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IN REPLY REFER TO:

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
OUTER BANKS GROUP

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site Wright Brothers National Memorial



Cape Hatteras National Seashore
1401 National Park Drive
Manteo, NC 27954
252-473-2111

A3821 (CAHA-S)

Mr. Jim Hale
9614 Whispering Pines Ct.
Saline, MI 48176

Dear Mr. Hale:

Thank you for your visitor comment letter regarding observations and recommendations about the management of off-road vehicles on Ocracoke Island at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (Seashore).

As a result of litigation, for the past four years the Seashore has operated under a court order/consent decree that provides for the management of protected wildlife and plant species until an off-road vehicle (ORV) management plan/environmental impact statement (plan/EIS) and special regulation are completed. The National Park Service (NPS) had been working on the plan/EIS since 2006 and issued a Record of Decision (ROD) on December 20, 2010. A proposed rule (special regulation) that would codify the designated ORV routes and regulations identified in the ROD was published in July 2011 and open to public comment until September 19, 2011. The NPS is in the process of preparing the final rule and we expect to begin implementation of the plan/EIS and special regulation before the start of the 2012 season.

The special regulation will formally designate portions of the Seashore's beaches as ORV routes and establish ORV use restrictions and requirements, while some beaches not designated for ORV use will be available as pedestrian only areas. During the bird and sea turtle nesting season, mid-March to mid-August, it is likely that some areas will be temporarily closed to public entry to protect nesting shorebirds and sea turtles. Much more information about the ORV management plan and special regulation is available at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=10641>

We appreciate receiving your comments and hope your next visit to Ocracoke will be thoroughly enjoy.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Murray

Michael B. Murray
Superintendent