

0075037

From: [Mike Murray](#)
To: [Ona Ferguson](#)
Subject: Re: Revised action items due 8/1
Date: 07/31/2008 05:06 PM
Attachments: [Village Closure Call Notes_080729_d1.pdf](#)

I was on the call and am under the impression that the Village Committee considered speed limits as a cross-over issue from the Vehicle Characteristics and Requirements subcommittee. The Village S-C commented that, in general, the parkwide speed limit should be 15 mph, rather than change seasonally (15 during the summer and 25 during the winter). There was a different discussion about having a 10 mph speed limit in the villages, if open during the winter, though it is unclear to me if they reached consensus. See attached notes. I'd say either check with Robert to see if he thinks there was consensus about 10 mph or 15 mph within the villages, or go ahead and distribute the latest Safety Closure version (showing 10 mph in the villages during the winter) from me. If there is an inconsistency with what the Village S-C recommends, people will let us know.



Village Closure Call Notes_080729_d1.pdf

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Ona Ferguson
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To <Mike_Murray@nps.gov>
cc

07/31/2008 02:08 PM

Subject Re: Revised action items due 8/1

Mike,

I was getting all set to send out this information, plus the hunt club access text you sent, then looked at the draft safety closures document and wanted to double check one thing with you.

In the safety closures document, you list 10mph in front of the villages. As I understand it, the Village Closures subcommittee was discussing 15mph. I want to be sure we are being consistent. Is it ok to send as is, or will doing so raise questions about what is under consideration in front of the

> uses that currently occur there.

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> If the road were opened to the public for vehicular access, it would no longer be a "trail" nor would it be an ORV route (since a "road" is inherently not "off-road"). NPS staff and I have a number of concerns about opening the road to all vehicles. NPS concerns include:

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> The road is part of a designated trail system (NC Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail). NPS would likely have to withdraw the trail segment from the system if we were to start using the route more as a road than as a trail.

> The "road" is only one lane wide and crosses an old culvert that is only one lane wide. It is in a marshy area and unlikely to ever be widened, which is one reason why it is used as a "trail" and not as a "road."

> There is limited parking at the soundside terminus of the road. Currently, people park at the south end of the lighthouse parking near the gate that blocks vehicular access to the road. I routinely see half dozen or more vehicles parked there. From the gate to the sound shoreline is only a few hundred yards.

> The area is popular with pedestrians. It is pretty well known locally as a good place for families to go, especially families with small kids since it is just a short easy walk to the water on a compacted surface (it is easier to walk to the water here than it is on a sandy beach), which is suitable for strollers (and wheelchairs). The culvert is a great place to take kids crabbing (easy access and lots of "action").

> Much of the crabbing occurs from the road where it crosses the culvert, which would no longer be viable if the route were open to traffic. The low energy sound shoreline is a good place to take kids fishing. I always see a number of people fishing there, and often it is a more diverse group of people than I typically see on the beaches. In other words, this site has a rather unique and diverse clientele, who seem to learn about it by word of mouth as being a good place to crab or fish with easy pedestrian access.

> Pros of opening the road to traffic: If the gate were open to traffic, then the vehicles that currently park outside the gate could drive the few hundred yards down to the sound where there is limited parking. Additional or different people who are not currently willing or able to walk or who cannot be pushed in a stroller or wheelchair for a few hundred yards would be able to access the site.

> Cons: If the road were open to traffic, some people would benefit by easier access, but it would be at the expense of the many people who enjoy the site "as is." In addition to the traffic on the one-lane road negating the pleasant pedestrian experiences now available, there would likely be parking congestion at the terminus and difficulties of vehicles trying to pass each other on a narrow, one-lane road.

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> 2) NPS edits of Safety Closure discussion are attached.

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> [attachment "ORV Safety Closures.NPS DRAFT.072408.doc" deleted by Mike Murray/CAHA/NPS]

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BRIEF SUMMARY

Village Closure Subcommittee
July 29, 2008 Conference Call

Participants: John Alley, Sonny Duke, Robert Fisher, Steve Kayota, Wayne Mathis, Mike Murray, Jim Lyons, Jeff Wells

Next Steps:

1. Mike Murray will provide the subcommittee the visitation data he referred to on the call.
2. Subcommittee members will develop "middle ground" proposals and send to Robert Fisher by Tuesday August 12th. Subcommittee members are encouraged to confer with others in preparing proposals. Robert will combine the proposals into a single document and distribute to the subcommittee for review.
3. Tuesday August 26th at 11AM – conference call to review draft proposals.

Speed Limits:

The Subcommittee discussed the information from the Vehicle Characteristics subcommittee concerning speed limits. Discussion topics included: consistency with the Executive Orders; potential closure dates; access for commercial and recreational fishing; potential criteria for evaluating speed limit proposals – simplicity, consistency, enforceability; driving purpose – access rather than recreation; beach conditions that might foster higher speeds; impact of posted speed limits on average speed; reducing the limit to 10 mph within 100' of a pedestrian within village limits and elsewhere. Mike Murray also informed the subcommittee that NPS was developing a draft alternative for a speed limit of 15 mph year-round based on simplicity for the public, visitor education, and Park management considerations.

The subcommittee recommends that the Vehicle Characteristics subcommittee adopt and recommend to the Committee a uniform speed limit of 15 mph, unless otherwise posted.

Closure Recommendations:

The subcommittee identified two recommendations for Committee consideration at the September meeting: (1) keep the [2008?] status quo, and (2) ban all driving in front of villages year round. The subcommittee will work on developing a third recommendation in the middle.

Mike Murray reported visitation data and John Alley reported real estate occupancy rates. The subcommittee also discussed: whether to treat all villages the same or develop different approaches for different villages; assessing views of different villages using a village-by-village survey or visitor survey information; and possibly using the village areas for some of the pedestrian only areas discussed by the routes and areas subcommittee.