



September 9, 2009

Mike Murray
Superintendent
Cape Hatteras National Seashore
1401 National Park Drive
Manteo, N.C. 27954

Re: Village seasonal closures

Dear Superintendent Murray;

The Negotiated Rule Making process for conflict resolution ended in February of 2009 but still raises questions to the continuing management of seasonal and safety closures of the seashore. Of particular interest to access organizations and Outer Banks businesses suffering economically under the “consent decree” is the continuing closures of public beach in front of Frisco and Hatteras Villages and south of Ramp #1.

Previous public statements from the National Park Service indicated a decision would occur upon the completion of the Negotiated Rule Making process. Additional statements by NPS indicated that a reopening of the once seasonal opened beaches of the villages would constitute a precedent favoring seasonally opened beaches. In fact what has really happened is a precedent has been set for the last 14 years to keep these beaches closed and somehow they should be treated differently. The public has endured these closures unnecessarily and unfairly in the past and consequently there are no guarantees the NEPA process will be completed on time. The current management policy favors private beaches over public beaches. Public perception begs the question, is there a deal that has been struck between the government and private property landowners to keep these beaches closed? There continues to be a lack of public access to these areas and there are no plans in the immediate future to provide access. The original publicly approved ORV plan of the late 1970’s, clearly states those beaches be opened September 15 to May 15. By contrast these seasonally opened beaches have historically been opened more than closed.

The National Park Service cannot continue to advocate for the enjoyment of our beaches to the privileged few over the rights of enjoyment by the public. These beaches should be opened September 15 and closed May 15 according to NPS guidelines and public record.

Sincerely,

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Cc:

Marc Basnight, N.C. Senate Pro Tem
Walter B. Jones Jr., N.C House Representative
Richard Burr, Senator N.C.
Kay Hagan, Senator N.C.
Beverly Perdue, N.C. Governor