTCOLLINS/NPS@NPS, Sherri Fields/Atlanta/NPS@NPS, Darrell Echols/CAHA/NPS@NPS

cc Thayer Broilli/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Timothy Pinion/Atlanta/NPS@NPS, Greg Eckert/FTCOLLINS/NPS@NPS, Britta Muiznieks/CAHA/NPS@NPS, Joe DeVivo/Atlanta/NPS@NPS, Cyndy Holda/CAHA/NPS@NPS

Subject FWS recommendations

All,

See attached summary recommendations from Pete Benjamin, the FWS representative on the negotiated rulemaking committee. I pass this information along to you for our consideration as work continues on developing Desired Future Conditions.

I think Pete makes a number of good recommendations, especially in the realm of adaptive management. I like the ambitious goals for improvement in the status of park resources, but must admit that neither I nor the park staff have the expertise in adaptive management to know how to "fix" the NPS alternatives in a way that is responsive to Pete's recommendations (i.e., we don't know how to describe or fine tune the "adaptive management framework"). With our current natural resources management field staffing, most of which is not based funded and is tenuous at best, we are already operating "at capacity." As already discussed, we need technical assistance on a number of planning issues (desired future conditions, adaptive management, and periodic review); but it is clear that we will need ongoing technical expertise in the adaptive management process.

Thinking out loud...I'm starting to believe that, one way or another, we need to establish an "adaptive management specialist" position here at the park in order to plan and implement what Pete is talking about. I've asked Darrell Echols to look at the budget and see if there is anything we could do (our options will likely be limited). I also wonder if SER would consider assigning an SECN position to CAHA or sharing a position with us, if we could partially fund it? In a sidebar discussion, the new Director of the NC Wildlife Resource Commission views the CAHA ORV management plan as a great learning opportunity for his agency as they move to embrace adaptive management. He has offered to create a technical staff position that would assist with the long-term study of changes that result from the CAHA ORV management plan. I can see that position as being helpful to us, but not a complete solution to our needs. WRC is often subject to heavy political pressure, so I think we need to establish our own capability as well.

In any case, please review Pete's comments and send me an email with any suggestions on how to proceed. If we think a conference call to discuss the comments would be helpful, the earliest I have some availability is Feb 18-20.

Thanks,

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----- Forwarded by Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS on 02/10/2009 11:07 AM -----

**Pete
Benjamin/R4/FWS/DOI@FWS**

To Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS
cc Patrick Field <pfield@cbuilding.org>, David
Rabon/R4/FWS/DOI@FWS

02/10/2009 10:03 AM

Subject My summary thoughts

Mike,

Here is a summary of my thoughts regarding where we stand. I'm providing this for your use as you enter into the "small group" discussions. Let me know what you think.

Mike/Patrick,

If you guys think it would be helpful, I would not object to you guys sharing it with the other members of the "small group". I'd like your feedback on the document first though.

Also Patrick, you mentioned that you'd be calling me at around 11:00 tomorrow regarding migratory birds. Two things: 1) 11:30 would be much better if at all possible; 2) there is a section in the attached that addresses migratory birds that says pretty much what I'd plan on telling the group.

Pete Benjamin
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[attachment "20090210_CAHA_RegNeg_Summary.doc" deleted by Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS]