

Public Scoping Meetings
Schedule & Locations

Scoping is the first step to involve the public in the environmental impact analysis process. Scoping includes holding meetings and providing opportunities for the public to comment so that their concerns are identified early and the analysis is focused on important issues. Because the Plan/EIS will analyze many complex ecological and social issues, your participation is encouraged and needed.

The meetings will consist of open house sessions and a brief presentation, with an opportunity to provide public comment during the open house portions of the meeting.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Cape Lookout National Seashore
131 Charles Street
Harkers Island, NC 28531



Tuesday September 11, 2007
Beaufort, North Carolina
Duke Marine Lab, Pivers Island
135 Duke Marine Lab Road
Beaufort, North Carolina 28516

6:00 pm to 7:00 pm Open House

7:00 pm to 7:30 pm NPS Presentation

7:30 pm to 9:00 pm Open House

Wednesday September 12, 2007
Raleigh, North Carolina
**Please note meeting starts at 7:00 pm

McKinnon Center
North Carolina State University
South Boulevard
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695

7:00 pm to 7:30 pm NPS Presentation

7:30 pm to 9:30 pm Open House

Thursday September 13, 2007
Charlotte Metro Area, North Carolina
The Hut
413 Johnston Drive
Pineville, North Carolina 28134

6:00 pm to 7:00 pm Open House

7:00 pm to 7:30 pm NPS Presentation

7:30 pm to 9:00 pm Open House

Cape Lookout National Seashore
North Carolina

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior





Cape Lookout National Seashore Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan/EIS

Public Meeting on the Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan/
Environmental Impact Statement | September 2007

You’re Invited!

Because of your interest in Cape Lookout National Seashore, we are requesting your input in developing the Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Your participation is vital to our planning process.

Background on ORV Driving at Cape Lookout National Seashore

Off-road vehicle (ORV) management has become an issue of concern for National Park Service (NPS) units in recent years, as shown by the development of management plans and regulations for Cape Cod National Seashore, Fire Island National Seashore, Assateague Island National Seashore, Padre Island National Seashore, and Big Cypress National Preserve. ORV use at Cape Lookout predates establishment of the Seashore and by many accounts is considered a “traditional use.” Beginning in the 1940s, vehicles were transported to the banks by shallow draft ferries. Vehicles were used on the Seashore to provide access to productive commercial and recreation fishing spots and for other recreational pursuits such as sightseeing and camping. Today, the only access to these barrier islands for vehicles remains from concession-operated shallow draft ferries. Pedestrians can access the Seashore by passenger ferries and private vessels. Presently ORVs are used primarily to facilitate access to the Seashore beaches for recreational fishing and camping and to a lesser extent sightseeing and beach driving.

Seashore staff recognize the importance of ORV access to Seashore users as well as the value users place upon Seashore resources that must be protected. The ORV management Plan/EIS will identify criteria to designate ORV use areas and routes and establish ORV management practices and procedures that have the ability to adapt in response to changes in the Seashore’s dynamic physical and biological environment.

Your Participation Will Help Shape This Plan

There are a number of ways to be involved:

- Attend a public scoping meeting
- Submit comments electronically to the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) web site at the following web address:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/caloc>
- Submit written comments by mail to:
Cape Lookout National Seashore
Attn: Wouter Ketel
131 Charles Street
Harkers Island, NC 28531

* Electronic comments will only be accepted if submitted through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system (above); faxed comments will not be accepted.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be aware that our practice is to make comments, including names, home addresses, home phone numbers, and email addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their names and/or home addresses, etc., but if you wish us to consider withholding this information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. We will always make submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.



WHY IS THIS PLAN/EIS NEEDED?

The purpose of this Plan/EIS is to manage ORV use in compliance with the Seashore’s enabling legislation, NPS management policies, and other laws and regulations to ensure protection of the natural, cultural, and recreational values of the Seashore’s dynamic coastal barrier island environment for present and future generations.

- An ORV management plan is needed to:
- Comply with Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 regarding ORV use, and with NPS laws, regulations (36 CFR 4.10), and policies to minimize impacts to Seashore resources and values.
 - Establish an approved plan incorporating public input that reduces the potential for inconsistent management of ORV use, user conflicts, and safety concerns.
 - Provide for sustainable recreational use.
 - Protect natural and cultural resources from potential effects of ORV use.
 - Provide for protected species management in relation to ORV and other uses that replaces the Cape Lookout National Seashore Interim Protected Species Management Plan/EA and associated Biological Opinion.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives help define what must be achieved to a large degree for the ORV Plan/EIS and associated regulation to be considered a success. All alternatives selected for detailed analysis must meet project objectives to a large degree, and resolve the purpose and need for action. Objectives must be grounded in the Seashore’s enabling legislation, purpose, significance, and mission goals and be compatible with direction and guidance provided by the Seashore’s general management plan, strategic plan, and/or other management guidance. The following are the draft objectives related to the development of an ORV management plan based on the above stated purpose and need.

Management Methodology

- Identify criteria to designate ORV use areas and routes.
- Establish ORV management practices and procedures that have the ability to adapt in response to changes in the Seashore’s dynamic physical and biological environment.
- Continue an ongoing and meaningful dialogue with the multiple public groups interested in/affected by ORV management.
- Establish procedures for prompt and efficient public notification of beach access status including any temporary ORV use restrictions for such things as resource and public safety closures, storm events, etc.
- Build stewardship through public awareness and understanding of NPS resource management and visitor use policies and responsibilities as they pertain to the Seashore and ORV management.

Natural Physical Resources

- Minimize impacts from ORV use to soils and topographic features, e.g., dunes, ocean beach, wetlands, tidal flats, etc.

Threatened, Endangered, and Other Protected Species

- Provide protection for threatened, endangered, and other protected species (e.g., state-listed species) and their habitats, and minimize impacts related to ORV and other uses as required by laws and policies, such as the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and NPS laws and management policies.

Vegetation

- Minimize impacts to native plant species related to ORV use.

Other Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

- Minimize impacts to wildlife species and their habitats related to ORV use.

Cultural Resources

- Protect cultural resources such as shipwrecks, archeological sites, and cultural landscapes from impacts related to ORV use.

Visitor Use and Experience

- Manage ORV use to allow for a variety of appropriate visitor use experiences.

- Minimize conflicts between ORV use and other uses.

- Ensure that ORV operators are informed about the rules and regulations regarding ORV use at the park.

Visitor Safety

- Ensure that ORV management promotes the safety of all visitors.

Park Operations

- Identify operational needs and costs to fully implement an ORV management plan.



Cape Lookout National Seashore has the unique challenge of providing for visitor use while protecting important natural and cultural resources.

Issues Related to ORV Use at Cape Lookout National Seashore

The following were identified as potential issues to be analyzed during the development of an ORV Management Plan/EIS. The terms “could,” “would,” and “may” are used because these are preliminary issues. The extent or nature of the potential issue will not be fully determined until the EIS analysis takes place.

- Geological Resources: ORV use on the ocean beach, tidal flats, and wetland areas could result in disturbance to sand and other geological resources.
- Air Quality: Management and use of ORVs may result in impacts to air quality from idling engines and use of generators. Potential impacts also exist from vehicle ferries.
- Soundscapes: Management and use of ORVs could impact Seashore soundscapes. Vehicular noise, as well as the recreational uses associated with it, may introduce an element to that soundscape that is incompatible with other recreational uses and could impact wildlife and wildlife habitats.
- Water Resources: Management and use of ORVs could impact water quality and marine and estuarine resources, as ORV use occurs in these environments. Issues of particular concern include submerged aquatic vegetation (SAVs) and the impact ferry propellers have on these resources in shallow areas.
- Coastal Barrier Processes: Natural processes such as hurricanes and other storm events that change the landscape of the Seashore can impact ORV use and management particularly in wildlife habitat areas. Also in these areas, long-term, high levels of ORV use could have a lasting effect on ecosystem processes in wildlife habitat areas.
- Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Species: Management and use of ORVs could impact federally threatened or endangered species and their habitat on both the ocean and soundside of the Seashore. Conflicts between the listed species and ORV use could create direct or indirect losses to the species.
- Locally Sensitive Species: Management and use of ORVs at the Seashore may impact habitat for the American oystercatcher, colonial beach nesters, and other locally sensitive species, as well as species listed by the State of North Carolina, that may be vulnerable to such use.

- Unique Ecosystems: Management and use of ORVs could impact Seashore resources which could contribute to its disintegration as a Biosphere Reserve.
- Visitor Use and Experience: Management and use of ORVs could result in user conflicts and changes to visitor use and experience. For some visitors ORV use is an integral component of their visitor experience, for others the presence of ORVs may detract from their visitor experience.
- Viewsheds and Aesthetics: Management and use of ORVs could impact the viewsheds and aesthetics along the Seashore.
- Cultural Resources: Management and use of ORVs may impact cultural resources by providing access to these resources. Examples include vehicles accessing shipwreck sites and knowingly or unknowingly removing or running over artifacts, disturbing features of historic districts by leaving tire ruts in the area, and introducing elements that are inconsistent with the cultural landscapes at the Seashore.
- Economy of the Communities around the Seashore: Management and use of ORVs could affect the local economy as the demand for goods and services in these communities could be influenced by the level of ORV use at the Seashore.
- Seashore Management and Operations: Management and use of ORVs may impact Seashore operations by requiring additional staff and funds.



ORV use is one of the many recreational uses occurring at Cape Lookout National Seashore.