



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor
Linda A. Carlisle, Secretary

June 2, 2009

John B. Couch
W. James Keene
Lawrence M. Hardham
Cape Hatteras Access Preservation Alliance
PO Box 1355
Buxton, NC 27920-1355

Dear Messrs. Couch, Keene, and Hardham:

We are in receipt of your Study List applications for Bodie Island Spit and Adjoining Beaches, Cape Point and Adjoining Beaches, Hatteras Inlet and Adjoining Beaches, and South Point Ocracoke and Adjoining Beaches.

Upon reviewing the applications, we have determined that they do not provide adequate information for the National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC) to determine if the sites should be placed on the Study List as properties that appear to be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as traditional cultural properties (TCPs). I refer you to my letter of January 29, 2009 which advised that very thorough Study List applications approaching the level of documentation required for a National Register nomination would be necessary for the NRAC's review. Your brief applications provide neither historical background nor relevant documentation to establish that the sites qualify as TCPs. (The only source mentioned, in your cover letter, is Cameron Binkley's 2007 report on the establishment of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, which is not pertinent to an argument for TCP status.) Also, the required photographs lack any identification such as subject and date taken. Photographic documentation must include representative views of each area being presented and identified as such.

The National Register bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* presents a step-by-step process for determining eligibility based on the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Some of the basic requirements include a living community of people who have passed down through the generations certain beliefs, customs and practices. The place being considered as a TCP must be identified specifically by that living community as a place where cultural traditions are valued by its long-term residents.

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June 2, 2009
Page 2

As stated on page 15 of the bulletin, "A significance ascribed to a property only in the last 50 years cannot be considered traditional."

Most of the applications' text appears to focus on the past fifty years when recreational fishing at the sites has almost completely supplanted commercial fishing, a long-established practice (although not necessarily a traditional cultural practice as interpreted by the National Park Service) for which documentation exists but is not cited. (See for example the 2005 NPS report, "Ethnohistorical Description of the Eight Villages Adjoining Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Interpretive Themes of History and Heritage.") The applications provide no historical documentation to establish that recreational fishing practices of the past fifty years have a direct relationship and continuity with the traditional beliefs, customs, or practices associated with historical commercial fishing patterns on the Outer Banks.

In order to make the case that the sites qualify as TCPs worthy of preservation, documentation must be presented to substantiate the community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices as they relate to recreational fishing and identify the "living community of people" who have established a pattern of land use reflected in the cultural traditions valued by its long-term residents. Are the respective groups as a whole who use the sites today descended from those who used the sites generations ago (i.e., more than fifty years ago) and are they using the sites in the same way that their ancestors did? Further, documentation must show that the four sites are the specific places that played a significant role in the community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices and that those beliefs, customs, and practices are integral to the community's cultural identity.

Therefore, based on the limited information in your applications, there appears to be little if any justification that the properties qualify as TCPs. Given the short timetable in which to generate the additional required information, you may choose to withdraw your applications in order to revise and resubmit them for a future NRAC meeting. If you do not withdraw the applications, staff recommendation to the NRAC will be deferral of a decision pending additional information. Please be aware that the final decision is made by the committee, which has the three options of approval, deferral, or rejection.

As the four sites are federally-owned properties, application for placement on the state Study List is an optional step in the National Register nomination process. A direct submittal by you of a National Register nomination to the NPS preservation officer would save you time and expedite the process.

Sincerely,


Jeffery J. Crow

JJC/cp

CC: Secretary Linda A. Carlisle
✓ Superintendent Mike Murray, Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Scott Power