

LANA # 2919

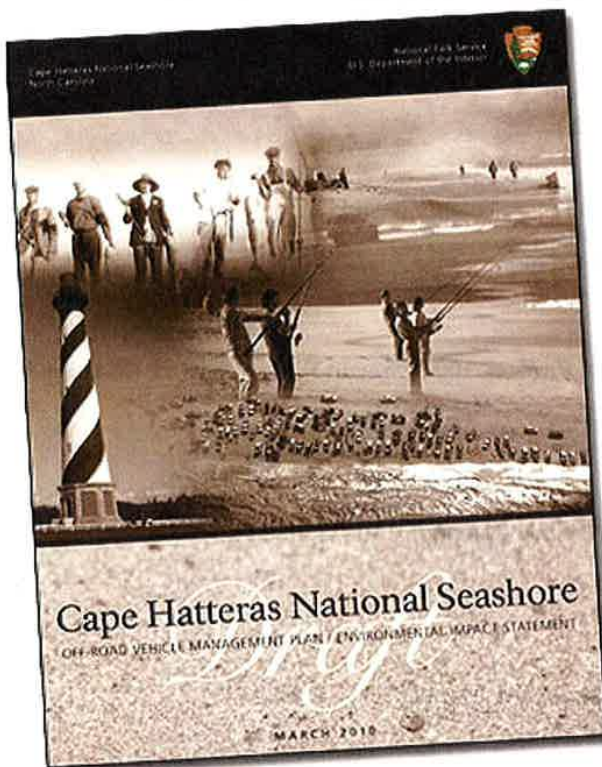


Beach Access and Park Issues

April 1, 2010

Coalition for Beach Access plans workshops on DEIS

By IRENE NOLAN



The Coalition for Beach Access is planning a series of workshops in mid-April to help the public learn more about and comment effectively on the National Park Service's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for ORV rulemaking at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

The DEIS and the park preferred alternative, contained in the document, will guide public access to the seashore for the next 10 to 15 years.

The document was unveiled to the public on March 5 and was opened to public comment on March 12. The 60-day public comment period closes on May 11.

During the week of April 26, the Park Service plans public meetings to discuss and get comment on the plan.

However, before the meetings, the Coalition of Beach Access plans a series of workshops on the Outer Banks to help the public make informed and effective comments on the DEIS.

The Coalition for Beach Access is a group of organizations committed to the preservation of pedestrian and ORV access to the beaches within the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational

Area. These organizations participated in the NPS negotiated rulemaking process, but the committee of stakeholders was not able to reach a consensus. The effort was disbanded in February, 2009.

Members of the coalition currently are the American Sportfishing Association, the Avon Property Owners Association, Cape Hatteras Anglers Club, the North Carolina Beach Buggy Association, Outer Banks Preservation Association, United Mobile Sportsfishermen, and the Watersports Industry Association.

The coalition has continued to advocate the positions it outlined in negotiated rulemaking in the year since that effort ended and as the Park Service has prepared its DEIS and draft ORV plan for the seashore.

Now the group plans community workshops to help the general public understand the DEIS, its implications,

and how best members of the community can make their comments to the Park Service.

The schedule for the workshop is:

- Tuesday, April 13, at 6:30 p.m. at Cape Hatteras Secondary School in Buxton.
- Wednesday, April 14, at 7 p.m. at the Ocracoke Community Center.
- Thursday, April 15, 6:30 p.m. at First Flight High School in Kill Devil Hills.

According to Natalie Kavanagh, Outer Banks Preservation Association board member and coalition organizer, each workshop will include a brief introduction to the DEIS, a PowerPoint presentation on what the coalition agrees with and disagrees with and why, suggestions on making the most constructive and effective comments, and the importance of public comments.

There will also be handouts with tips on commenting effectively.

In addition, the PowerPoint presentation, the handouts, and some video of the Buxton meeting will be available online shortly after the meetings for those who cannot attend the workshops.

The National Park Service public meetings are scheduled for the week beginning April 26. They are:

Ocracoke

Monday, April 26, 2010 – 9 until 11 a.m.
Ocracoke School, 1 Schoolhouse Road
(Doors open at 8:30 for sign-in, the meeting will begin at 9.)

Buxton

Monday, April 26, 2010 – 5 until 8 p.m.
Cape Hatteras Secondary School, 48576 Hwy. 12, Buxton
(Doors open at 4:30 for sign-in, the meeting will begin at 5 p.m.)

Kill Devil Hills

Tuesday, April 27, 2010 – 6 until 8 p.m.
Wright Brothers National Memorial First Flight Centennial Pavilion, 1000 Croatan Hwy., M.P. 7 ½, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948
(Doors open at 5:30 for sign-in, the meeting will begin at 6.)

Raleigh, N.C.

Wednesday, April 28, 2010 – 6 until 8 p.m.
McKimmon Conference & Training Center (NC State University Campus), 1101 Gorman Street, Raleigh, NC 27695
(Doors open at 5:30 for sign-in, the meeting will begin at 6.)

Hampton, Va.

Thursday, April 29, 2010 – 6 until 8 p.m.
Holiday Inn & Conference Center, 1815 West Mercury Boulevard, Hampton, VA 23666
(Doors open at 5:30 for sign-in and the meeting will begin at 6.)

The Coalition for Beach Access has developed its own ORV Access Environmental Impact Position Statement to summarize its positions on many of the issues that are important to its goal of open access to the seashore.

“The coalition believes the positions stated within this document and its attachments represent a common sense, reasonable approach to ORV management that will protect public access and natural resources without impairment to either,” the organizers said in a message to members of beach access groups and the media.

“All who are interested in the preservation of pedestrian and ORV access to the beaches within the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area are urged to compare and contrast this document with the NPS DEIS and ORV plans to assist them in the preparation of comments during the official comment periods,” the coalition release said.

An electronic copy of statement can be downloaded at www.obpa-nc.org/position/statement.pdf

Electronic Copy of NPS DEIS can be downloaded at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=358&projectId=10641&documentID=32596>

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Comments are always welcomed!

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