

**Notes from December 11-12 Reg Neg Committee Meeting**  
(Small Group Discussions by Geographic Areas)

**BODIE ISLAND SPIT**

Designate as a route and area subject to modification/closure based on resource needs and best available science (*represents agreement of everyone in the small group discussion*)

Also discussed: possible use of vegetative management and whether it would be mandatory or discretionary, review of decisions with long term impact or precedent, science advisory panel, adaptive management, productivity goals, effects of dredging, wintering area for plovers, monitoring plan, data about past performance

**SOUTH BEACH**

**DEFINITION:** From Ramp 45 to 49.

**INTERESTS:** From 45 to roughly mile marker 47 (no ramp currently) very good habitat for Oystercatchers and Colonial Water Birds from 15 March through 1 August or later. Also, South Beach is good habitat for foraging and resting for non-breeding season migratory birds (ranging from June all the way through the following spring). This is also a relatively productive turtle habitat as well. Also, very protected beach so good for fishing when strong winds move people off the points and spits. Also, very good for families, kids, picnicking, and there's a horseback operation that takes people horseback riding. Relatively remote experience for pedestrians as well.

**OPTIONS:**

*General:* Rebuild the old interdunal road from 45 to 49 behind the dunes and create at least a ramp 47 or perhaps other dune cuts to the beach. Rebuild road to allow parking alongside either side of the road.

*Option #1:* Close 45 to 47 in the breeding season, from 15 March until August (end date to be determined). Open this area up otherwise from August through the following 15 March. From Ramp 49 some distance east (1 or more miles) allow year-round open beach. At somewhere around 48 provide a mile (or more) of beach year round that does not have driving EXCEPT for an ORV corridor that runs just at the toe of the dune (perhaps one vehicle deep parking below it). The beach should be wide enough here to allow for birds to forage the like and for families and others to use. The high beach ORV corridor might be closed down and replaced once the interdunal road is reconstructed.

*Option #2:* Close 45 to 47 in the breeding season, from 15 March until August (end date to be determined). From Ramp 49 some distance east allow year-round open beach. Somewhere between Ramp 49 and 45, the Park would identify each year 1 mile (or other distance) of non-breeding migratory habitat with this area (probably from August through some March) and close it to vehicles (but allow pedestrians).

*Option #3:* Close 45 to 47 in the breeding season, from 15 March until August (end date to be determined). From Ramp 49 to 47, open from 15 March until August. Then, flip the open

or closed beach. From August to March 15, 45 to 47 would be open, 47 to 49 would be closed.

### **HATTERAS INLET**

**DEFINITION:** From the Pole Road that ends on the beach to the South and a newer spur road off the Pole Road that heads west and north and ends on the sound side

**INTERESTS:** This has become decreasingly good habitat for birds or turtles. There were no Piping Plovers the last two years, but Oystercatchers did close the area. The shoreline has changed dramatically, decreasing the flat beach to the south significantly over the last ten years (essential this spit is diminishing while the Ocracoke North End across the channel is expanding). It is heavily used by fisherman for red drum, flounder, and other fish. There's a "false point" on the south side about a ¼ or more mile east of the actual point good for fishing and a rip around the point that is very good for some fishing. Families can also drive easily from the villages for sunbathing, picnicking, fishing, and other activities. There's birding and wildlife viewing (one can bushwack into the vegetation to some degree). There's also kiteboarding. It is considered by some a successful example of multiple use with minimal contact. It, however, is also desired as a remote area where a remote pedestrian experience could be had.

### **OPTIONS:**

*General:* Maintain the northwest heading newer road off the Pole Road to maintain access (especially when the ocean front is closed due to birds in the summer).

*General Natural Resource Issues:* Regardless of pedestrian interests, there is a challenge with maintaining access on the Oceanside during bird season, especially with the eroding shoreline on the Oceanside. One possibility is to create a corridor after March 15 that runs at least to the False Point and keep it open as long as you can until either SM1 or SM2 buffers shut it down.

*Option #1:* The Sound Side is closed to driving expect for an area for beach for parking off of the spur from after Labor Day until 15 March. This would provide a more remote, pedestrian experience in fall and winter. The sound side would be open to ORV access from March 15 through Labor Day to ensure alternative access to the point when the Oceanside is closed due to birds.

*Option #2:* Prohibit vehicles for some small amount of the very point itself, perhaps from the .25 miles to the east on the Sound Side from the point around to the false point on the Oceanside (another .25 miles). This would provide .5 miles of remote pedestrian experience year-round while preserving some sound side and Oceanside access for ORV-access.

*Option #3:* From the spur road of the Pole Road on the south side, heading east to the "Tower" close this beach to all but pedestrians year round. This would reduce restrictions on ORV access while providing a remote pedestrian experience (but, doesn't provide the unique "point" experience of the CAHA).

**NORTH OCRACOKE**

*(represents agreement of everyone in the small group discussion, although different from what the R&A subcommittee developed)*

- move existing parking lot that is currently just south of Ramp 59 0.1 to 0.25 miles further south so it is not on the high dune and the crossing for peds will be more gradual. Expand the parkinglot. Put the boardwalk off the south end of the parking lot.
- Build a pedestrian boardwalk or access from that parking lot to the ocean.
- where that boardwalk hits the ocean becomes the division between the PED and ORV areas (ped to the south, ORV to the north)
- Keep ramp 59 as is
- Designate from the boardwalk to the tip of North Ocracoke as an ORV area, until you get to natural resource closure areas.
- The north end of Ocracoke (the actual end that is between the ferry and where ORVs can drive to) From the Ferry terminal around to the right is currently a good, beautiful, well-used pedestrian-only beach.
- Improve/keep the road that goes from the main road out to the sound just below the ferry open for driving just to the sound (no driving along the sound).

**Reasons for not considering pedestrian only use of North Ocracoke**

- Pedestrians wouldn't use it (need to take ferry)
- Already have a ped area there on the back side, by the ferry and around to the north
- Easy/wide beach to have both ORVs and peds with little conflict
- Criteria aren't established for selecting among all the spits and points if there is to be one for peds. If the criteria were: Smallest -- then North Ocracoke would be the place, Best Experience -- then Cape Point or Hatteras Spit would be the place, Most Accessible -- then North Ocracoke would be the one.

**SOUND SIDE ACCESS**

*(represents agreement of everyone in the small group discussion)*

- All sound side roads: need consistent signage with other parts of the beach (put either names or milepost numbers throughout park on the highway and on the beach for safety reasons so people can say where they are and so visitors know what roads they can access/know where they are), need roads maintained and made two-lane, clamshell, maintain all roads, add an area to turn around at the end if there isn't one currently, clear brush on either side of roads to the sound.
- Prong Road – need more parking (fits 4-5 now), an area to turn around

- Borrow Pit Rd/Cockrel Creek – maintain the parkinglot & road – currently has 4-5 spots, which is adequate.
- Falk Hammock – should be maintained as is (currently locked, used by commercial fishermen, 22 keyholders)
- Scrag Cedar – sufficient parking, maintain road, currently used for ocean beach parking, which would change if new Ramps 62 and 64 had parking.
- Pony Pens – expand parking on both sides of the road (there is currently some parking on each side, but not enough)\
- Hammock Hills – widen and improve road.

### **SOUTH POINT**

*(represents agreement of everyone in the small group discussion)*

- Work to get access to the sound just to the west of Ocracoke village by discussing/working with the landowner, NC Coastal Land Trust
- Keep South Point Road open to ramp 72, which has ocean-side access. Open a mirror sound side access road at that same place (so the road t's out heading south and you can drive left to the ocean and right to the sound).
- In the winter, put in a road that ORVs can use to access the sound side further down, maybe halfway between the Ramp 72 sound access and the tip. That road would sit between wintering habitat and the dunes, and people would access it from the ocean-side beach
- Utilize a suite of management options during bird breeding season (first keeping a corridor open, then keeping a pass-through open if there was more biotech monitoring and vehicles were not stopping and triggers were established which would lead to full closure if birds are disturbed, then escorted pass-through, then boat to get to pedestrian only area at tip from Ocracoke Village)
- DATES: Move the end date of resource closures sooner, to July 31 + 2 weeks after last observed bird behavior.
- TIMES: Have the night closure dates more closely mimic reality of when the sunsets by closing the beach to driving (in corridors/pass-throughs if/when allowed) from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise, with the option of park and stay on beach (the park and stay option we didn't have time to explore fully, but no one seemed to have huge objections). Other options considered included 7pm (March 15-May 15) and 8:30pm (May 15-Aug 31), or a graded scale where each month on the 15th the closing time changes to the appropriate half hour depending on sunset. Note that NPS wants the same timing as on Cape Point.

**SOUTH POINT**

*(discussed but not agreed to by all in the small group)*

- Consider the needs of the Red Knot at the very tip, maybe close the very tip to the sound side for their use July 15-May 1.
- Manage the vegetation to keep it further back/sound side on South Point to reduce conflicts between birds and people
- Place pre-nesting closures further up the beach to make it less likely that buffers would entirely close the corridor for ORV access.
- Perhaps base where the ORV corridor ends in the summer at the very South Tip based on where Red Knots are, and let people drive to that point then walk into the Red Knot area for other recreational purposes.

**OTHER**

- Note that the map incorrectly shows the pedestrian area that begins at the Ocracoke Campground ending below the Ocracoke Day Use Area. It should end AT the Ocracoke Day Use Area, and from there driving would be allowed heading south at least to Ramp 72.
- Widen Ramp 67 to 2 lanes.
- Want at least two red knot wintering habitat areas in CAHA based on wherever the red knot is wintering now most frequently (need to ask NPS for this data)