

South Point Ocracoke - Alternative E 11/05/08

NPS is not seeking or considering public comment on these materials at this time. NPS is sharing this information with the negotiated rulemaking advisory committee now solely for members' use in negotiating a consensus alternative for recommendation to the NPS. NPS highly values public input in the planning process and will actively seek public comment on the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), which will include these alternatives and an analysis of their impacts. NPS plans to have the DEIS ready for public review in the early fall of 2009.

DRAFT ORV Management Alternative E Site Specific Plan for South Point (Ocracoke) Resource Area

GOAL

- Protect natural resources and maintain some sort of access to South Point, to the extent possible, year-round.

DEFINITION OF AREA

- The South Point Resource Area is defined as from 0.5 miles south of South Point Road (Ramp 72) to the inlet. South Point includes the ocean, inlet and sound shorelines and all the land in between.

MEASURES

- Designate South Point as a “restricted access” ORV area from March 15 to August 31. Entire area is closed to ORV use during this period, except for a designated ORV access corridor running more or less along the ocean shoreline to the inlet and along the inlet shoreline toward the sound. (Exact terminus and configuration of access corridor TBD by NPS resources management staff based on an annual habitat assessment).
- By March 15, establish prenesting closure and modify access corridor from the non-breeding season configuration. The corridor would be no more than 33 meters wide above the intertidal zone wherever it does not conflict with the previous year’s PIPL breeding adult foraging area(s). In locations where there is an expected conflict with the foraging area(s) along the ocean shoreline, there would be an ORV “pass through” zone approximately 10 meters wide located approximately 50 meters above the intertidal zone. Exact location and distance from the intertidal zone of the “pass through” zone to be determined by NPS Resources Management staff based on an annual habitat assessment and the previous year’s (1 year) PIPL foraging activity.
- All access within the Resource Area is restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7 p.m. from March 15 to August 31.
- No pets allowed within the Resource Area from March 15 to August 31.
- Stopping, parking, or disembarking passengers, as well as pedestrians and pets would be prohibited in the pass-through zone.
- Once the access corridor, including pass-through zone, is established, it will not be significantly modified or relocated to accommodate access, except for minor adjustments that do not affect park resources.
- Beginning March 15, follow SM2 monitoring procedures.
- Breeding Behavior/Nesting/Incubation:
 - PIPL: Provide SM2 buffers and monitoring. If breeding adult PIPLs forage outside of the established resource closure(s), adjust buffers and lengthen pass-through zone as needed to protect foraging sites.
 - AMOY and CWB: Within or along the ORV access corridor, provide SM2 ORV

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- pass-through buffers for observed breeding and nesting behavior for non-listed species. Expand buffers as described in SM2.
- Unfledged chicks:
 - All species: Follow prescribed SM2 buffer distances and monitoring for unfledged PIPL, AMOY, and CWB chicks. Close access corridor, including pass-through zone, if needed to implement or maintain prescribed buffers, or to protect park resources.
 - Once chicks have hatched, allow pedestrian access along ocean shoreline access corridor if possible to maintain SM2 buffers for unfledged chicks of the respective species present.
 - Reopen ORV access corridor when SM2 buffers for unfledged chicks can be maintained for all species present; or reopen ORV use when all chicks have fledged (and 2 weeks after AMOY chicks have fledged).
- NPS retains the right to impose further restrictions than described above if necessary for resource protection.
- Boat access: Once the prenesting area and access corridor are established, designate and post boat landing zone (“drop-off”) near inlet that could be used to drop off pedestrians if/when inlet shoreline is not otherwise closed to protect park resources. NPS to encourage water shuttle for this purpose; however, drop-off point is subject to closure on short notice if needed to protect park resources.

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