

Committee Feedback on NPS Action Alternatives

Nov 14, 2008 – Small Group Work

Compiled by Facilitation Team

Cape Hatteras National Seashore Negotiated Rulemaking

Alternative C - Benefits

- Conceptually manages based on what's happening in the Park
- Locations for protecting breeding birds as shown on maps
- Predictability of dates
- Easier to manage than Alt. E
- Additional ramps and facilities
- Annual permit runs from date of purchase
- Use of SM2

Alternative C - Benefits

- Year round Non-ORV areas
- Night driving ban and hours
- Easy to communicate
- Mandatory education requirements better than Alt D
- Seasonal dates include pre-nesting of birds and very end of turtles

Alternative C - Concerns

- Concept (what's happening in the park) was not translated into mgt activities
- Closing Spits and Points
- Potential Sea Turtle Areas
- Safety Closures
 - Monitoring every two weeks not often enough
 - Should be up to driver (as in Alt D)
- Seasonal dates too early
- No corridors for pre-nesting areas

Alternative C - Concerns

- Not as flexible or provide as much access as Alt E
- Carrying Capacity
 - Focuses on safety, which is only one factor, and excludes environment and social
 - Less parking allowed on Ocracoke
 - Two year periodic review not often enough
 - Establishes full capacity without knowing the actual capacity
- No measurable objective criteria for changing once plan finalized

Alternative C - Concerns

Hours of Allowable ORV Operation on Beach

- Night Driving
 - Ban inappropriate and unnecessary
 - Hours
 - Under and over inclusive
 - Miss sunset and sunrise
 - Nov 15 too late -- only 7% of turtles nest after Oct 31
 - Law enforcement
 - Access soundside then go onto beach after patrol leaves (e.g. Pole Road)
- Villages
 - No ORVs in front of Villages at any time

Alternative C - Concerns

- Rodanthe Pedestrian Area impractical and does not have high aesthetic value
- Access to Ramp 4 unclear
- Resource protection
 - Dates, times, monitoring frequency
 - SM1 does not include physical boundaries (less monitoring)
- Need better definition of camping (36 CFR §1.4 insufficient)
- Nothing good in Alt C

Alternative C - Ideas

- County purchase of condemned property at Pea Island-Rodanthe boundary for pedestrian area
- Set density numbers using actual data from prior years, use an average after a few years
- Use data from rental agencies to set dates for village closures
- Treat all villages the same (Hours for Allowable ORV Operations on Beach)
- SM2 buffers should be based on science and what's done in other park units

Alternative C - Ideas

- Carrying Capacity
 - Use multiplier of 150% of vehicles per mile
 - Use different calculation/approach
 - Link vehicle free areas to determination

All Alternatives

- Permit Requirements
 - Should be the same for all alternatives
 - Exam raises numerous problems (e.g. languages)
- Night Driving
 - Determine restrictions based on light and vehicle movement rather than hours
 - Use sunset to sunrise (or 30 minutes before and after) and post tables at park entry/access points

Alternative D - Benefits

- Predictability/simplicity/simple to understand
- Requires less staffing/least costly to NPS/easy to administer
- Establish boardwalks by pedestrian areas
- Education for the permit/no exam
- Permit geared toward the driver
- 7am driving start time gives rangers time to discover turtle nests
- No safety closures – don't dictate safety choices
- Ban on night driving
- Nice areas for pedestrian access and resources
- Maximum species protection/best resource protection
- Same sound side access
- Most consistent with the USGS maximum protocols
- None

Alternative D - Concerns

- Least flexibility for management
- Concern about implications of no safety closure
- Night driving dates: Nov unnecessary, inflexible
- Takes the heart out of areas enjoyed by recreational fishing
- Closes points, spits and villages to ORVs year round
- Education less thorough because no test
- Large economic impact to communities
- All X areas on matrix are SM1
- Carrying capacity – needs to be better defined, apply to high-pedestrian use areas, parking 2 deep is by choice

Alternative D - Ideas

- Add parking for walking over at night
- Add ramp 47
- Want objective, measurable criteria for changing designations over time
- Open more of Ramp 1-Oregon Inlet to ORVs
- Better define sea turtle nesting
- Why are the night driving times 7-7? Connect to daylight hours or science. Consider concept of healing beach where wind/waves have time to smooth ruts before night.

Alternative D - Ideas

- Passes: add a 1-2 week pass, make it 12-month
- Use more typical buffers even if less predictable
- Be sure habitat annual review looks at historical data
- Clarify resource protection measures – birds nest outside resource areas?
- Corrections: Map conflict (maps 6-7), dates inconsistent in resource protection/ORV maps

Alternative E - Benefits

- The **most promising** in terms of a conceptual basis for building Committee agreement.
- Utilizes adaptive management.
- Most flexible, adaptive and innovative.
- Strong education component
- Access corridors seeking to protect natural resources and access. Doesn't draw rigid "lines in the sand" as much.

Alternative E - Concerns

- Confusing and complicated; may be hard for public to understand.
- Most expensive and resource intensive to implement.
- Routes and Areas
 - Year round closure of Ramp 27 to 30? 45 to 47?
 - Sound side ramps closed with parking lot development– shouldn't close all – makes access harder
 - Not enough pedestrian-only areas on Hatteras.
 - Not enough ORV routes/areas on Ocracoke.
 - Needs a means for changing areas/details with measurable, objective criteria.
 - Don't like if ORV access closed, a pedestrian-only area opened to driving.
Pedestrians
 - Insufficient “segmenting” of pedestrian areas across the geography.

Alternative E - Concerns

- Closure Dates and Times
 - Village seasonal closure dates – 4/1 to 10/31, some view as too restrictive. Data can be hard to interpret.
 - November 15 for turtles seems late in the season.
 - Bird closures until 8/31 generically seems to much.
- Natural Resources
 - Winter habitat and FWS critical habitat designation – too much discretion for NPS without clearer criteria, etc.?
 - In some monitoring scenarios, every 2 weeks too little.
 - Lots of questions about resource tables.
 - Opening at 6 AM doesn't allow for turtle patrols first.
 - Pass thrus may pose some natural resource concerns
 - Is 10 PM closing sufficient for hatchlings who may hatch before 10?
 - Total ban on nighttime driving across Park a problem. Can't we do something more nuanced?

Alternative E - Concerns

- Carrying capacity!?
 - Parking 1 deep subject to interpretation
 - Parking needs to be variable given wind, families, etc.
 - Seems like based on safety and not other required criteria (natural resource and social carrying capacity)
 - Don't like Ocracoke getting the least capacity, especially if routes severely restricted.
- Will a water taxi really be viable – wind, shallow draft, landing difficulties?

Alternative E - Ideas

- Even with night time restrictions, still need night time patrols/enforcement.
- Specific routes need to be worked out to meet the specific needs of the Committee.
- Extend Cape Point access strip around end further to allow for break wave and red drum fishing.
- What about pedestrian area from Buxton north?
- What about developing parking in north end of Rodanthe?
- Couldn't we develop some kind of rolling average year density trigger for seasonal village closures based on actual beach usage, not who is staying in units, which is an imperfect measure?
- What about a land taxi – trained drivers, permitted, allowing more access?

Alternative E - Questions

- How can we ensure the infrastructure is in place at the time the restrictions are put in place?
- What if we don't get the necessary additional money to make this one work?