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From: [Marcus Sanders](mailto:Marcus.Sanders@nps.gov)
To: mike_murray@nps.gov
Cc: cyndy_holda@nps.gov; trip@realwatersports.com
Subject: ORV/Pedestrian Access Plan, Cape Hatteras National Park and Recreation Area
Date: 03/25/2009 04:40 PM

Attn: Mike Murray, Superintendent, National Park Service Outer Banks Group
From: Marcus Sanders, Editor, Surfline.com
CC: Trip Forman, Real Watersports
Re: ORV/Pedestrian Access Plan, Cape Hatteras National Park and Recreation Area

Dear Mr. Murray:

I'm sure by now you've heard from many surfers how important Cape Hatteras is to the America's wave-riding community, recognized internationally for its consistency, wide variety of surf spots and treasured history. More than any other East Coast surf zone, it remains the 'go-to' destination for anyone in search of powerful waves and a unique, natural beach experience. I'm confident you are also aware the area is home to a thriving local surf industry encompassing dozens of businesses that depend on its annual influx of surf-enthusiasts. Simply put: when the Outer Banks has good waves, the whole world want to be there. And I think the following statistics from Surfline.com ~ the planet's leading online surf reporting and forecasting source ~ help clarify just how much of a focal point Cape Hatteras remains.

First, North Carolina is our 7th most visited state with 515,000 unique "visitors" in 2008. And of the 759,547 page views attributed to our North Carolina "webcams" last year, Cape Hatteras accounted for nearly half with 327,000, while nearby Nags Head ranks next at 108,000 -- and that's just the surfers keen to find out the immediate conditions. What about the surfers who want to know what the waves will be like inside the next few days? Our Outer Banks forecast pages received 362,000 page views last year. Furthermore, our recent "Outer Banks Spot Check" ~ a feature discussing the ins and outs of ensuring the best trip possible ~ received 48,718 views at last count.

But perhaps the most important stat is not where or why we get the most traffic -- but when. We actually see a massive spike in numbers ~ approximately 4 to 5 times the normal daily traffic ~ during hurricane season, which I understand is roughly the same time period as the proposed closures. That means 80% percent of those previous viewers are hoping to surf Hatteras at the same time their favorite spot may prove inaccessible.

These aren't just numbers, Mr. Murray. They represent hundreds of thousands of living beach lovers who value Hatteras as much as any surf location on the planet ~ spending more hours in the ocean than any other user ~ yet leave the smallest impact on the beach itself. They park, they surf, and they go home, leaving nothing behind. Every single one the ideal example of a life-long steward of coastal ecology. Please consider all these elements when you are finalizing the access laws for Cape Hatteras National Park and Recreation Area.

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Thank you for your careful consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Marcus Sanders

Editor

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