

**Conversation with James Higham, 757-652-3499, on July 23, 2009,
at approximately 1:56 pm**

Mr. Higham was asked to share his concerns with me regarding his complaint to the Regional Office about Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The conversation was lengthy; 15 to 20 minutes, in which the topics Mr. Higham related to me are summarized below:

- 1) Concerned that the park is being managed under the terms of the consent decree which is “wrong and unfair to the general public.”
- 2) Concerned about the park’s predator control program; “how do you value one species life over another? I like to see the fox and the mink when I’m fishing on the beaches at night.”
- 3) Concerned that the “buffer distances are too long and too large.” Indicated that smaller buffer distances would be adequate to protect the birds as well as allow reasonable access for people.
- 4) Concerned that “NPS has elected to not include Pea Island in your ORV management plan.”
- 5) Concerned that “special interest groups filed suit and then were allowed to remain on the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee.”
- 6) Concerned that the small areas left open “concentrate way too many people in crowded conditions which cause people to not want to come back and is concerned about carrying capacity issues” because of these crowded conditions.
- 7) Concerned about “the lack of adaptive management” as an option for NPS to conduct business in the seashore.
- 8) Concerned that “NPS did not stand up for themselves and let environmental groups have their way with this issue.”
- 9) Concerned that the night time ban on ORV unfairly punishes off-road vehicles and that they are blamed for turtle problems. “The light on the lighthouse is just as much an artificial lighting situation as an off-road vehicle on the beach at night.”
- 10) Concerned about the false crawl ration and compaction studies.
- 11) Concerned that the “Sandy Bay AMOY pair last year nested within 150’ of Rt. 12 and they were fine.”
- 12) Concerned that NPS is prohibiting night time driving during the turtle hatching season and wants a similar policy that Cape Lookout uses....”put a red lens over vehicle headlights.”
- 13) Believes “the Interim Protected Species Management Plan is the better way to go.”
- 14) Doesn’t understand “why NPS won’t incorporate the bird count numbers from the nearby dredge spoil islands.”
- 15) Wonders “if NPS owns the sand under the Oregon Inlet waterway?”
- 16) Would “like to see entrance fees collected at Whalebone and distribute the fees among all users and then re-implement the Interim Protected Species Management Plan with those fees.”
- 17) Concerned that the “economic and socio-economic factors of this issue where never really explored and fee a prompt review from someone is in order.”
- 18) Concerned that “the newly installed ramp counters will not take into account all the users who will never return to Cape Hatteras.”

- 19) Concerned that “NPS doesn’t realize or acknowledge that from the toe of the dune to the mean high tide line sounds like a route to me.”
- 20) Concerned that “two solicitors sat on the panel for the Negotiated Rulemaking committee and disagreed about several issues so who should we believe?”
- 21) Concerned that “all this time I’ve never seen any documentation that a bird or turtle has ever been hit by a car on the beaches.”
- 22) Concerned that the “in the final plan, I would like to see an extensive educational program and implement some sort of penalty to weed out the bad apples. I lot of these problems are done by bad apples who have spoiled it for the rest of us. And it is not fair for the Judge to penalize all of us for those few who don’t appreciate the beaches.”

Mr. Higham’s final remarks to me were:

“I’m very upset about this.....to the point that I’m suicidal because you guys have taken away my favorite place to go. I’m at work and this upsets me.”

I thanked Mr. Higham for his comments and asked him repeatedly (at least three times) if he would like to be added to the park mailing list. He refused to give me anything other than his name.

Cynthia M. Holda

July 23, 2009