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Subject: RE: Your communications
Date: 02/25/2010 10:51 AM

Apologies – my email address for you was incorrectly entered, Mr. Judge.

Chris Canfield
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**DONATE ONLINE to protect NC's
birds and habitats. www.ncaudubon.org**

From: CANFIELD, Chris
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2010 10:49 AM
To: 'Warren Judge '
Cc: 'allenb@darenc.com'; 'richardj@darenc.com'; 'vtillett@darenc.com'; 'mikej@darenc.com'; 'maxd@darenc.com'; 'jshea@darenc.com'; 'Amy.Fulk@ncleg.net'; 'Joshua.Bowlen@mail.house.gov'; 'Melissa_Midgett@hagan.senate.gov'; 'perrin_cooke@hagan.senate.gov'; 'patrick_brennan@hagan.senate.gov'; 'kara_weishaar@burr.senate.gov'; 'Mike_Murray@nps.gov'; 'David.Alberg@noaa.gov'; 'Peter.Dutton@noaa.gov'; GOLDER, Walker
Subject: Your communications

Commissioner Judge,

I recently received the attached email from you to one of over ninety scientists who signed a letter to the National Park Service concerning ORV management on Cape Hatteras National Seashore. My staff and I have been forwarded similar emails received by other scientists. In addition, we have seen Dare County’s recent press release stating that the sign-on letter requests that the National Park Service “prohibit year-round recreational access for everyone” and reflects Audubon’s “long-intended goal of closing the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area to everyone forever.” I am disappointed by the tone of these communications and their misleading nature.

Audubon has never advocated and is not now advocating “closing the Seashore to everyone,” and the letter we drafted for review and sign-on also does no such thing. The scientists who signed the letter merely supported the government’s own management protocols for protected species recommended by the United States Geological Survey in 2005 and urged “the National Park Service to implement the highest level of protection to the extent possible, but certainly no less than the moderate level of protection as described in the USGS protocols.” Such a recommendation demands neither closing the entire Seashore to vehicles nor closing any part of it year-round to pedestrians. For Dare County to publicly state that the scientists’ letter or Audubon intends to “prohibit year-round recreational access for everyone” is erroneous and sadly serves to further inflame the issue.

Even more troubling is your suggestion that the scientists have misused their authority. The letter could not be more clear in stating: "This letter represents the professional opinions of the following individuals and not the official opinions of their institutions, agencies, or organizations." Having an official capacity does not deprive these individuals of the right to be heard, particularly on a subject on which they have expertise. Dare County's continued pressure on these people, even after they clearly explain what is stated in the letter, provides the appearance of officially sanctioned harassment, chilling their free speech rights and subverting the scientific integrity of the rulemaking process.

Instead of further polarizing the issue, fueling the air of intimidation that exists within your communities against anyone supporting responsible resource protections on the National Seashore, I would hope that Dare County officials such as yourself would look for ways to alleviate tensions. It seems counter to the role of responsible government officials to support those who have bullied local citizens through verbal harassment and vandalism. It also seems counterproductive to your hopes of developing a diverse tourism economy to focus on one subgroup of visitors at the expense of all others.

The National Park Service will have to manage in line with the laws that the people of the United States have passed, and it will have to justify such management in the light of the best science available. Continued denial of that fundamental reality, as has been ongoing for decades, will only prolong the tensions, causing pain to all involved.

Working together, we could support the Park Service in fulfilling its obligations for resource protections while increasing its attractiveness to visitors of all kinds. Our federal leaders could help fund the Park Service to provide the kinds and levels of staffing needed to support wildlife protections that accommodate the most other uses of the seashore; to provide improved facilities at ramps for both pedestrians and ORV drivers; and to market the unique mix of natural assets, communities and progressive management that should make Cape Hatteras a destination for people all over the world.

I have heard from many citizens who are tired of petty power games that seem only legitimized by constantly inflated conflict; they are anxious to move past antagonism to making the most of a new reality at Cape Hatteras. I invite you to show your leadership by promoting a new and respectful tone toward all those with legitimate interest in the future of our country's first national seashore.

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