

From: [Fred](#)
Reply To: fwestervelt@pol.net
To: Mike_Murray@NPS.gov
Cc: irenen@mindspring.com
Subject: The Ongoing ORV iscussion
Date: 12/08/2008 04:24 PM

An Open Letter to Superintendent Murray

Sir,

I begin by commending you on the early release of the NPS DEIS Action Alternatives. Not only do these offer a needed framework upon which the RegNeg Committee may build, but also they provide a glimmer of hope that reason might prevail in the ORV beach access issue. I hope to see this borne out at the next meeting.

Your presentation on Friday afternoon, 14 November, was illuminating, and prompts me to comment- of course. I am especially attracted to your Slides 4 and 5, which depict plover population data for the past two decades. For the purpose of this letter I accept these data as correct and without bias.

The premise that the plover is at risk, fundamental to the argument that embroils us all, seems to find at best only weak support in Slide 4, indicating that with the exception of our Cape Hatteras the plover is faring satisfactorily along the Atlantic coast. The upper mid-West and Gulf Coast offer similar good news. In addition, population data for Pea Island and Portsmouth Island are omitted as these significant beaches are outside the jurisdiction of CAHA/NPS, and those for the numerous spoil islands have been unexamined. Whatever the reasons, the birds' choice must be considered to be contributory.

Your Slide 5 depicts a substantial decline in CAHA plover breeding pairs (from a mean of 12 per year before 1998 to mean of 4 per year 1999-2007), with estimated (by me, assuming 4 chicks per pair) number of chicks 48 to 16 annually. While this may be statistically significant by one or another test, is it biologically significant such as to warrant the major cost and societal upheaval that is now ongoing? I suggest that it is not. Neither number seems sufficient to influence the survival of the species when studied in the total context. But then, this is not necessary, as the species is doing well elsewhere, and there is no reason to force an unneeded outcome.

The known enormous expenditures for so little gain seems to me to be irrational, especially in these times of local as well as national economic turmoil. The outlay by NPS, funded solely by tax monies, include enhanced beach management and regulation, these meetings, legal fees in defeat and more. The substantial monetary and cultural losses sustained thus far by Outer Banks populace and businesses, certain to increase, have not yet been properly tabulated and sadly seem to be of little interest. Add to these stresses the uncertain impact on our lives of the incoming liberal Federal administration, and continued pursuit of "birds over people" is worrisome. We love our birds, and do protect them, but the unending opposing of pro-avian zealotry is fatiguing and discouraging.

We appreciate that you are simply doing your job, and that this regrettable

process must grind to a conclusion. The Committee's deliberations are coming to a close, and its recommendations, if any, are subject to your control. Data driven by an agenda, from whatever direction, can only further pollute the outcome of these actions that have already spawned widespread distrust of both the legal system and the relations between the Park Service and those subject to its regulation on the beaches.

It is imperative that you ensure that only the best available information and data be sought and utilized in the pursuit of these recommendations

Sincerely,

Frederic Westervelt
Ocracoke, NC

For the bad to prevail it is only necessary for the good to remain silent