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 CAPE HATTERAS ACCESS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE
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April 29, 2009

Dr. Jeffrey J. Crow
 State Historic Preservation Officer
 North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
 4610 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh NC 27699

Dear Dr. Crow,

We are pleased to submit to your office Study List Applications for locations identified as Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) potentially eligible to be included in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as Amended. The four properties are on federal land as part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area (CHNSRA). They are:

- 1) Bodie Island Spit and Adjoining Beaches;
- 2) Cape Point and Adjoining Beaches;
- 3) Hatteras Inlet and Adjoining Beaches; and
- 4) South Point Ocracoke and Adjoining Beaches.

The Cape Hatteras Access Preservation Alliance is advancing the formal recognition of these areas as TCPs as well as their NRHP-eligibility determination on behalf of Outer Banks communities who hold the properties in value. These Outer Banks communities maintain that the long standing access to and the responsible use of the properties is an integral component of, and critical to preserving their traditional culture and life ways.

Contained within each application packet are: Study List Application; 10.A. Description 10. B History; 10. C. Map/Site Plan with air photo as GIS base layer; and 10. D. Photos on CD.

Two main published sources were utilized in the Study List Application. Historical information was cited from *The Creation and Establishment of Cape Hatteras National Seashore The Great Depression through Mission 66* by Cameron Blinkley 2007 published by the Cultural Resources Division Southeast Regional Office National Park Service in 2007. The *National Park Service National Register Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* (Guidelines) was reviewed for guidance and to positively ascertain the applicability of Section 106 of the NHPA, as Amended in the protection of the four historic properties.

When the CHNSRA was being established, the director of the National Park Service Conrad Wirth promised Outer Banks residents in a published letter that their communities would always have access to their traditional use beach areas (Blinkley 2007:117). The communities have long viewed this document as a binding social contract. In the context of Section 106 of the NHRA, the letter clearly underscores that as early as 1952 the federal government recognized the importance of maintaining traditional Outer Banks culture as it relates to federal lands and undertakings. Some 50 years later, traditional elements of Outer Banks life ways are increasing threatened and need protections that the NHPA of 1966 as Amended was specifically designed to afford.

We have carefully reviewed the Guidelines and feel the above properties: 1) constitute TCPs; and 2) are potentially eligible to the NRHP as such.

The Guidelines explicitly state that TCP designations are not to be limited to properties held in importance by Native Americans or other minority groups but that Americans of every ethnic origin have properties to which they ascribe traditional cultural value. Further, if such properties meet the National Register criteria, they can and should be nominated for inclusion in the NRHP.

The four properties in question comprise: 1) components of a rural community whose organization and patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its long-term residents; and 2) a location where the communities have traditionally carried out economic and other cultural practices important in maintaining their historic identity.

As TCPs the historic properties in question not only help maintain the traditional identity of Outer Banks communities, but these same communities have been historically shaped by the long standing use of these beach landscapes. Historically, Outer Banks culture has been inextricably tied to the surf zone, and remains so today. The surf zone has traditionally sustained the island economy and culture through commercial fishing, and also by way of recreational fishing and tourism. 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. Cape Point stands as a defining physical feature of the Outer Banks, which consist of narrow strips of land perched as much 30 miles out in the Atlantic Ocean. The other landscapes considered TCPs equally comprise the transitional realm between island home and the

sea. As such, the historic properties continue to provide island folk with a profound sense of place and their use helps sustain the collective identity of their communities.

In recent historic times, traditional commercial beach fishing has been eclipsed in importance by recreational surf fishing. Recreational surf fishing itself, particularly for the iconic red drum has in itself long held a defining place in Outer Banks culture. This sporting pursuit has historically been undertaken by generations of Outer Bank residents and visitors alike, and continues to be of great economic and social importance today. The very fact that non-residents and visitors participate in the traditional use of the historic properties in no way diminishes the cultural and historic value of those properties. In fact the opposite is true. In many ways, Outer Banks culture is resilient, inclusive, and dynamic. Having non-residents participate in aspects of traditional barrier island life is enriching to the public and makes protecting and preserving this cultural resource all the more important. In addition, the portions of the properties remain the focal point for the local surf dory seine net fishery. This economic activity represents a nearly extinct folkway as the CHNSRA beaches are one of the very last places in the country in which this traditional commercial fishery is practiced. The 1980 amendments to the NHPA specifically call for protecting and preserving these kinds of cultural activities.

The historic properties are considered potentially eligible to the NRHP based solely on their constituting TCPs held in cultural importance by Outer Banks communities. However, the same properties should be considered potentially eligible to the NRHP as historic cultural landscapes. Components of these cultural landscapes include dune systems, road traces and dune overpass ramps features that are of historic age. These features were first constructed as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) public works programs. We urge the National Park Service to formally recognize the landscapes as cultural entities and we remain confident that the agency will fully comply with Section 110 of the NHPA of 1966 as Amended and continue to work in good faith to identify evaluate, and manage all cultural resources under its stewardship.


Much has changed on the Outer Banks since the establishment of CHNSRA. However, it is also remarkable how little has changed in terms of the local cultural landscape and its traditional use. This use is predicated on vehicular access to the surf zone, which supports the traditional local economy as well as being integral to the social and cultural fabric of the Outer Banks communities.

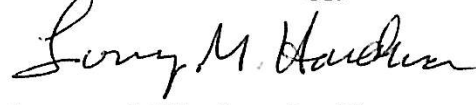
It should be noted that the maintenance of barrier island culture is largely unique to portions of the North Carolina Outer Banks. Across much of the Eastern Seaboard, traditional barrier island settlement, economic systems, and life ways have been obliterated by a transformation of coastal areas into nothing less than urbanized commercial districts. Other areas, most notably the Virginia Eastern Shore barrier islands have been abandoned to human settlement and use. This entire barrier island chain is in private conservation ownership as a wilderness reserve. The widespread loss of traditional barrier island culture makes preserving the surviving elements of historical Outer Banks life ways absolutely critical.

In summary portions of the CHNSRA consisting of Bodie Island Spit and Adjoining Beaches, Cape Point and Adjoining Beaches, Hatteras Inlet and Adjoining Beaches; and South Point Ocracoke and Adjoining Beaches are deemed historic properties potentially eligible to the NRIIP as TCPs under Section 106 of the NIIPA of 1966, As Amended. These historic properties and their traditional use have long been, and continue to be, integral to the social and cultural fabric of the Outer Banks. The properties have traditionally sustained the local economy through commercial fishing, recreational fishing, and other beach activities. Recreational surf fishing has also historically become a part of Outer Banks culture. As cultural landscapes, the historic properties provide Outer Banks residents and visitors with sense of place and help to sustain the collective identity of local communities. Therefore, the continued traditional open and socially and environmentally responsible access to these properties is essential to preserving the traditions and maintaining the historic identity of the Outer Banks and its people.

Sincerely,


John B. Couch, President
Outer Banks Preservation Association


W. James Keene, President
North Carolina Beach Buggy Association


Lawrence M. Hardham, President
Cape Hatteras Anglers Club

CC: Governor Beverly Perdue
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
Ann V. Swallow, National Register Coordinator