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Subject: Draft ideas for Cape Point/NR issues
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Attachments: [CAHANRSubCapePoint8-26.doc](#)

MIKE AND THAYER

Here's my best cut at our options discussion yesterday. Please don't hesitate to edit away. If you can get me any comments by Wednesday AM, I'll incorporate them and shoot this off to the subcommittee. I know this is rapid turn around time.

If you do a redline/strikeout, when you save the file, save the file with your initials so I keep track of who is whos. Thanks.

PAT

NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE
Summary of Ideas/Options for Cape Point
8-26-08

GOAL

- Protecting natural resources and access to Cape Point, to the greatest extent possible, year-round.

DEFINITION OF AREAS

- Cape Point is defined as from the southern groin (the old lighthouse location) to ramp 45 off of the Cape Point Campground
- South beach is defined as from Ramp 45 to the village border at Frisco just west of the airstrip.

OPTIONS AND IDEAS

Pre-Nesting Enclosures

- Move the current 2008 pre-nesting closure on the east beach and to and/or around the Point some modest distance to the west. This would expand the ORV corridor and “encourage” CWB nesting further to the west, reducing full closures of the corridor during the later spring/summer due to CWBs.

Altered Buffer Distances during Pre-Nesting

- Reducing buffer distances in select areas (i.e., east facing beach of Cape Point to the Point) for non-endangered species during breeding/nesting behavior until nests are on the ground. Some impacts are allowable under the NPS non-impairment rule.

ORV Access When Piping Plover Chicks on the Ground

- During daylight hours, ORV access would be allowed within the unfledged piping plover chick buffer (currently 1000 m) two weeks after the chicks have hatched. When ORV access is permitted, a buffer distance (suggestion is 300 m) between piping plover chicks and ORVs would be maintained at all times and with sufficient, on-going NPS monitoring each day.

Active Management Tools in Select Areas

- For CWBs, utilize decoys to help establish colonies away from driving corridors. This has been successfully done elsewhere for common and least terns and black skimmers. This would have to be a targeted effort in select areas only, like the Point, given NPS staff resources.
- Utilize temporary fencing and/or temporary barriers between the nest and/or chicks for some species to reduce chances of birds being harmed. Fencing has been used elsewhere through out the United States.

Vegetation Management in Select Areas

- NPS should explore opportunities to enhance interior bird nesting habitat at a sufficient distance away from the north beach ORV corridor.

- Selected interior areas of Cape Point could be opened to vehicle traffic from X to Y date (one suggestion is 16 November to 14 March). Such action should reduce vegetation density and possibly make the interior areas of Cape Point more attractive to nesting birds. Some areas would not be included in this winter opening because they are suitable as foraging, resting, and roosting habitat for non-breeding shorebirds, such as ephemeral pools/ponds, all moist soil habitats, and a buffer around such habitats.
- Vegetation should be removed from areas only if the area selected will not close access because of some buffer.

Areas Non-Accessible to Birds during Nesting and Unfledged Chicks

- Vehicles may be allowed to pass through portions of the protected area where the protected area is considered by NPS natural resource management staff to be inaccessible to chicks because of steep topography, dense vegetation, or other naturally occurring obstacles. Ocean beach would not likely be included in this exception regarding plovers and AOCs due to typical, wide-ranging chick behavior.

Interdunal Road

- The interdunal road should be maintained and open for two-way traffic.

Management of Bird Disturbances

- Within the ORV corridor and any pedestrian access areas, establish clear rules and violations for such possible bird disturbances as pets, kites, loud noises, large objects attached to vehicles (i.e., banners, flags, etc.), and so forth.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- The Committee needs to better understand adaptive management and its practical application in the Park via dialogue with an expert acceptable to all.
- The Committee and/or a subcommittee could develop a specific set of adaptive management questions to answer over the coming years, which in turn, would require NPS to develop appropriate technical/scientific protocols for testing, monitoring, analyzing, and learning from data.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

- The parking area at Ramp 45 should be open during duck hunting season.
- An access route to the dredge pond with suitable parking should be developed for the bird watching enthusiast.
- More parking and toilets at ramp 43.
- Increase the width of pavement in the approach to ramp 44 for airing down.

VIOLATIONS

- Penalties for violations should be “neutral” regardless of the interest of the person(s) violating enclosures on foot, vehicle, or other means.
- Options include:
 - Better education through some kind of pass/permit system

- Better marked enclosure signs with clear notice of penalties for violation
- Higher dollar fines for violations
- Expanding buffers when repeated violations occur
- Expanding buffers when a single violation occurs

AREAS FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION

- What are the specific requirements under the Piping Plover Recovery Plan for unfledged chick buffers, weeks after chicks on the ground, and so forth.

TURTLES

- Work Group of Subcommittee, including _____ will help prepare for Turtle discussions in October Committee meeting.

ISSUES STILL IN DISCUSSION

- Date of establishing pre-nesting closures (March 15 or later)
- Use of South Beach
- Buffer distances