

**Cape Hatteras Access Preservation Alliance (CHAPA)**

**Analysis of National Park Service's *Proposal to Facilitate Additional Beach Access – Environmental Assessment (June, 2013)*  
7/23/2013**

**Public Comment Needed by August 2, 2013**

As announced by Superintendent Barclay Trimble on June 26, 2013, the public comment period for the Cape Hatteras National Seashore *Proposal to Facilitate Additional Public Beach Access – Environmental Assessment* opened on July 1, 2013 and will end on August 2, 2013.

We urge you to review the documents, to form your personal opinions about the proposals, and to provide your comments by August 2, 2013.

The official NPS documents for this assessment can be found at the following link:

[http://parkplanning.nps.gov/beach\\_access](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/beach_access)

The document is 188 pages long. We suggest that you first focus on tables 2-1, 2-2 and 4-5 to understand the proposed projects. You should then review other sections within the document as needed to aid you in your review and formulation of comments.

You may submit your comments at the following web site:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?documentID=54247>

The Outer Banks Preservation Association (OBPA) motto is “Preserve and Protect, Not Prohibit.” Another phrase often used is “Free and Open Beaches.” Our goal has always been to maximize beach access for all visitors to the beaches at Cape Hatteras. Infrastructure projects alone cannot resolve the punitive access restrictions placed on the public by the ORV rule in February, 2012. Nevertheless, infrastructure projects to improve access are long overdue. In our opinion, many of the projects identified by NPS have obvious value, while some are more questionable. We urge everyone who values CHNSRA to take the time to review the proposals, form your own opinions, and provide comment within the allotted time frame.

The following information will be the basis for the official CHAPA comments to the National Park Service Environmental Assessment. We thank the North Carolina Beach Buggy Association (NCBBA), an alliance member, for their effort in preparing the project assessment table which is included and which they distributed to their members last week. We hope you will find it useful as you conduct your review.

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#### General Observations:

- The 29 infrastructure projects assessed by the NPS address both pedestrian and ORV access improvements which were identified in the *Cape Hatteras National Seashore Final Environmental Impact Statement/ORV Management Plan – November, 2010*. These projects are defined within the NPS assessment on page 5. Per the NPS descriptions;
  - 5 of the projects are intended to primarily benefit ORV access.
  - 5 of the projects are intended to benefit both pedestrian and ORV access.
  - 19 of the projects are intended to benefit pedestrian access only.
- 11 projects include components to improve access to the handicapped in compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.
- Many of the projects are long overdue. Some of the projects are of questionable value to either ORV or pedestrian use.
- Cost estimates have not been provided for each individual project.
- The NPS intends to fund all 29 projects with the ORV permit fees instituted by the ORV rule in February 2012. (“Funding for the proposed action would come from ORV permit fees established under the ORVMP/EIS.” p. 45)
  - Approximately \$2 million in ORV permit fees were collected in 2012.
  - ORV permit fees are also used to fund ongoing operations, e.g. permit offices, rule enforcement, ramp maintenance.
- None of the projects are intended to be funded through the general or capital budgets for the CHNSRA.
- The NPS intends to assign the highest priority to projects that provide access to areas of the beach that are closed to ORVs. (“Facilities would be implemented based on funding, cost, and regulatory issues with the highest priority given to construction projects that provide access to areas of the beach that are closed to ORVs.” p. 45)
- Timelines for projects have not been provided.

Responses for each individual project are on the following pages.

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
1	A 10-car parking at the former site of the U.S. Coast Guard Station on Bodie Island*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Update facilities to accommodate visitor use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach between Ramp 1 to 0.5 miles south of Coquina Beach is a VFA</li> <li>• Seashore visitors currently use area as a parking area</li> </ul>	A good use of area, but concerned with adding 3 additional intersections on a busy highway such as NC Rt. 12. The summer season sees this highway congested and adding more intersections would likely lead to additional accidents.	PED
2	A handicap accessible boardwalk at Coquina Beach on Bodie Island*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> <li>• Update facilities to accommodate visitor use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach between ramp 1 to 0.5 miles south of Coquina Beach is a VFA</li> <li>• Current ADA accessible boardwalk does not extend to the beach</li> </ul>	An ADA compliant boardwalk should do more than simply move the handicapped over the dune. What facilities are available @ the terminus of the boardwalk? ORV fees should not be used for access to VFAs.	PED
3	Additional access road from NC-12 to fee station at Coquina Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC 12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> <li>• Minimize conflicts between different types of recreation users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict between visitors using the beach and visitors who are obtaining their ORV permits</li> </ul>	Should not further congest traffic in this area. Permits should be available on line @ reduced cost to NPS & issued for a 12 month period. A fee station should be located @ the visitor center at the park entrance. Additional parking could be provided at far less cost and with better traffic control than this proposed access road. Undocumented visitor conflicts are an excuse, not a documented reality.	ORV

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
4	An ORV ramp and 10-car parking area 0.5 miles south of Coquina Beach (New Ramp 2.5)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate ORV and pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore open to ORVs</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach at this location is difficult to access by foot</li> <li>• Year-round ORV route from 0.5 mile south of Coquina Beach to 0.2 miles south of ramp 4 has one ORV access location at ramp 4</li> </ul>	Closure of Ramp #2 is the most fiscally irresponsible and absurd proposal within this total document. Ramp #2 has existed since 1952 and, to our knowledge, never been significantly breached by any storm. To move 0.5 mile south, destroy vegetation, create a need for added maintenance and create a new ramp is total folly.	Both
5	A 10-car parking area with foot trail to Bodie Island Spit at Ramp 4*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal ORV route from ramp 4 to Oregon Inlet.</li> <li>• Beach seasonally closed to ORV route at this location is difficult to access by foot.</li> </ul>	10 car parking area would be good to allow groups arriving in multiple vehicles to consolidate since many ORV drivers will not pay a \$50/120 fee. A shared expense would be appropriate. A foot trail through this wetland would be an unused trail to nowhere. What estimated usage justifies this expense? ORV fees should not be expended for pedestrian access to VFAs.	Both

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
6	A 20-car parking area and handicap accessible boardwalk at Ramp 23 (Salvo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach directly north of Ramp 23 is seasonally closed to ORVs (Rodanthe, Waves and Salvo);</li> <li>• Seasonal ORV route from Ramp 23 to 1.5 miles south of ramp 23</li> <li>• Beach at this location is difficult to access by foot</li> </ul>	<p>The NPS “Need” incorrectly states that Ramp 23 south is seasonally closed for 1.5 miles. This area is defined as a VFA by the rule and is closed year round.</p> <p>Parking could be added by expanding the current parking lot. Proposed parking would only be accessible via ORV. We have always promoted maximum access for all visitors but cannot justify ORV fees paying for all improvements while pedestrians contribute nothing. Added ADA compliant boardwalk should not be paid for with ORV fees.</p>	Ped
7	A 10-car parking area* about 1.0 mile south of Ramp 23 with foot trail to the beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach at this location is a VFA and this area is difficult to access by foot</li> </ul>	<p>Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.</p>	Ped
8	An ORV Ramp 25.5 with foot trail or boardwalk to the beach*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate ORV and pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore open to ORVs</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach at this location is a VFA and this area is difficult to access by foot</li> <li>• Provides access to year-round ORV route from 1.5 miles south of ramp 23 to ramp 27</li> </ul>	<p>Since ORV Final Rule created this problem this action should have a priority</p>	Both

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
9	A 5-car parking area and foot trail to beach (beachside) at soundside Ramp 48*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach between ramp 27 and ramp 30 is permanently closed to ORVs year-round</li> <li>• Beach at this location is difficult to access by foot</li> <li>• Visitors park along NC-12 to access beach</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped
10	An ORV Ramp 32.5 (Little Kinnakeet) with a 10-car parking area* and foot trail to the beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate ORV and pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore open to ORVs</li> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of year-round ORV route from ramp 30 to 2.5 miles south</li> <li>• VFA from ramp 34 to 1.5 miles north</li> <li>• Beach at this location is difficult to access by foot</li> </ul>	Since ORV Final Rule created this problem (VFA) this action should have a priority.	Both
11	A handicap accessible boardwalk at Ramp 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFA from ramp 34 to 1.5 miles north</li> <li>• Seasonal ORV route from ramp 34 to ramp 38 (Avon)</li> <li>• Beach at this location is difficult to access by foot</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped
12	A handicap accessible boardwalk to sound at Haulover Beach Parking Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular area with no ADA accessible boardwalk</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
13	A 15-car parking area west side of highway at/near Kite Point*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Update facilities (e.g. parking areas) to accommodate visitor use</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFA on beach from 1.5 miles south of ramp 38 (i.e., Haulover) to 0.4 mile north of ramp 43 (includes Buxton)</li> <li>• Popular area for soundside access</li> <li>• Overcrowding conditions</li> <li>• Currently visitors park along NC-12</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees. Parking fees should pay this expense.	Ped
14	A 15-car parking area at soundside access #59 with foot trail from highway to beach <i>(Changed from 10 to 15 car after scoping)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFA on beach from 1.5 miles south of ramp 38 (i.e., Haulover) to 0.4 mile north of ramp 43 (includes Buxton)</li> <li>• Beach at this location is difficult to access by foot</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped
15	A 5-car parking area west side of highway at/near soundside access 60*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Update facilities (e.g. parking areas) to accommodate visitor use</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFA on beach from 1.5 miles south of ramp 38 (i.e., Haulover) to 0.4 mile north of ramp 43 (includes Buxton)</li> <li>• Beach at this location is difficult to access by foot</li> <li>• Popular area for soundside access</li> <li>• Currently visitors park along NC-12</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
16	A 50-car parking area at the former Buxton Coast Guard Station* with handicap accessible boardwalk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Update facilities to accommodate visitor use</li> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFA on beach from 1.5 miles south of ramp 38 (i.e., Haulover) to 0.4 mile north of ramp 43 (includes Buxton)</li> <li>• Overcrowding conditions</li> <li>• Conflict between visitors of the Cape Hatteras Light house and beach visitors</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees. Access to this proposed parking lot should be from old light house site, not thru residential area. Why does map (Fig. 2-16) not show 50 car parking area?	Ped
17	A handicap accessible boardwalk at Lighthouse Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular area with no ADA accessible boardwalk</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped
18	A 3-car parking area at Loran Road* w/ new handicap accessible boardwalk to the beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Update facilities (e.g. parking areas) to accommodate visitor use</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFA on beach from 1.5 miles south of ramp 38 (i.e., Haulover) to 0.4 mile north of ramp 43 (includes Buxton)</li> </ul>	This has no effect on safety along NC-12. Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped



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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
19	An elevated section of Lighthouse Rd to address flooding at ramps 43 and 44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paved road becomes frequently flooded</li> <li>• Unsafe conditions</li> </ul>	Drains exist in this area that for many years kept roadways passable. NPS created this problem when NPS failed to maintain existing drainage systems. Drains need to be cleared first & then roadway surveyed. Cost should be shared by ORV fees & campground fees. State permits should be obtained to allow drainage from this area directly to the ocean as is done in the towns north of Oregon Inlet.	Both
20	An unpaved IDR between Ramp 45 and 49 w/new ORV Ramp 48 to the beach* ( <i>Ramp has been moved from 47.5 to 48</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate ORV and pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore open to ORVs</li> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beach is a VFA from 1.7 miles west of ramp 45 to the east of Frisco boundary at the new proposed Ramp 48</li> <li>• Area of beach difficult to access by foot</li> </ul>	Since ORV Final Rule created this problem (VFA) this action should have a priority.	ORV

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
21	Widen Ramp 49 and add connector road and 5 car parking area to Billy Mitchell Rd. near Frisco Campground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update facilities (e.g. parking areas) to accommodate visitor use</li> <li>• Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas for pedestrians and motorists</li> <li>• Minimize conflicts between different types of recreation users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcrowding conditions</li> <li>• Unsafe beach exiting and entering</li> <li>• Popular beach location</li> </ul>	Since ORV Final Rule created this problem (VFA) this action should have a priority. Minimizing conflicts is a perceived condition with no factual reporting of this condition.	ORV
22	A handicap accessible boardwalk at the Ramp 55 parking area on Hatteras Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular area with no ADA accessible boardwalk</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped
23	An unimproved 20-car parking area near the Pole Road/Spur Road intersection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal ORV route from Spur Road to Hatteras Inlet</li> </ul>	This parking is accessible via ORV only. North spit @ Hatteras inlet should be reopened to ORV's and parking area would not be required.	Ped
24	A handicap accessible boardwalk at/near north ferry terminal parking area on Ocracoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VFA from Ocracoke Island Ferry North Comfort Station to 0.5 mile southwest of ramp 59</li> </ul>	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
25	An ORV Ramp 59.5 at north Ocracoke*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate ORV and pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore open to ORVs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The beach is a VFA from the old Ramp 59 to the Ocracoke Island Ferry Station.</li> <li>No access to year-round ORV route starts 0.5 miles southwest of ramp 59.5 to new ramp 63</li> </ul>	Since ORV Final Rule created this problem (VFA) this action should have a priority.	ORV
26	A 5-car parking area at the west side of highway entrance of Borrow Pit Road*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate ORV and pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore open to ORVs</li> <li>Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location on beach is difficult to access by foot</li> </ul>	Access to VFAs should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees	Ped
27	An ORV Ramp 63 across from Scrag Cedar Road*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate ORV and pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore open to ORVs</li> <li>Improve safety conditions along NC-12, other roads, beaches, and parking areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No access to year-round ORV route starts 0.5 miles southwest of ramp 59.5 to new ramp 63</li> </ul>	Since ORV Final Rule created this problem (VFA) this action should have a priority.	ORV
28	A handicap accessible boardwalk at the Ocracoke Pony Pens*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VFA at Pony Pens Beach</li> </ul>	Access to VFAs should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped

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#	Project (per NPS)	Purpose (per NPS)	Need (per NPS)	CHAPA Analysis	Target User
29	A handicap accessible boardwalk at the Ocracoke Day Use Area*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate accessibility for visitors with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VFA at Ocracoke Day Use Area</li> </ul>	Access to VFAs should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas which are not accessible to those paying the fees.	Ped

- Projects identified in the ORVMP/FEIS