

**PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE
BEACH MANAGEMENT PRE-NEPA
Civic Engagement Correspondences
Public Comment Period February 10 through March 14, 2023**

Correspondence ID: 1 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,10 2023 13:38:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please fully protect sea turtle nesting beaches and habitats for other ESA listed species.

Please manage public recreational uses to avoid, reduce, and mitigate any adverse environmental and resource impacts.

Please pursue solutions to the rapidly worsening climate and extinction crises. We need to use less fossil fuels and provide more habitat protection.

I hope this planning is successful and results in positive outcomes.

Thanks!

Correspondence ID: 2 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,10 2023 15:14:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Despite its popularity, there is no need for a beach management plan at North Padre Island National Seashore. The park service has already implemented several measures to protect the natural environment and conserve the wildlife that calls this area home. For example, the park service has established strict rules regarding visitor behavior and the use of vehicles on the beach, which help to minimize human impact on the ecosystem. Additionally, the park service regularly conducts monitoring and research activities to assess the health of the ecosystem and ensure that it remains protected and preserved.

Another reason why there is no need for a beach management plan at North Padre Island National Seashore is that the park service has developed a comprehensive ecosystem management plan that addresses all of the relevant issues. This plan is based on the latest scientific research and takes into account the needs of both wildlife and visitors. The park service has already implemented a number of measures to reduce human impact.

Additionally, North Padre Island National Seashore is surrounded by a large, undeveloped buffer zone that helps to protect the park from external impacts. This buffer zone provides a critical barrier between the park and the surrounding areas, which helps to reduce the amount of pollutants and other harmful materials that can enter the park and harm the ecosystem. This also helps to reduce the impact of other human activities, such as development, on the park and its wildlife.

In conclusion, North Padre Island National Seashore is a protected area that is well-managed and well-protected. The park service has implemented a number of measures to protect the ecosystem and conserve the wildlife that calls this area home. There is no need for a beach management plan at North Padre Island National Seashore because the park service has already developed a comprehensive ecosystem management plan that addresses all of the relevant issues and ensures that the park remains protected and preserved for future generations.

Correspondence ID: 3 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,10 2023 17:24:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a person that goes down to Corpus Christi about half of the year, I would really hate to see any restrictions on access to the beaches at pins. The beach there is a wonderful asset to the community, and any restrictions on said asset would be a shame. If it was restricted then I would have to restrict my travel to the area which will impact the economy, jobs, housing, everybody that lives there. If anything, access to the beach and the area of bins should be expanded. There are many more people that would love to have access that are limited in their Mobility as well as the availability of driving. If anything, the infrastructure should be expanded to provide better access roads to get to the beach for more people to enjoy it. Any plan going forward should be for expansion of the natural experience for all!

Correspondence ID: 4 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,10 2023 20:00:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please keep PINS open to vehicle traffic throughout the year. My husband is a serious birder and drives this stretch of beach several times a week year round. He keeps detailed records and reports them through Cornell University. Many other birders do the same and must have access to this part of the coast in order to continue these observations. We have purchased a lifetime pass in order to have affordable access. These beaches should remain open to the people who fund them.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 5 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,10 2023 21:00:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not support any planning for managing this beach. PINS is wild and free because its left alone. The reason most of us love this park is because of freedom to travel. Enjoy nature. Relax in peace. Not limiting who can do this and who cannot. Restricting driving . Building more structures. Takes away from the beauty of what makes this park different. Being able to enjoy nature in person is why parks exist. I do not support any changes of any kind.

Correspondence ID: 6 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,11 2023 08:23:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would strongly urge you to schedule one of your meetings on North Padre Island with the 12 thousand neighbors and friends of the Padre Island National Seashore. I would suggest checking in with our local Island school, Seashore Middle School about using their facilities and expect a large turnout. Please make a special effort to include the people who live and work and play at and near PINS.

Correspondence ID: 7 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,11 2023 08:23:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not consider closing any of the beaches to vehicle traffic.

Correspondence ID: 8 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,11 2023 09:09:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: All federal lands need to be returned to the states. The states have to maintain them and the federal government and The United Nations have no business in our land Texas is Sovereign

Correspondence ID: 9 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,11 2023 11:46:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Kemps Ridley sea turtle program, under the direction of Dr. Donna Shaver is a local treasure and an internationally recognized best practice,

This program, and especially the UTV turtle patrols and egg harvesting and incubation program must be maintained and, if possible, expanded.

They need more resources and more support.

We have a unique situation here with our turtle population nesting on a beach that regularly floods, is full of predators, and allows for driving.

The turtle patrols and egg harvesting program allows for the population to thrive and grow in these harsh conditions.

Dr. Shaver's work and the program she runs must be supported.

Correspondence ID: 10 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,11 2023 14:02:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been to the National Seashore several times. The one thing that has impressed me the most and which I love is the natural beauty of beach. I am staying close to White Cap Beach which they grade everyday and it is not as beautiful as the National Seashore. Please leave it as a natural park and not some groomed tourist trap.

Correspondence ID: 11 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,11 2023 18:10:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please don't destroy the last wild beach Texas has, that many folk can access

Correspondence ID: 12 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,11 2023 18:26:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We enjoy our spring trips. It would be a shame to shut down access to the seashore.

Correspondence ID: 13 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 07:39:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Although I appreciate your efforts "to provide guidance on different and conflicting uses" within the park, you continue to refer to driving as the primary problem and link it to the sea turtles. Driving on Texas beaches is allowed due to the Texas Open Beaches Act and applies to all county, state, and federal lands. The plan suggests building a road behind the dunes. This would create more damage than driving. Most of people that access the park are regular that respect the natural resources.

One additional comment regards the Original Deed, signed by Jerry Sadler (Commissioner of the General Land Office), John Connally (Governor of Texas), and Waggoner Carr (Attorney General of Texas) states, "the following conditions, limitations, exceptions, and reservations:

1. This conveyance is made for the use of the public as a park and recreational area.

Plus, eight additional conditions but the first is the most important. The park was signed and created for recreational use not conservation.

The following statement was received January 2022 by the Texas General Land Office.

"The closure of Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS) to vehicular access or prevention of public use and enjoyment of PAIS may also subject the Park to implementation of the reverter clause found in Senate Bill 6, the 1963 all state-owned lands conveyed to the federal government pursuant to the Act will automatically revert to the State of Texas..."

Additionally, the 4 and one-half strip of land referred to as "Closed Beach" does not comply with the original deed and may be subject to the reverter clause.

Our community looks forward to the opportunity to voice our concerns at the proposed meeting.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 14 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 10:45:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My family has been driving the PINS beach since long before the National Parks obtained the land. We have enjoyed camping, fishing, and beach combing, as well as picking up trash that washes in from the currents. We are firmly AGAINST any management of that beach that includes restricting our freedom to travel that shoreline. Texas state laws protect shorelines as public property and regulate them as public roadways and this beach should be accessible to citizens as such. Keep the beach open and accessible to vehicle traffic so the entirety of that stretch of the beach can be enjoyed, allowing people to spread out and minimize the camping density and impact on any given location.

There is no good reason to interfere with the way nature moves the sand. If one area of the beach is eroding, that same sand is washing up on another stretch of the beach further down, or blowing back creating dunes and habitat in the grasslands. Leave the beach alone, allow citizens to continue to utilize it as we have for decades, and stop trying to manage nature.

Correspondence ID: 15 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 11:27:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We, as locals, long enjoyed the ability of taking a Jeep and riding down beach. Please do NOT take that away from us.

Correspondence ID: 16 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 11:59:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not restrict beach driving at the Padre Island National Seashore. As a physically disabled, senior citizen I rely on automobile access to the National Park. I visit the park several times a week to enjoy my hobbies such as bird watching, fishing, and beachcombing. If you close the beach to automobile traffic you will take away my privilege to enjoy the National Park. People love to camp, fish, and surf the at this beach and closing it to automobiles will negatively impact the local economy.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 17 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 17:09:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have followed this on going situation. I am furious and sickened that this govt entity has had a goal to remove rights from our citizens. The beach should belong to all of us. The manipulations have not gone unnoticed and we will not forget. Do the right thing even when no one is looking.

Correspondence ID: 18 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 17:25:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Except for NPS law enforcement and emergency services, please prohibit the use of any motor vehicles on national seashore beaches. Beach driving threatens sea turtles and other wildlife. It also poses public safety risks, burns fossil fuels, and creates noise and pollution.

Jet skies should be prohibited in seashore waters for similar reasons. Their use is inconsistent with sustainable or environmentally responsible recreation.

Natural beach erosion and deposition should be allowed to continue without human interference.

NPS should strive to fully protect and restore natural ecological systems and processes.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

Correspondence ID: 19 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 17:28:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I feel that protection of this special habitat should be the highest priority in the beach management plan.

I am in favor of a sand management plan that is more protective of natural habitats.

I am in favor of establishing beach driving permits in order to protect visitor experience and protect resources.

I am in favor of opening the beach with limited after an initial safety check.

I am in strong support of all of the options listed to address marine trash and am particularly intrigued by initiating an interstate and international response to address the sources.

I say all of this enthusiastically as a person who loves driving our RV down island and camping on the beach. I believe we must prioritize habitat protection of this special place. As a recreational enthusiast, I would happily accept increased regulations when visiting in order to keep PINS the remarkable, beautiful, wild place that it is.

Correspondence ID: 20 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 21:38:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My husband and I moved to Corpus Christi last year. We worked to get new jobs and save money to move here on North Padre Island. My brother in law and his girl friend did the same thing to move down here to Corpus this last year. We picked here for the beach and the ability to be on it everyday. We fish, swim and take our pets to play most weekends. I spend weeknights walking for exercise and finding specific blue seashells. If we are not able to drive on the beach, we wouldn't be able to take our canopy for shade, chairs, ice chest and pets. I wouldn't have time to decompress most days after long work days. The beach we can drive on is what keeps north padre booming. How many tourist come to Corpus and buy supplies in town or on the island to set up at the beach because they can easily back up and unload it. How many campers spend money on gas and diesel to keep their rigs or generators at our local gas stations? I call on you today to ask tax payers what they want!

Correspondence ID: 21 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,12 2023 21:47:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Must everything benefit some hotel owner or contractor with more financial gain?! Leave it alone. Let families access the water without paying an arm and a leg for access.

Correspondence ID: 22 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 04:48:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I lived on Padre over the last 16 years and just recently moved to Emerald Isle, NC. Please check out this link to see how they do their turtle program - eiseaturtlepatrol.org. One thing they do is closed the beaches to traffic after Labor Day to Spring Break but I know about Texas Open Beaches Act so that may not work but these beaches are clean and everyone leaves the turtles and their eggs alone. Good luck! PINS is one of my favorite places in the world!

Correspondence ID: 23 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 06:38:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leave our beaches alone. Driving on the beach is a Texas privilege. Beach sand management should always take into account the habitat and environment, including managing the dunes properly.

Correspondence ID: 24 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 07:32:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Whatever you do, do Not take driving on the beach away. Also, fully put your proposals on an internet page so people that cannot attend meetings can be fully aware of them before giving our knowledgeable opinion! Thank You!

Correspondence ID: 25 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 08:02:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Park service needs to keep things the way they are. The people have the right to unimpeded access to the national seashore. It's the best park in the land, don't ruin it because a vocal minority of outsiders want to mess things up.

Correspondence ID: 26 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 09:04:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I agree with a bypass of the first 5 miles. There is a lot of out of towners that come and park in those first 5 miles(4X2) areas. This would minimize the amount of traffic for the people that are heading further down the beach. Many of the people heading to big shell/little shell or the Mansfield jetties will go a little faster knowing they have a longer drive. The bypass of the first 5 miles could have a 4X4 sign on it notifying drivers that once they hit the beach they would be in a 4X4 area. This would keep the first 5 miles safer in my opinion. There is already areas at Malaquite that are no driving, so I don't see the need to create more areas of the beach that you can not explore. Many people that drive further down the beach for fishing and exploring are very quick to inform turtle patrol/park rangers of anything suspicious or signs of turtle tracks/nesting. Closing driving on the beach will also limit the amount of eyes you have going up and down the beach to notify agencies of these types of activities. 90% of the people heading further down PINS want to preserve the wildlife/marine wildlife, with a lot of people catching and release and documenting/tagging.

Correspondence ID: 27 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 09:25:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: #1 no restrictions on beach driving. You already control speed limits and close off road passages where you prefer folks not drive.

#2 no beach parking permits as you already collect an entrance fee.

#3 sand management is taken care of by mother nature and we shouldn't try to alter it. One thing I thought worked well though but was discontinued was the disposal/usage of real discarded christmas trees to allow the dunes to build up faster.

#4 As for the turtle protection program Dr, Shaver has adequately proved that her system of collecting eggs and releasing the hatchlings has greatly improved the Kemps Ridley turtle population. Yet your offices have imposed your will to make this program as difficult as possible for all the people involved.

Correspondence ID: 28 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 09:25:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have lived in Corpus Christi my whole life and have been going to the seashore for much of that time. I even attended Lady Bird's dedication in 1968. I have many concerns about your plan.

* Vary patrols- utv patrols are the most effective. They are staggered in order to find more nesting turtles. They could nest within a 45 minute time period and using a drone or other means would not be as effective.

* Why limit egg collection to the park boundaries? Dr. Shaver know the best methods to ensure the turtles hatch safely. We are trying to increase their numbers as the Kemp's Ridley's are the most endangered sea turtles. As you well know

* You should hold more public hatchling releases! Many people plan their vacation to our area according to the releases! PINS is known for the Kemp's program! However, you should hold visitors at the pavilion and have a park ranger educate them about the Kemp's. Make it an educational experience. It is difficult to inform people about the turtles when they are spread out on the beach. I have brought my kids and grandkids for many years. I also think you shouldn't charge people for the releases. Many people spend money at the gift shop afterwards! Make it a great pr time!

* Any nests that are not relocated will likely be predated as you know. We are not like Florida where people live in the area and the turtle ladies can monitor them. We have 60 miles of beaches as you know. We have many coyotes, gulls, ghost crabs, etc. We will lose many babies!

* Alternative incubation facility? Where? I lived in the suburb area of Corpus Christi during Celia and our house was destroyed. How long has the turtle lab been around? We don't ever know the exact path a hurricane will take.

* PINS does not rehab turtles but the volunteers are glad to help with strandings at any time!

* Do you really need to do a study to determine if moving nests protects them from flooding or predation? The answer is obvious.

* I have driven through Malaquite in a utv and visitors often stop and ask us questions or wave to us. Good public relations!

* We love our turtles but we also love to fish and drive down the beach. You will encounter disdain from many if you try to limit driving on the beach!!

I hope you will reconsider your plan. Dr. Shaver has been doing a great job for many years! Save the turtles! Save PINS!

Correspondence ID: 29 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 09:29:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a conservationist and steward of our environment and in this case its coastline and its beaches, I am a supporter of addressing any issues which are adverse or detrimental. However, I do believe in a balance to allow full, unencumbered access to enjoy our natural resources. I strongly suggest finding the balance without limiting access to the general public via vehicles. Having a family member that has limited physical mobility, I understand how key it is to maintain the vehicle access and allow them to use all of our resources.

I do believe that the National Park Services (PINS) needs to be creative in their solutions and should ensure that individual agendas and political agendas are eliminated from any discussions, direction or solutions. It must be for

the enjoyment of the people while preserving the environment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Correspondence ID: 30 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 10:12:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We don't need any plans to do anything with the national seashore. The only thing y'all need to do is to find the sea turtle projects more. We don't need to develop anything on this beach.

Correspondence ID: 31 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 10:26:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: First, I would like to preface my suggestions by saying that I spend a good amount of time on PINS. More than most people, camping, kayaking, or just driving. I love the solitude, the clean sea air, the flora/fauna, and the wildlife and the suggestions I'm about to make are areas that I feel could use some improvement. I sincerely hope that you find something here sensible and useful. With that, here are my suggestions:

Marine debris, one possible avenue to explore might be to consider some form of "Adopt a Beach" program similar to the "Adopt a Highway" cleanliness programs. I'd suggest adding mile markers between the current ones a one mile intervals for this. After that, the only budget needs might be to provide signs for mile sponsors and more trash bins, and maybe trash bags to provide to the organizations. Depending who chooses to sponsor, this could even help with large debris removal (a construction company, for example). Also, maybe consider providing trash bags at the beach entrances the way Nueces County does. (the ones they provide are a mesh so would be basically useless for people to steal for home use)

Beach driving: Please do not consider closing or limiting numbers. The idea of a bypass road isn't bad, and I would be fine with some "vehicle free" areas, as long as it doesn't inhibit the ability to drive from asphalt to jetties. Most of the beach wouldn't even be accessible for a "nonmotorized experience with regard to South Beach. I wouldn't be opposed to North Beach being closed to vehicle traffic, but it may be costly because you'd need to provide some sort of parking areas for people who wanted to use it on foot.

Hurricane/Storm recovery: Consider creating a volunteer force. This would be comprised of people with suitable four-wheel-drive vehicles who are willing and able to complete some sort of safety and inspection guidelines training (would need to create that too) and possibly an annual refresher and would be willing to help with the safety assessments and possibly debris removal.

Sea turtles: Consider offering colored pin flags at the park entrance, along with a flyer explaining the meaning of the colors and what to look for in order to help identify, mark, and report nests. Also, consider placing a sign that explains what the flags are for so unaware motorists understand that they need to be given a wide berth.

Thank you for taking the time to read,

Correspondence ID: 32 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 11:01:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I love PINS. I like the idea of a 5-mile bypass to MM5, I am one that normally goes down 20+ miles to fish and enjoy. I can't tell you how many times I have had children or adults in the first 5 miles simply walk into the driving lanes without looking both ways.

But maybe there's another idea - restricting the first 5 miles to beachfront parking/camping only, during daylight

hours, with a restricted driving (ONLY) lane next to the dune. Because I am afraid that a secondary 0-5mm bypass would not get enough driving traffic and occasional high water to maintain/flatten the sand, and would be so powdery that it would be unsuitable.

I support the idea of having an additional paid driving permit past the 5mm.

Correspondence ID: 33 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,13 2023 11:12:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Hello,

I am writing you today in disagreement with the NEPA plan. It first of all violates the Texas open beaches act, secondly denies access for tourists and fisherman who come from all corners of this state and country to visit this wonderful park. There are many people who also volunteer to clean the beach, help with the turtle rescue during cold snaps who wouldn't be able to access the beach anymore due to this plan. All I ask is that you consider NOT going through with this plan, as it will both negatively impact the park, and the people who have the right to use the park and beach because of its public nature as part of the national park system.

Thank you and best regards,

Correspondence ID: 34 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,13 2023 11:32:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Re:

Saving Turtles, we only think we are saving the Sea Turtle, 4 Turtle generations from now the sperm count of the Sea Turtles will be down 30%.

How about we do a study on the Plastic they are eating; (i.e., Color, Size, etc.it has become more apparent for the last three years the increase is exponentially alarming?

Discover the various mix designs and other properties that we could omit? or add to make these products unappealing to marine life. This would save more Turtles than a factory, or tourism site.

The Federal Government does not have good track record of changing world population decrease or increase of any living organism on planet Earth. We should stop playing God, and let the Beach stay what it was intended originally,

The citizens of The United States deserve a place to go without Law Enforcement intimidation or harassment.

Most of this Land we are discussing was donated for public use to avoid any Taxing entity.

Here is another Federal program that is ripe for destruction, Burning Baja Madre under brush, (Not to mention the Local Sugar Cane industry). the Endangered Texas Tortoise cannot outrun a fire started by anyone.

Remember, We the People.....

Correspondence ID: 35 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,13 2023 12:35:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a San Antonio native, the PINS beach has been a place that I've enjoyed for quite some time. It provides a place to have a remote getaway without having to travel across the entire state of Texas. Not to mention, the access it gives to thousands of anglers a year to go fishing, not only on the beachfront, but in the Laguna Madre through Yarbrough Pass, and on the jetties at the Mansfield land cut. Fishing is one of the primary industries in the Corpus area, and to do anything that would restrict access to PINS fishing at any time of year would be a massive disservice to all of the small businesses that depend on folks going fishing. Aside from fishing there are thousands of visitors that come every year just to experience what it's like to camp out in one of the few truly wild, undeveloped stretches of beach in the state. If that is taken away, the public's connection to the wildlife could be potentially lost, decreasing numbers for PINS's advocacy.

Correspondence ID: 36 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 12:37:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I just wanted to voice my concern if park is considered to be closed and also discontinue support for the turtle program. We are avid beach goers as a family along with many other families through out the year. We are completely in support of leaving the full access to beach as is along with continued support of the turtle program for the sake of our children to continue to enjoy this beach for many years to come.

Correspondence ID: 37 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 13:39:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Island, it's guests and residents as well as the entire county need to have a safe, sane and reasonable plan to protect and support our wildlife, the dunes and the unique experience that PINS provides.

I personally support a plan as an island resident-and as a member of the the League of Women Voters

Correspondence ID: 38 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 13:39:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Opposed to the Beach Management Program as it will severely damage opportunities to save the Ridley turtle.

Also it will be damaging to tourism and work of volunteers helping to save the turtle population.

Correspondence ID: 39 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 13:41:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: How about leave things the way they fucking are. Notice that wasn't a question. Plus, those who do not live near any of those areas and have these things, called jobs, cannot attend those and tell you how fucked up your thoughts are. We have been going to this beach for decades and the one thing that keeps making the beach worse it the federal government with new rules. Stop. Oh, the turtles are not native and if I introduced a non-native species you would be all over me.

Correspondence ID: 40 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 14:15:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I want the current motor vehicle driving access to stay the same related to this issue as well as any other at Padre Island National Seashore. I pay the \$45.00 yearly fee to access PINS every year. I drive all the way to the Port Mansfield jetties regularly, almost every other weekend. I clean the beach at whatever area I stop at and never take glass there. I and my friends who accompany me to fish and take in the scenery always leave the area we are fishing (between the 20-mile marker and the 60-mile marker, cleaner than when we found it. We are careful to take our time driving, not only watching out for obstacles but the wildlife as well.

I am wholeheartedly against any change to the current motor vehicle access rules and laws currently in place.

Correspondence ID: 41 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 14:56:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dr. Donna Shaver has spent more than 40 years at Padre Island National Seashore working to save the endangered Kemps Ridley sea turtles. She has spent that time perfecting the policies and procedures to give the Kemps Ridleys the best chance for survival. You can't compare the challenges faced in Florida with the ones faced here because we Texans are allowed to drive on the beaches so what works for the turtles nesting in Florida will not work here. We have many predators that would destroy any nests left on their own. In addition, these are scientific decisions that should be made by scientists namely Dr. Shaver, Cynthia Rubio and their very competent staff along with the volunteers who help make the program sustainable. In addition, visitors love the public hatchling releases and are able to learn about the turtles. Many people say that attending a release is something on their bucket list. They are in awe watching the turtles make their way to the Gulf. For most people, this is the only way they'll ever see a sea turtle.

Correspondence ID: 42 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 15:44:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Why would restricting access to a beach that is the source of income and the motive thousands of visitors come to Padre Island National Seashore even being considered? This move will make businesses and small locally owned businesses to loose everything they have worked so hard to achieve. The current program (Turtle rescue) has worked fine and has proven positive results. The need to provide ample time for stakeholders to become informed in a timely manner on these proposals should have transperence since its inception, Not being transparent and rushing these type of NEPA meetings is a sign of corruption involvement.

Correspondence ID: 43 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 17:22:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Back in the 70's and 80's there was access to the lower island via "the High Road", a path behind the seaward dunes. It started just south of Yarbrough Pass (MM15) and came back out approx MM44 or so. Also there were several oilfield roads that ran further back and came out in various locations. Bypassing the first 5 miles or so would ease down island traffic thru tourist and camping areas. I also believe that fishermen have historically been under utilized for spotting endangered species within the Parks boundaries. Texas fishermen understand the need for conservation and have a love for the great outdoors that the National Parks System provides us, the citizens of America. I believe Conservation, Preservation and Recreation can all be accomplished within Padre Island National Seashore. Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Correspondence ID: 44 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 18:03:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not take driving off the beach. Driving down the beach is therapy for people who need the wave sounds and for surfing.

Correspondence ID: 45 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 18:09:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have had an annual pass to the park for 20 years to surf fish with my wife. Do not restrict driving on the beach. True fishermen protect the environment. The locals need this access, because the out of town and out of state people have taken over our other beaches.

Correspondence ID: 46 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 18:30:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is long past time that Padre Island National Seashore conduct a beach management plan. For far too long, this beloved and important park has gone without a comprehensive review of its operations and those operations' effects on its resources. Additionally, such a planning process provides the public to provide feedback like this on the future management of their lands. Thank you for ensuring the public is heard in this important process.

Correspondence ID: 47 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 18:33:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There are multiple methods to clean up beaches but a recent study of the 21st century has concluded that during most of these cleanups, an abundance of sand is being taken away from the beaches. It is known that sand is needed for beaches to help maintain the ecosystem and can help slow the erosion rate of the mainland or island. During this study and experiment out of "6,700 items of PML", plastic liter categories, a total of "1,566 g of sand" was removed (Battisti, et. al). Beach cleanup can be done differently in order to keep as much sand as possible at the beach and not the landfills. One method that can be used for large pieces of litter is a sifting method. This way will ensure that a majority of the sand will remain at the site. Unfortunately, this method may not remove small pieces of plastic or microplastics. To remove these tiny pieces of plastic more research must be done to keep our environment clean and healthy.

Battisti, C., Poeta, G., Pietrelli, L., & Acosta, A. T. R. (2016, October 24). Research article: An unexpected consequence of plastic litter clean-up on beaches: Too much sand might be removed: Environmental practice. Cambridge Core. Retrieved February 13, 2023, from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/environmental-practice/article/research-article-an-unexpected-consequence-of-plastic-litter-cleanup-on-beaches-too-much-sand-might-be-removed/1BC13357201F9C5054C4167450230335>

Correspondence ID: 48 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 18:36:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please Do Not restrict our access to our park by any means.. The public helps report stranded and nesting turtles, not to mention other wildlife that is in distress or beach. Most of us locals pick up trash on the beach while we are enjoying our seashore.. It's our right as stated in the Texas Right to Open Beaches Act.. The Park Service doesn't have the manpower or the will to keep the beaches clean. When the land was given to the NPS. Unrestricted accessibility to the park was part of the deal. Why Deep Horizon settlement money being diverted from Texas to Florida. Florida has big hotels up and down their beaches. This is 60+ miles of dunes, very different than Florida and should be treated as such...NPS should listen to what the local people are saying and not what the "Review Board" recommends. Not one of the persons on that review was from Texas and if there was a Texan input it was misinterpreted to benefit the Review Board opinion. Why wasn't Dr. Donna Shaver included in this Review?? She's the scientific expert.

Correspondence ID: 49 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 18:48:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 1. Keep Dr Donna Shaver Turtle Recovery Program as is. There are many predators on the beach such as coyotes, badgers, sea gulls, skunks, raccoons, hawks, etc., that would dig up and eat the eggs and the hatchlings. Use this Turtle Program to educate the public with more releases that the public can attend, educate about the danger of plastics and trash in the water and on the beach to the turtles, wildlife.
2. Keep the driving on the beach as is but implement rules on the proper place to set up camp, park cars, trucks so as not to get stuck, nor block traffic. Use PINS maintenance equipment to help maintain entrance to beach, remove large trees, boats, buoys and other driving obstacles that wash up on the beach.

3. Have Rangers, police patrol the beach daily. Be visible. Enforce proper speed limits, reduce reckless or damaging driving on the beach, inspect for illegal activities such as illegal smuggling/trafficking of drugs and humans, illicit drug use activity.
4. Have Rangers more visible on the beach to assist any native wildlife, sea life in need.
5. Provide more beach cleanup with more volunteer activities, hired personnel to pick up trash, educate campers and visitors not to leave trash, provide trash bags.
6. Do not put any additional "back roads" on Padre Island National Seashore. These roads will be difficult to make, maintain, and police. Without immediate supervision some off road drivers will start cutting across the dunes to get to the water, causing more damage to dunes, vegetation, turtles, wildlife.
7. Enlarge current paved camping sites as there are very few in relation to number of visitors that come and have to park elsewhere.
8. Staff the National Seashore Entrance 24/7 to collect payment for all visitors and check passes for everyone. Have cameras capturing incoming and outgoing license plates.
9. All dogs should be on a leash.
10. Game wardens and/or rangers should be checking for fishing licenses, and other violations such as use of drones, extraction devices for ghost shrimp, fishing violations.

Correspondence ID: 50 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,13 2023 18:50:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Dear Federal Authorities:

Please know that any changes that restrict our access to the PINS will not be tolerated by the citizens of Texas. It is with great concern for our way of life and the concern for stewards of our park such as myself, that I make this comment.

If the administrators of this park have even partial beach closures, even if it is a seasonal closure, due to turtle nesting in mind, it shows ignorance. Dr. Shaver's program, albeit imperfect, was a very effective and least restrictive method of sustaining turtle populations from egg laying, collection, and incubation, and finally the safe release of thousands of turtles. Anglers, beachcombers, campers and other outdoor enthusiasts work hand in hand, daily, with turtle patrollers. More eyes on the endangered turtles coming ashore to lay eggs, or stranded due to injuries saves lives by getting them away from predation by hungry coyotes, badgers and coons. Not to mention attack on the nest by imported fire ants.

The disregard and lack of respect for the visitors and campers of this park, who live in symbiosis with the wildlife while enjoying PINS never ceases to sicken me. 95% of us ALWAYS haul out way more trash than we bring in, and yes, that includes wave and wind deposited trash from the gulf as well. We are also, by far, better stewards of the wildlife than most of the current rangers who get paid to do so. The rangers should pay more attention to education of visitors, safety of visitors and wildlife in distress and should know this beach and come to love it as we have, or move on to a California NP. It seems to many of us who frequent the park that the rangers are only interested in getting outside of their air conditioned trucks to write a ticket. Some positive interaction with outdoorsmen along that 60 mile stretch will work wonders in establishing a positive rapport between citizens and law enforcement. The park has plenty of pistol packing rangers to keep speeding, drunk and reckless driving and illegal activity to a minimum. We need rangers and administrators who love our island and respect the outdoorsmen who love it. If you are looking to make the park a success, you should focus your efforts on those few bad apples, and work together, as a team, with the overwhelmingly high percentage of good, respectable visitors and old timers on this beach. You might just learn a trick or two.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 51 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 20:05:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Access for visitors must remain the top priority. Visitors who drive down the beach are an asset to the Park, not a detriment. Many visitors who travel far down PINS help cleanup trash, report sea turtle nesting sites, and assist others in need. This Park must remain an open resource for both the local community and other visitors.

Focus on how to open up more access, reduce currently restricted areas, and work to maintain access to remote areas of the Park. The ability to get away from civilization is a primary draw to the park. Any management plan must increase access rather than funnel people into smaller areas.

Correspondence ID: 52 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 21:04:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I really appreciate being able to drive on the beach. It is the only place in the country that you can. Please do not take that away.

I think also that the national park service treats our park like a hated step child. Please turn control over to the state.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 53 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,13 2023 21:35:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We would like to see the beach accesability via vehicles remain the same as in the past please increase implement more supervision of vehicles intintually carving carving deep trenches and circles across the sand with hefty fines ... thus providing more funding for park and beach maintenance.

Correspondence ID: 54 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 04:06:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think beach driving is great,its an experience a lot of people dont get...,Beach driving isnt allowed on a lot of beaches..you can pack a lunch pull close to the water enjoy the views and clear your mind.i am sure you can find a way to give both beach goers a great experience..Please keep letting us drive on beach...its what makes our beaches excellent.Thank You

Correspondence ID: 55 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 05:45:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There is already a vehicle free beach. It is called Malaquite beach. Me and my family back in the day used it at times. Now I am "old" and partially disabled and cant get to the vehicle free area. I need to be able to drive on the beach to be able to get to the sand and water that i love. The people proposing this nonsense about "needing" vehicle free beach area - are not from here, since they would have seen the 4 miles of vehicle free beach with the nice side walk and walk areas to get to it - so why in the hxxx are we listening to those people. And if its the local PINS superintendent and his regime, that what is the motive for wanting this. Its damn sure not because of worrying about taking care of the turtles since we already had a world acclaimed turtle expert here that was doing by all honest reviews, an excellent job other than the local superintendent couldnt or wouldnt control her and ran her off. The problem was not the turtle lady - it was the superintendent who should have either put in the effort to learn to use her expertise and experience - or the other option that i prefer - leave.

As i heard for years, I've been here for 70, the national seashore area was acquired by the government with the stipulation that it remain open always and forever for the use of the public - and if they, those desiring control - revoked this freedom to use the beach - it would make that transfer null and void and that area would return to the original owner.

Leave our beach alone - or just leave.

Semi-respectfully

Correspondence ID: 56 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 05:46:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: At face value it sounds reasonable, but restricting access always ends up keeping the majority of visitors away for the sake of the very few. I have witnessed this time after time during my 70 yrs. Most of us are not physically able to walk or run considerable distances.

I would have no problem with a path along the edge of the dunes, but I promise you restricting vehicle access will create a wasteland available to very few people. Also, such restrictions usually affect economically disadvantaged the most.

Examples: Lake Waco. Corps of Engineers closed roads fenced off thousands of acres. Reduced access from thousands to less than a hundred regular visitors. Lake Whitney. Same thing. Two large parks fenced off. Literally hundreds of visitors banned.

Correspondence ID: 57 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 06:03:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have witnessed this process on a number of occasions at locations in Texas and Colorado. It always takes place under the guise of some "environmental necessity," and the affect usually results in limiting access to all but the managing entity and a few "favored" activists.

I watched the Corps of Engineers spend millions fencing off US citizens' property around Lake Waco in the name of waste management. Areas around the lake that provided access to thousands, predominantly low income users, was turned into overgrown, isolated habitat for snakes, rodents, and rabbits.

I saw the same thing happen at Lake Whitney. Corps fenced off to popular parks. They are now overgrown, seldom used.

Bureau of Land Management in Colorado has very few limits to access. My family was able to drive a car up mountain roads and experience beautiful, lightly traveled treasures without Guard Shacks and uniformed "police" dictating our every move.

Correspondence ID: 58 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 06:11:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please add a plan to reduce driving trucks and cars on north Padre Island in Corpus Christi to Port Aransas. It's getting out of hand and is dangerous, not to mention bad for the beach and natural ecosystem.

People are drinking and driving on a beach that has children playing. I recommend creating a separate road or various parking areas to allow for 2-3 miles of safe, vehicle-free beach front as a safe space for families to enjoy.

Correspondence ID: 59 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 06:43:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please Stop the NPS from denying access to the beach and accessibility to all ends of our park.

The park's service does not have the will or manpower to keep trash off the beach and as locals consistently pick

up trash.

We as locals along with the public consistently find and report stranded, nesting turtles and other distressed wildlife.

Please allow us to provide our free labor for access to our beaches and accessibility to all ends of our park.

Kindest regards.

Correspondence ID: 60 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 07:03:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not deny the public and residents of North Padre Island access to the beach!! It is known that the our funds from the Deep Horizon settlement to Florida.. The park's service does not have the will or manpower to keep the trash off the beach!! The locals (including myself and neighbors) pick up more trash than the NPS... The public helps finds and reports stranded/nesting turtles and other distressed wildlife.. Please take this into consideration. Do you take away our beach access!!!!

Correspondence ID: 61 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:03:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The National Seashore is a treasure that should be available to all Americans. The turtle protection program has been extremely successful in protecting and increasing the number of Kemps Ridley turtles and the other beautiful turtles that nest on our beaches. Allowing driving and visitors in this area has greatly assisted the staff of the National Park to locate and secure these turtle nests. The ability to visit this amazing area brings millions of dollars to this area and furthers the research and development of conservation programs that will enable us to enjoy this unique environment forever.

Please leave our National Park alone. Don't close it to those of us that love this beautiful place.

Correspondence ID: 62 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:09:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have lived in Corpus Christi for over 60 years and enjoyed the beach and gulf for scuba diving and spear fishing, beach combing, hiking, camping, and more recently for beach driving to the cut. I volunteered with the turtle patrol for a couple of years after I retired. I have participated in the Big Shell Beach cleanup many times. I mostly enjoy the pristine, natural, solitary sections of beach where I can be totally alone. Very hard to find public places like that in South Texas anymore. Please do not limit beach driving down Little and Big SHell, in anyway!! I have been camping at South Padre several times to enjoy the unofficial clothing optional section. Should have a similiar section at Big Shell.

In favor of extending road another 5 miles to minimize traffic along the first section of beach. As can be easily observed, Malique, with no vehicles, is never as crowded as the section at the end of the pavement where people can relax near their vehicles.

Helping preserve the turtles is a worthy cause, but no further limitations of peoples enjoyment of the beach.

Correspondence ID: 63 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:11:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not do anything on the Padre Island National Seashore to jeopardize or disturb our precious sea turtles.

Correspondence ID: 64 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:23:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We come here every year for 2 months, and then go to daytona Beach for a month because my wife is somewhat handicapped and there we can drive on the beach and sit there all day. I would love it more here if we could drive on the beach. I understand there is a lot to it. But the section they have to drive on the beach is not cared for at all. I see cars and trucks getting stuck in the entrance daily. The sand here is not managed or cleaned at all. I am here in the winter time only, but u could see more visitor's for sure because if a drivable managed beach, maybe as part of thinking about it, they could contact daytona and ask them how the managed there beaches and learn from it. Thank you

Correspondence ID: 65 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:43:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think the proposals in a few words just SUCK. I am all for keeping access to the beach totally free and also support the Turtle program as well. I was a volunteer for 7 years and know how it was run efficiently as well. We need to continue to support the Ripley turtles and give them the help so they will not go extinct.

To start charging to drive on the beach also goes against Texas law. Ever since the new head of the park has been here all the changes he has made have been detrimental to the park His record at other parks is the same and there were many complaints of what he had done.

Leave it alone except give the money back to the Turtle Patrol and let them keep up the volunteer program.

Correspondence ID: 66 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:48:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I grew up in Corpus Christi and our family went to the beach (usually north of Bob Hall Pier) every Sunday afternoon. I attended the dedication of the National Seashore to see Ladybird Johnson. I took my kids to the beaches of Port Aransas. It wasn't until I retired and became a volunteer for the Sea Turtle Recovery program that I discovered the beauty of Padre Island National Seashore! I met a man who had flown from Germany to see a nesting sea turtle! I have seen hundreds of people who have planned their vacations to see releases of endangered sea turtles! Unfortunately I have seen just hatched baby sea turtles in their nest eaten by ants because the nest was not discovered and excavated.

We must protect access to the beaches of the Seashore while funding and protecting the most endangered Kemps Ridley sea turtle!

Correspondence ID: 67 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:51:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Living in Corpus Christi most of my life, I am against the seasonal closures.

Residents here have been around and worked with the Turtle Program for decades.

We do NOT NEED SEASONAL CLOSURES.

Correspondence ID: 68 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 08:58:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Good morning

Please cancel your plans to block traffic on the beach. Texas has open beach access and you should respect that. I appreciate the things you do but do not want vehicle access on the beach restricted.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 69 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 10:54:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hi, I live here in Flour Bluff, OTB, as we say. My husband and I grew up going to PINS, and we honestly would hate to see it as we know it changed or destroyed by government overreach, and I'm afraid this is what's beginning. Some of the ideas are actually sound ideas. Changes in the Turtle programs? Does anybody realize how much money hatchling releases bring into the economy (I mean, realistically?) Do you realize how many young children have been given that special spark by being educated by this program, and watching one? Why? What is the real reason? The real problem with them?? I do have an issue with changing those. I think a sound sand management plan does need to be implemented, to protect against beach erosion during weather related events and to prevent dune erosion. I don't even mind beach closures IF NEEDED to protect against beach erosion and help with sand management- for short term.

Beach Driving- Many people complaining about beach driving aren't even from the area. (I'm from here, I'm on PINS several times a week) these people set up large rv' sites surrounded by cones, or set up in the middle of the beach, forcing people to drive through them. So, they think people are driving dangerously. Granted, some people do. We have Malaquite for people to go without vehicular traffic, why do we need another? I think having a 5mile bypass is a really great idea and would solve that problem nicely!! Is fisher people and 4wd can still get down beach!

Hurricane and storm recovery related issues- Beaches and facilities remain closed and infrastructure are repaired, clean-up is completed and resources are surveyed before reopening- I believe this option is in EVERYONE'S best interest . This is in the interest of safety, facilities can be repaired and restored quickly, resources aren't strained by worry about public safety, and beaches can be cleaned up sooner.

I think we can all come together to come up with the right solutions and strategies to bring PINS into a new and sustainable way, that everyone can be happy with and support.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Correspondence ID: 70 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 11:12:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leave the beach as is. No restrictions. No new roads. Enforce the current rules. Leave the beach alone. Do not impede access to cars.

Correspondence ID: 71 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 11:47:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am not in favor of any type of beach access closures. Public access to public beaches does not create any environmental or safety concerns. Most people who visit the beaches pick up more trash than they bring in especially locals. Any fees above the entrance fee would cause a financial burden to those on a fixed income. I don't think diverting funds meant for PINS to other locations is the best use of these funds and subverts their intended purpose. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Correspondence ID: 72 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 12:05:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The federal government needs to quit trying to install more regulations and leave our beaches alone.

Correspondence ID: 73 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 12:10:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a Texas resident who uses this national park and cares about it deeply.

- The natural resources of the park, especially turtles, are precious.
- The public's ability to access the park is also precious.

It is possible to achieve both - they are not mutually exclusive. Any management plan must prioritize both. Removing or limiting beach driving would be a significant impact to the public. Removing vehicular access must have a benefit equal to its impact. Such benefit has not been demonstrated to the public. Removing vehicular access will effectively remove access. This park's size and layout is unique and requires a unique approach to access - that approach is vehicular access.

Please protect the park's natural resources while maintaining public access.

Correspondence ID: 74 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 13:06:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Kemp Ridley Sea Turtle program has been hugely successful per reports from marine biologist time and time again. It is a known fact that human assistance in the turtle egg hatching/rearing/releasing process has "saved" the species. Your decisions should focus on the turtle issue, tourism and access to the PINS area.

Building roads would be expensive and allow greater access to southern beach area by more people which is both good and bad. it would require more funding to monitor/police/maintain the increased activity.

Areas protected by "bollards" for foot only traffic are good but must allow all vehicular through traffic to the more southern beach areas.

More specific information is needed concerning "closing" Malaquite Beach to vehicular traffic. 1. what area does your definition of that beach. 2. would traffic closer to the dune line be allowed without impacting nesting sites 3. would the use of bollards in the area accomplish stated goals for the area

PINS is a very special place..... PLEASE don't mess it up with governmental bureaucratic political over administrative policies and systems.

Correspondence ID: 75 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 13:19:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please leave our beach accesses alone. Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 76 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 13:39:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I'm was born and raised in Corpus Christi and have lived on North Padre Island for over 30 yrs. I am 71 yrs old and have been a part of the local community proud to have the open drive beach access. As a community we work to keep it clean and safe. We stand together to watch out for others.

We Want to Continue to keep are beach available to drive down and beach comb or fish. Please DO NOT Close our beach access and beauty it Holds.

Correspondence ID: 77 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 14:21:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Nueces County and Kleberg County residents help maintain the cleanliness and protocol of our share of PINS. Not only do we pitch in for every occasion, but we also have more foreign visitors and correspondents coming here for the turtle programs and releases than any other NP. We are an incredibly committed community that was driven by a young Dr Donna Shaver many many years ago. She got into the community, wanted to know us and we wanted to help her with any projects, resources and research. Diverting funds away from the PINS is only going to bring a lack of enormous support to the NPS. Put the money back to where it is most beneficial to the ecosystems.

Correspondence ID: 78 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 14:42:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not block the beaches from driving and change/ break the existing laws. Texas beaches should remain open to driving at all times.

Correspondence ID: 79 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 15:08:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please leave it to nature. Invite openings under strict control only.

Correspondence ID: 80 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 17:28:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To whom it may concern

The vehicle access on Padre Island National Seashore has been working well for many years and it will continue to do so if left alone. There is already a beach with no vehicle access, called Malaquite. I have been fishing the area in in twenty and thirties for years and sincet's hard for me to get around due to my rheumatoid arthritis being close to my vehicle while using the beach helps with my condition.

Thank you

Correspondence ID: 81 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 17:42:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do not close any part of the National Seashore to driving. As a native Texan and lifetime resident of Nueces County the national seashore has been a huge part of my families life and traditions. We have a right under the Texas Open Beach Act to access the beaches. PINS is a staple for Texans. And honestly, listening to the voices of local community should be considered. Trying to close off more of the beach only sets precedence for others to follow and you have no legal right as we the residents of Texas have a right. Let things be as they are and do not make any changes to current driving and keep it all year long !

Correspondence ID: 82 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 19:41:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While not a local I have brought my family down the last 6 years in a row to spend a month (or more) to do beach camping. It's a 25 hour drive, with 3 kids and a dog, so it must be a pretty special place. Truth is there isn't another place like this in the world. There are a few things we have learned over the years. #1 try not to be there on the weekend, because the beach gets a lot more dangerous with the shenanigans. I think an area that would be car-free would me magnificent.

#2 Slow WAY down on the last five miles. Which in itself isn't a negative. I don't mind driving 15, I have children, I understand. But not many others feel this way. If you could let the people that are in such a rush to bypass this then you could let the weekend crowd be less of a highway and more of a backroad. I know that beach

= road. But beach doesn't have to equal Talladega.

#3 It's an incredible place. The ocean, the sand, the wildlife. The sea turtles and the birds. Coyotes and kangaroo rats.

#4 Like many other great wild places in this country it's being loved to death. While I would be absolutely crushed if I arrived at PINS and was told it was full. I would understand. You have the ability to control the usage, even in the land of the free.

#5 Spending the day in the car-free area is such a superb and carefree way to spend the day at the beach. Maybe increase the ability to park near these and allow more folks to enjoy the ocean breeze without the diesel breeze.

I know that it's tough to keep any sort of road open, and cutting a road through the fragile dune habitat might be far worse than the problem it would try to solve. Not to mention another road would give people even more access. I think for the price of creating and maintaining a bypass you could just hire more rangers.

I also know that sand moves... a lot.

Correspondence ID: 83 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 20:39:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think the implementation of a beach management plan would be a splendid use of time and money. I know that personally, I would be on board with an increase of admission price if those revenues were allocated towards the protection of the beach! Look at El Prat beach in Catalonia, Spain (see: The management and recuperation of beaches in Catalonia, by F. Breton, P. Esteban, David Sauri Pujol) The dunes, vegetation, and sand were all in bad shape being subjected to constant pressures of tourism just like our National Seashore! They implemented a beach management plan and over the following decades, the beach looks incredible. One of the most effective things they implemented was more restricted pathways of public access, this heavily reduced foot traffic and erosion of dunes and vegetation.

Correspondence ID: 84 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 21:57:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The National Park Service may be obligated to assess visitor capacity to protect resources and visitor experience however the public first needs to be supplied the departments current data before we can determine the capacity and its effects if increased. First we need to see a greatly needed park ranger patrols down the 60 mile south beach area. I rarely see rangers on the south beach and if I do see one it is in the first 5 miles of the beach. I know we do not have a shortage of rangers because we can see the vehicles at the ranger and employee only offices and maintenous area or the MALAQUITE BEACH station. Every February when I participate in the Sandifer Beach Cleanup I can see all of the Park Rangers at the pizza and hotdog gathering so I know there are enough personnel to patrol and manage the beach with the current visitors I witness visiting our beach. The citizens of Texas guaranteed the access to this PINS beach in 1959 with the Texas Open Beaches Act which became law and was voted into the Texas State Constitution in 2009 by 75% of those voting in a statewide referendum so before we worry about the parks visitor capacity and brainstorm changes to the current driving program we should first have the Park check with the rights os citizen access and any changes we consider must first and foremost guarantee the public access that our forefathers gave us in 1959

Correspondence ID: 85 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 22:02:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: i think that this proposal would be very detrimental to all the passionate anglers and outdoorsmen who spend time out on the surf. Revitalizing an already unused pedestrian area is asinine. What's the point of making it bigger if it's unused. It's a waste of government stipends. On top of that, making the surf anglers feel even less important to their community. At the end of the day, there's other things the community can utilize it's resources on. But this is not one of them.

Correspondence ID: 86 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,14 2023 23:28:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I believe to enhance the safety of beach goers, local wildlife, and the cleanliness of the beach itself, driving on the beach should be prohibited. Growing up in Corpus Christi, I'm used to seeing trash left behind and dirty sand with litter throughout our beaches. I traveled down to South Padre Island for a research project for TAMUK and I was appalled to see beach parking lots but most importantly how immaculate the beach was. Additionally, I felt safe knowing I didn't have to be mindful of cars speeding by. Going to a beach that allows parking in the sand, little children running around are at constant risk of being run over or possibly kidnapped from the back and forth of traffic. Not only would a parking lot help that issue, but also people leaving behind trash brought by personal cars/trucks. Too many times have I been to the beach to see large personal items left behind for someone else to pick up for them. If there was a parking lot, beach goers would have to unload their property and walk to the beach with it. Which would then limit the amount of supplies/personal items brought in the first place. It is important to restrict beach driving so that other beaches in the Corpus area follow in suit.

Correspondence ID: 87 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 02:19:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a native and life-long resident of Texas , I am opposed to ANY plans to close PINS for use by the people who pay the taxes to keep it open. PINS has long been used for recreational purposes without affecting any of the wildlife along the beach; and down island is so remote, there are no crowding issues which would require "limits" on the number of daily visitors .

As for the turtle program; it had been run successfully for many, many years, until the new park superintendent took over. It seems the problems started when the new superintendent took over; so the logical solution is to remove him and return the turtle program to its former team. The turtle releases are a FANTASTIC public relations (and revenue) win and any proposal to reduce these releases is about as stupid an idea as one can have. Who in the hell doesn't want more children watching sea turtle babies released into the wild to promote increased ecological awareness ? Isn't that one of the main drivers of your department ???

I do however support the need for a high road behind the dunes to the 5MM, to bypass day use people if safety is actually a concern.

P.S. There is already a 5 mile section of beach closed to vehicular traffic, its called Malaquite beach. The park service would know this if the proposals had actually been created by someone who lived in the area rather than some idiotic bureaucrats in another state . This sure seems to be a long term land grab for private ventures (Oil, real estate) to take over our open beach, and if history is any indicator; will not end well for those ventures if that is the case . Texans don't take kindly to thieves .

Correspondence ID: 88 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 04:41:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There must be a plan that drivers understand and adhere to. I enjoy this beautiful beach very much and its remoteness we can obtain via 4 wheel. If we don't obey all laws, rules and judgments then it will become a walk in access only. Look to the East and West coast almost no drivable beach access!

Correspondence ID: 89 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 06:11:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is best to ban electric and internal combustion powered vehicles on the beach. Human powered vehicles only. Slower, safer, & environmentally friendly must be the morals that direct the decisions to be made for PINS.

Correspondence ID: 90 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,15 2023 07:10:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Hello! Our family adores the National Seashore and would like it to remain pristine. We do not currently have a 4WD vehicle and have not driven on the beach. Building a new road would make more of the beach accessible to more folks without compromising the natural beauty or the ecological balance.

I do wish there was an easier way to reach Big Shell Beach, though. But that's likely an issue for another time. Please do all you can to preserve the beauty and wonder of the park without compromising safety.

Correspondence ID: 91 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,15 2023 08:30:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: PINS thoughts:
1. No roads this will only make it more accessible and crowded.
2. I am ok with driving fee after the 5 mile marker or what ever is determine to be the 4x4 limit. But fee must benefit the PINS and the drivers since bulk of the fees are coming from 4x4 drivers
3. A ranger house after the 5 mile marker for regulation/saftey and trash drop off would be a benefit. But this is a nice to have, since 1968 this has been working. Data on issues after the 5 mile marker would greatly help clarify this need.
4. Ranger house would not have public restroom only private for Ranger only as access to public facilities tend to congregate visitors.
5. National Parks are and should accessible but not all parts of the nationals parks should be by everyone because you can drive to it. One need to work/plan and make true effort to see the PINS as it is. The beauty of PINS is that you can find stretch of beach that seems like you are the only few around you and not a pool scene.
6. Trash clean up should be tied to fees, 1 dollar back for every trash bag filled for instance and free if you pull bulky items to designated something along that line.

Correspondence ID: 92 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,15 2023 08:33:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: How in the world can you establish a maximum capacity of visitors for 60 miles of beach with only one access point? Now if you build a 60 miles long road and put rv pass along that road you could have the capacity. Of course that would not include all the fisherpersons and tent campers. Your currently proposal is not realistic unless you are intending to totally eliminate vehicle access to south beach and keep the 60 miles totally natural, with no human intervention. If you do that you could also eliminate all the turtle patrols and egg collectors and let the turtles nest and hatch all by themselves!

Correspondence ID: 93 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,15 2023 08:34:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I live in Port Aransas and am opposed to Senate Bill 434. This bill threatens the rights of everyone who enjoys the large open sections of Texas beaches. In 2009 the Texas Open Beaches Act became part of the Texas Constitution because the overwhelming majority of citizens want to keep our beaches open. Please keep our beaches open for all to enjoy.

Correspondence ID: 94 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,15 2023 08:46:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We need full access to the PINS property-clean up, restoration, trash cleaning-.

Correspondence ID: 95 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 09:59:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I believe beach permits for vehicles should only be available for vehicles which meet minimum ground clearance and/or 4WD requirements. Smaller, lower vehicles often get stuck in deep sand and require recovery from a larger vehicle, which blocks the drive-able portion of the beach and causes congestion.

I believe there should be more pedestrian-only areas of the beach where vehicles, overnight camping, and fishing are prohibited. Prohibiting camping in these areas will keep them cleaner and more widely available. Prohibiting fishing will keep swimmers safer.

Correspondence ID: 96 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 10:01:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Greetings.

I've spent many hours walking the beaches and dunes of Padre Island. Lovely as those times have been, if there were but a single improvement to the experience it would be lack of motor vehicles. Every plant, creature, and other human present benefits, at the tiny cost of a thrill or convenience for vehicle occupants. Oh yes, please , please, let's keep the cars on the road, off the pristine beach. Thanks much for considering this issue.

Correspondence ID: 97 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 10:42:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not take away/limit/restrict Texans access to our beaches. Look for other solutions.

Please stop scraping Texas beaches so they look "clean;. Nature intended them to look that way.

Correspondence ID: 98 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 13:15:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The national seashore is a TREASURE. It has both a beach protected from vehicle traffic AND a beach that has vehicle traffic. Neither one is ever full to capacity and everyone can find a perfect spot to enjoy the beaches.

Correspondence ID: 99 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 13:42:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am writing to you from Montana because this is public land that belongs to all Americans, not just Texans.

Why hasn't there been a management plan written since the area was designated as a National Seashore?

If there was a management plan in use there wouldn't be the problems now of overuse, crowding, motorized use on the beaches, and damage to nesting turtles.

My recommendations are...

1) Objectively measure motorized use that may contribute to noise, air and water pollution.

Phase out motorized use on beaches within the National Seashore.

2) Objectively measure impacts to turtles and their critical nesting habitat.

3) Limit visitor use to a reservation system, i.e, limited entry, reservations

4) Increase and monitor information and education conducted by on the ground park rangers.

Evaluate effectiveness of information and education efforts and adjust accordingly.

5) Increase law enforcement patrols and issue citations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 100 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 14:18:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Before the National Park Service considers closing any further sections of Texas Beaches for "non-motorized" recreation or other purposes it should first quantitatively demonstrate this by demand by usage data. There is already a section of beach on PINS set aside for "non-motorized" experiences. The Park service should track the number of users in this section and demonstrate that it is currently over-crowded before considering closing off more sections to vehicles. A park road that will extend further south on PINS behind the dunes is a great idea as long as it isn't coupled with closing additional section of the beach to vehicular traffic. Any notion of seasonal closures of the beach so that predators like coyotes, hawks, etc. can rampage Sea Turtle nests (left all-natural) without human traffic around is a "fool's errand."

Correspondence ID: 101 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 14:19:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As seniors who have moved to the area to be able to enjoy the beaches weekly and visit PINS on a regular basis, We would like to see the beaches still be accessible to motor vehicles. Normally we drive through the first 5 miles of the South beach to 20-50 miles. We just don't want to see vehicles NOT allowed on the beach. If a road is necessary past the 5 miles that allows motor vehicles back on the beach after that we could work with that but PLEASE don't banish vehicles from driving further South.

Correspondence ID: 102 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 17:53:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a frequent visitor to PINS, usually 1-2 times per week, mostly fishing. I propose that the NPS require a beach driving permit to venture beyond the 5 mile marker. A similar cost structure as used for Hatteras, \$50/10 consecutive days or \$120 annual. This money should then be used to enhance turtle patrols and law enforcement of beach regulations. Try this approach before banning driving during turtle nesting season.

Correspondence ID: 103 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 19:18:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think the beach should be left alone as it is, natural. The only thing the government ever does is screw things up, look at the country what a mess. I'm sure the only thing they want to do is restrict freedom and make more money. Leave the beach alone, better yet just leave.

Correspondence ID: 104 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,15 2023 20:33:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As long as driving is permitted the full 62 miles 365 days a year I am ok with any other restrictions

Correspondence ID: 105 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 07:30:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 1: Create pedestrian parking area to utilize the beach that is already closed to driving behind the visitor center that gets very little use. Much less environmental impact than the proposed 5 mile road.

2: Keep the previous turtle program. Limit public releasing if you feel it's necessary.

3: STOP RANGER HARASSMENT: While visitor enjoyment seems to be an issue; the rangers are a rude, threatening presence when encountered. I was forced to provide my social security number , and questioned about drinking, and my learning disabled nephew was accused of lying about having his seatbelt on. I am constantly in fear of another encounter. I have heard numerous stories from the elderly snow birds/winter Texans about these encounters. RANGERS ARE MENTAL TERRORIST. Kleberg county court automatically gives a 50 percent fine reduction to citations issued by park rangers. That speaks volumes.

4: I may suggest high visibility signs describing the turtle nesting areas and impose fines for people driving and/or parking on the pre-dune areas. I often see vehicles parked on top of these lower dunes when the tide is high and driving just for fun. It appears to be from ignorance. This is where the turtles nest.

5: Ranger education to prevent life threatening detainment such as the recent story on Youtube of the woman with a stingray injury. The rangers endangered this woman's life! Again, these men terrorized this woman. These are not the rangers from Jellystone park we all loved.

6: Make a prominent beach parking sign that addresses where/how to park on the beach. If a vehicle can not navigate the sand, that vehicle should not be parked so as to block the beach.

7: Limit the loud noise (stereos) on the beach. Nothing ruins my experience more often than a group ruining my serenity with a blaring stereo.

8: I have a park pass, and visitors are charged at there gate for entry. No beach parking permits necessary or wanted. I would guess that 99.5 percent of visitors are coming to park on the beach. A beach permit added to the present fees seems to be taking advantage and gouging

I belong to no group associated with this action,

Correspondence ID: 106 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 08:21:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a resident of Dallas, TX and an annual PINS park pass holder. I travel from Dallas to Padre Island about 10-12 times a year. The ability to explore the natural beauty of the PINS park by driving the beach and fishing the surf is the primary reason I travel to PINS and Padre Island. I feel that if the proposed changes, restricting beach driving, are enacted they will greatly decrease the amount of visitors to the park and therefore Padre Island itself. This will have a devastating effect on the local economy of Padre Island. Please do not restrict beach driving access to the park.

Correspondence ID: 107 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 09:30:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

I'm writing regarding the potential changes to beach driving within Padre Island National Seashore.

I support "Potential option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island." I view this change as a good compromise to help reduce traffic on the beach in the more heavily used section of the beach.

I do not support "Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience." I feel that adding a new road for thru traffic would be the better option while still allowing

some visitors to access the first 5 miles via a car. With the first 2 miles typically being the only easily available option for non 4x4 vehicles, it would be a shame to see this taken away from visitors wishing to beach camp who are not able to travel further down the beach. There are plenty of other sections of the beach that can be accessed on foot without parking on the beach. Perhaps a similar barrier like the one at the entrance of the south section could be constructed at the 5 mile mark once the access road has been built. This would prevent 4x4 traffic from driving through the first 5 miles, thus limiting traffic and increasing safety. They could easily use the access road to gain access to further down the beach.

Thank you for your time.

Correspondence ID: 108 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 09:48:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been traveling to and fishing from the PINS for over 30 years and would love for that to continue, especially for my family. The park has been a destination for surf fishing and family activities for many more years than I have been going and it would be a shame for that to come to an end through limiting vehicle traffic and closing off the park. Even "seasonal" closures would be a great impact since anglers frequent the park year round based on species that are in the surf during spawning periods. I appreciate that the park is taking a conversationist approach to improvements and believe that they can accomplish great things without limiting public access to all 60 miles of shoreline.

Correspondence ID: 109 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 10:02:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: With regards to the issue of beach management at Padre Island National Seashore (PINS):

Conservation and preservation of the natural resources is paramount. Changes to human activity (e.g. permitted driving) can be reviewed & changed if needed. Once the beach is polluted, or the turtles become extinct, reversal of this situation is expensive & problematic. Thus priority should be given to these activities.

With regard to turtle activities (page 3 of the newsletter refers), sea turtle patrols should be varied with consideration given to protecting in-situ nesting (described as Study 1). Public releases should be scaled back; the release is for the benefit of the turtles and not for the entertainment of tourists. This could perhaps be balanced with more educational and/or rehabilitation tours, with a view to allowing more public releases as the turtle population increases.

As stated above, natural resources are key. Sand management activities should specifically address and focus on the protection of sensitive habitats, as described on page 4 of the newsletter.

Beach driving (page 4) is a key issue, where many of the problems are caused by visitors inexperienced in driving on sand spinning holes into the driving surface or burying their vehicles to a point where heavy rescue equipment needs to be used. If permits are required to drive on the beach (available where park entry tickets are sold), this allows not only for numbers to be monitored but for information to be given on driving techniques. It also allows for proper warnings to be given about access; many tourists are unaware that more distant sections of the beach require a 4x4 & proper equipment to drive, not just the SUV they use buy groceries in Austin. They also make the false assumption that cell service is available on PINS & panic when they cannot call for help. All this could be included with a driving permit information package.

Adding an additional access road is an unnecessary expense, and will increase tourists getting further down into the rough stuff without realizing. Vehicle free areas exclude handicap visitors.

Hurricane recovery (page 5) should be based on the Hanna model, with the seashore closed until proper

assessments have been made and opened in a specific order, aligned with agreed criteria. Fair minded visitors will accept the restrictions in the wake of a major hurricane event and that clean-up may not have been fully completed.

Removal of trash (page 6) will remain a problem until state & international regulations address the problem. Even then, material will accidentally (or deliberately) be released & wash up on PINS. Clean up should be principally done by park maintenance staff (in conjunction with law enforcement where the debris is human or other contraband), while coordinating with volunteers.

Many of these points could increase costs. It is essential that PINS be properly funded as a park, and not considered a profit/loss business where expenses are shaved to the bone and how cheaply PINS is run trumpeted as a triumph. While PINS is not perhaps as noteworthy as other parks, it holds an important place in the lexicon, deserves to be run as a properly funded resource for the people & an important conservation area.

Correspondence ID: 110 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 10:50:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have spent most of my life camping and fishing on PINS since the 90's. While I have seen tremendous growth in the volume of traffic and visitors to the park I cannot accept any restriction of access to south beach. A status quo option must be added to the alternatives being reviewed. Malaquite is already closed off to vehicle traffic and is rarely used. Adding more unused beach closed to traffic will just push more people further south which is less safe for inexperienced beach drivers. A road behind the dunes will be expensive and difficult to maintain.

I would like this administration to more clearly define the problems that are trying to be addressed and why change is required at this time.

Correspondence ID: 111 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 13:20:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It has been brought to my attention that the BP Oil Spill money procured by Donna Shaver was taken from our Turtle Program by Superintendent Brunnemann and given to the program in Florida. When assessing the program, he utilized turtle "experts" from Florida while not including any input from Donna Shaver, who created and led the program for 40 years. We are not Florida! Stealing the funding procured for our program and trying to force the program to follow their Florida's methods is inappropriate and unethical.

Correspondence ID: 112 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 13:37:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Superintendent Eric Brunnemann came to PINS with the goal of dismantling the turtle program, as he has done with other programs such as the Black Footed Ferret. He has the reputation for being a Hatchet Man, and this is what he has done to the turtle program. Now he is attempting to use the same program to add beach closings to his list. He is trying to ramrod this through, but he is not following the latest EIS regarding the turtle program, and he is trying to bypass Texas State law and the original deed of the Park, which states that the park is for the enjoyment people. If the Park does not comply with the deed or State Law, it reverts back to the State of Texas. The people of Texas fought this once before, and we will do so again if needed.

Correspondence ID: 113 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,16 2023 20:52:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a resident of Dallas, TX and an annual PINS park pass holder. I travel from Dallas to Padre Island about 10-12 times a year. The ability to explore the natural beauty of the PINS park by driving the

beach and fishing the surf is the primary reason I travel to PINS and Padre Island. I feel that if the proposed changes, restricting beach driving, are enacted they will greatly decrease the amount of visitors to the park and therefore Padre Island itself. This will have a devastating effect on the local economy of Padre Island. Please do not restrict beach driving access to the park.

Correspondence ID: 114 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,17 2023 14:16:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am against ANY closures pedestrian or otherwise.

The community is very well aware of how to protect and get help for our beloved turtle program.

Please consider ALL community comments as this IS AGAINST the TEXAS OPEN BEACHES ACT.

Correspondence ID: 115 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,17 2023 15:14:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Of the options for sea turtle management, I support the use principles of adaptive management principles for all management activities (execute an action, monitor results, and adjust in subsequent cycles).

Adjusting research and operations (e.g., do not relocate every nest) seems to offer the biggest improvement for reducing the intensity of this major intervention in a species' life cycle. Anything that can be done to reduce the number of nests relocated while maintaining a normal level of hatchling survival would be better than having eggs hatched in captivity. This option would require additional research and monitoring but could provide long-term benefits to both turtles and a cost-savings to operations.

Potential pilot study 1 and 3 could provide useful management data. Pilot study 2 seems to be based on the notion that if turtles put their nests in suboptimal locations that flood they should be moved by NPS staff. That would only be a viable strategy if the goal was to do everything possible to increase turtle populations rather than to alter the management of park activities to allow turtle reproduction to proceed naturally.

Of beach driving options, I am strongly against any new roads. PINS is simply too narrow to avoid further fragmentation. The one exception that would help spread users from the beach to the grassland and wetlands would be for PINS to create a primitive hiking trail that runs the length of the property. Entire groups of users who are not drawn to the beach have no where to go in the current configuration of a short asphalt trail. With regard to driving options, because the culture of driving on TX beaches is so ingrained in the beach users that blocking off full sections of the beach would seem to be so offensive to some residents that they would fiercely fight it. Fisherman in particular value the ability to drive the full length of the beach. However, on certain stretches of the beach, consider restricting vehicle travel to narrow strips of the higher elevation areas, clearly marked off. That would leave all lower parts of the beach vehicle-free and allow fishers and others to pass on their way S.

Of the marine debris option, all those efforts are worth supporting. Also, because local users also contribute to the trash, consider starting a major education campaign on beach trash starting in early elementary schools in the cities from which most visitors originate.

Correspondence ID: 116 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,17 2023 17:15:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please save these already endangered turtles.

These nesting grounds that they lay their eggs upon is vital to their survival. These turtles & their young deserve every chance they can get to make it from a hatchling at that beach to the ocean.

They belong to all of us in the world. This is NOT your Texan right to destroy their nesting ground &

passing by. They belong to all of us & not your total lack of humanity. No respect for living things. Just another reason Texas is shit.

Correspondence ID: 117 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,17 2023 17:26:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have attended turtle release and followed the sea turtle efforts in Texas and strongly disagree with closing the beach to driving. People have consistently watched out and reported nest that spotted and eggs preserved and turtle

Populations rose. We owned property on the island for years and frequently drove many miles down PINS and still return several times a year. Texas open beaches act expressly gives access to all citizens to our beaches and both can be accomplished together as it has been in the past. I am totally opposed to closing our access to PINS which is only by vehicle past the end of the park road for miles of Texas beach.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 118 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,17 2023 17:33:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been visiting Padre Island National Seashore for 8 years now and I am deeply opposed to the changes being talked about in this plan. I have spent hundreds of dollars on park fees over the years, and have enjoyed PINS and the adventures I have had on the park. The plan to make cuts to the turtle program and more importantly changes to the driving rules on the park are not a good idea. Changes to driving rules, like limiting the number of people who can be on the beach or closing parts of the beach to driving will have a very negative effect on visitor experiences and will likely cause fewer people to visit the park. I do not not understand why the changes have even made it this far in the consideration process. All of the changes listed seem like they will only drive more people away from the park and make visiting the park less enjoyable for people who regularly visit it. Please do not make changes to the driving rules on the park, PINS is great the way it is currently operated and any changes to the driving rules would be a very unwelcome change. Thank you, and please do not change the driving rules.

Correspondence ID: 119 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,17 2023 17:53:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The fact that o am having to beg you not to destroy an endangered turtle is ridiculous. It's absolutely disgusting to me that you have the balls to tell us your going to allow these turtles to be slaughtered and destroyed! You should be embarrassed and ashamed at your actions. These turtles need protection! I can't understand how cash is more important than their right to exist. Have you no soul or morals? I will send this message out on all social media. You need to stop and make the changes to protect these endangered tur

Correspondence ID: 120 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,17 2023 18:02:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We have been driving down to PINS annually since the 1970's. We've enjoyed every trip very much. The natural surroundings are incredible. We would appreciate more wash up trash removal. Please don't go modernizing our beach for tourists to mess up. Thank you, A Concerned 8th Generation TEXAN.

Correspondence ID: 121 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,17 2023 20:31:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello! My name is , and Avid fisherman of PINS. I have fished that beach for 25 years and so has my father, we have created so many memories and been able to fish and have a great time driving all along that beach within the summer days, Fishing for a living , charters , you name it. PINS is a big part of our daily life

as we are always out there, especially during the

Months of March - August as it's the best time of the year to fish ! We look out for these turtles and do our part to protect them we drive slow we do our part and that's what matters. Dew do not want restricted beach access, we love and take care of that beach . We don't know what we'd do if it was ever closed off, It's not fair. And will ruin people's lives I guarantee you. Thanks . Have a great day

Correspondence ID: 122 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,17 2023 21:48:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please save the sea turtles!

If not destroyed by our high tides, they will be 100% predated by coyotes, fire ants, opossums, or raccoons. Right now, the Kemp's ridley is our most endangered sea turtle. The only thing protecting this turtle is the collection of their sea turtle eggs, which are then monitored and released with as much protection as is possible.

Staff, Rangers, and volunteers make sure the beach is clear of predators and then they raise netting over the hatchlings as they make their necessary crawl across the sand to the sea. If the nests are left on the beach, there will be no eggs left to hatch and no other protection will be given as a hatchling makes that perilous crawl to the Gulf, if by some miracle an egg survives to hatch. Please keep it the way it is to ensure a future for sea turtles. Too many species are increasing in low numbers or becoming extinct. This is unacceptable when we have a program that works! I humbly beg you to continue to work on increasing our number of sea turtles and keeping the park program fully open, funded & functional for future generations to enjoy the wonder of these amazing creatures. If we have a chance to SAVE & protect ANY creature- it is our duty to be fully vested in conservation of these animals . No more species can go extinct. We must do everything possible. Please- do you want to explain to your grandchildren you didn't help protect the sea turtles ' now they're gone completely? I don't think so- please save the sea turtles - keep the park open!

Sincerely,
Seattle WA

Correspondence ID: 123 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 01:32:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I strongly object to the National Park Service's intention to destroy endangered turtle nests and eggs. I also strongly object to the decision to allow vehicles driving on the beach during breeding/nesting season.

The Kemps Ridley turtles are endangered and must be protected. Humans cannot allow more wildlife to become extinct, we are on the brink of a mass animal extinction due to our continuous destruction of tress and plant life, pollution of oceans and we should be doing everything to assist their survival.

People should respect wildlife, we are not the only animal on this planet but we are the ones that can choose to help or destroy.

Turtle management must remain with scientists not an organisation that only cares about making profit.

STOP DESTROYING TURTLES. STOP BEACH DRIVING.

Regards

Correspondence ID: 124 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 08:04:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The seashore has been a vacation spot for my family, originally from Kansas, for many years and one of our first PINS experiences was the release of the baby Kemps. We came back annually and always

tried to plan our visit around release season. We moved here permanently because it just felt like home, like the sea turtles coming back here year after year, it calls us at a primal level. It is devastating to think how many title eggs will be lost if we leave the nests untouched on the beach, the water regularly reaches the dunes especially now that so much sand was washed away during each successive hurricane or tropical storm. The turtle program has done so much to increase the numbers of the Kemp's but they only got that way from the PiNs community watching out for them. Taking away our beach access during nesting seasons helps no one. I have been lucky enough for my children to grow up attending releases since before they could walk and knowing that they get to look out for the nests to help more turtle babies grow up is making my babies grow up with kindness and responsibility for those that can't help themselves. Don't take this away for us.

Correspondence ID: 125 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 09:18:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is disgusting to me that you would let people drive over a turtle nesting area during nesting season! IS THIS TRUE?!? What will be done to assist the turtles that use this area?

Correspondence ID: 126 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 09:24:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There should be zero beach closures. PINS already has a 4 miles section pedestrian only beach that has minimal use at best. You don't need to close anymore beach to "improve visitor use." As I recall, the land making up PINS was once privately owned and was given to the park service/gov't with one stipulation. It must remain open for all to use. If you close it, you will have a fight on your hands.

With that said, I would not be opposed the creating a paved back road the ran the entire length of the beach that was behind the dune line. Give beach access every 10 miles that allowed vehicle to access the beach and drive that section of beach. This will help reduce impact on the beach. Angler have their favorite section they like to fish. Some only want to fish the Port Mansfield Jetties. Allowing them to travel by paved road and then cut over to the beach would help reduce traffic on the beach.

Up the fees for park access. I would pay \$100 to access the beach for the year. Any serious beach goer would. Keep a reasonable daily use fee. With this said, you need to keep someone in the toll booth 24 hours a day to enforce this or fees are useless. I have pass that booth many times and greeted by no one.

Improve law enforcement. You rarely see law enforcement (excluding border patrol) past the 20 mile marker. When I was younger, you have rangers that drove to the jetties and back every day.

Many of us participate in research. Myself, I have tagged sharks for the Harte institute, NOAA/NMFS, and Mote Marine Labs. I have rescued several bottlenose dolphins and melonhead whales and aided in rehab. I have also preformed necropsies on marine mammals under a LOA from TMMSN. Many of these animals were found by beachgoers on the beach.

Closing beaches with the reason to protect migratory species is unjust. You can not protect them in a small portion of their migratory path. If yo want to protect them, you would have to protect them on every mile of their path from start to finish. There is no way to do that.

In closing, beachgoers respect our beaches. We aid in rescuing wildlife and report nests. Many of us have day to day knowledge of the beach that can be helpful.

Correspondence ID: 127 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 09:32:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Are you kidding me? The Kemp's ridley is a CRICITALLY endangered species. And at a time when this planet is losing thousands of species a year - you're going to mess with their protection??? It's an idea like this that gives me cause to believe life on the planet is on a downhill slide from which we will not recover. And we arrogant humans are in the midst of this slide.

Stop pandering to corporate and personal (property owners) wishes. That's why we're in trouble in the first place in many areas of the world.

Who in the world thought up the idea of giving up protection for this speciesl. Whomever it is needs to very quickly find other employment.

Correspondence ID: 128 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 11:18:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Committee of Citizens for Access and Conservation (CAC)

CAC is a Corpus Christi-based, grassroots, not-for-profit, non-political, non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to advocating for the enforcement of the Texas Open Beaches Act and preserving public access to Texas Beaches.

CAC has defended and protected the rights of Texans to our public beaches, particularly those administrated by the National Park Service (NPS), specifically the Padre Island National Seashore (PINS), since 2009. At that time, NPS attempted to reduce public access rights. The group successfully modified the proposed restrictions and preserved the right of Texans to use their beaches for various recreational and conservation activities.

The NPS now wants to adopt the scientifically unsound process of leaving the nests in situ or on the beach as they do in Florida. The proposed idea will not work in Texas because of the many natural predators, high tides, and warming sands due to climate change.

If this plan goes ahead, the potential cost to our community is outlined in this reparation of 2020. The possible economic cost to the Corpus Christi community was determined. The study found 618,000 park visitors spent an estimated \$27.5 million in the local gateway regions while visiting Padre Island National Seashore. These expenditures supported 373 jobs, \$10.4 million in labor income, \$17.5 million in value-added, and \$31.7 million in economic output in local gateway economies surrounding Padre Island National Seashore.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on such an important issue.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 129 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 12:00:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Greetings:

I write as a concerned resident of the North Padre Island and a supporter of PINS because of all of its beauty and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. I do support conservation, BUT I am very concerned about any management plan that will restrict access to the 60 miles of beach at any time.

I, like many other outdoorsmen, respect the wildlife and contribute to keeping the beach clean. I am willing to pay more for access if that money is kept for PINS and doesn't supplant its budget. I can support reduced speed limits during turtle hatching season if speed is a threat, but otherwise please allow us to drive according to the terrain or suffer the natural consequences of stupidity when our vehicles fail.

The plan to create a back road between mile 1 and 5 is a good idea since that is where much of the tourist population congregates, but it isn't critical if the speed is kept at 15MPH.

Please allow us to enjoy the freedom of the park to the maximum, ask for financial support where it's needed and try to enlist the regulars to support some of your objectives. I know people will volunteer to assist with the wildlife, cleanliness, and even troubleshooting problems. It is a dedicated group of people who want to support your good intentions.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 130 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,18 2023 12:10:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Thank you for all that you do:

I am a resident of NPI and regularly take advantage of the beauty of PINS. I really appreciate the superintendent and staff who support the park, and as a vet, thank you for your civic service. My concern about the management plan is the slippery slope. I cannot support limiting access to the natural wonder over the 60 miles of beach. I fish, clean up, and have even helped wildlife, therefore, any plans for restriction worries me.

Please listen to those who live hear and love this natural beauty. You can work with us if you are concise with your objectives and listen to our concerns. We can be your greatest supporters and advocates, but we are passionate and have made life decisions about where to live based upon the access too the park and its wonderful benefits.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 131 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,18 2023 12:19:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern;

Hello, I'm an 82 year old resident of North Padre Island and moved her after many trips to visit my son and enjoy PINS. I love PINS and see it as a national treasure. At my age, I also understand things change with increased population, crime, and preservation. A management plan as presented in the literature worries me because of the extension of federal authority over my lifetime. I don't want limited access to the 60 miles of beach. I travel with my son and his family and can attest to the fact that we clean it up, have assisted wildlife, and we would do more if asked and if it resulted in keeping the beach accessible from mile 0 to 60.

Please don't limit access, but ask for help from the community to achieve any of your conservation and safety goals. I think you will be satisfied by voluntary cooperation versus management mandates.

Gracias!

Correspondence ID: 132 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,18 2023 12:39:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The current program of collecting sea turtle eggs by qualified park service employees and volunteers will help insure the survival of the species. Subsequent controlled hatch and release is the only answer. The nests left in a natural state with "hopes of successful hatch and release" is a pipe dream. PINS is home to many natural predators who will ravage the nests and kill all of the turtles before or after the hatch. I am

not sure what the motivation is for the planned change but I can't help being skeptical of the Texas political machine having non-nature friendly motives; usually connected to some special interest, personal financial gain, or power and control.

Keeps PINS a natural resource open to the Public and a safe haven for wildlife.

Correspondence ID: 133 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 12:54:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a lifelong Texas resident fisherman, beachcomber, camper and sightseer (age 63), I'm for leaving PINS the way it is provided this wonderful natural area is preserved. If there are concerns regarding the wildlife or flora and fauna being impacted by driving/camping or other activities then they should be voiced. I definitely want PINS preserved, however, as one of the Park Rangers mentions; many people use the island for different purposes.

I do believe designating certain habitats (behind the dune line and during nesting or breeding season) off limits during certain times of the year. While the flora/fauna from the dune line to the water (ghost crab, ghost shrimp, shore birds, turtles etc.) is more problematic due to vehicular traffic; it could perhaps be mitigated by enforcing driving patterns (speed, designated pathways or detours) to minimize any impact to them. Regardless any area of PINS with higher concentrations of wildlife or flora/fauna can be zoned and access restricted or heavily limited to minimize impact.

As a geologist and one who has observed this happening across the United States, beach erosion is primarily being caused by excessive damming of rivers which prevents sediment from replenishing the barrier islands. It is not in my opinion caused by driving on the beach nor by sea level changes.

Correspondence ID: 134 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 13:34:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My family and I visit the Padre Island National Seashore multiple times a year and really enjoy it. I am concerned about any restrictions on access to the beach due to the negative impact on our ability to enjoy PINS.

Correspondence ID: 135 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 13:37:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I visit the Padre Island National Seashore multiple times a year. It is my family's "go to" vacation spot because my mother and father in law live on Padre Island. It really is more than just a vacation, it's a second home. I am concerned about any restrictions on access to the beach due to the negative impact on our ability to enjoy PINS.

Correspondence ID: 136 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 14:24:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: If the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle eggs aren't dug up and placed in an incubator, they will be eaten by predators. Who is going to protect them if the U.S. Park Service doesn't?

Correspondence ID: 137 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 16:03:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 1) Do not alter the current turtle program. Eggs must not be left on the beach because of predation and tides. 2) Do not restrict public access or collect additional fees. 3) No special permits to access beach or drive. 4) Do not divert funds to other programs.

Should create a First Aide Station.

Rangers should reinstate daily drives to Mansfield Cut.

Any proposed changes must be supported by meaningful environmental impact study.

Any proposed changes must be supported by meaningful economic impact study to local and surrounding economies.

Correspondence ID: 138 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 20:02:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a visitor to Padre Island National Seashore to see the Kemps Ridley sea turtles, I am deeply concerned that your new plan is a disaster in the making for this most endangered of the turtles. I cannot imagine what you people are thinking.

I think it is a bad idea for a local nonprofit to take over turtle management from the National Park Service scientists. Their unknowledgeable, unscientific actions will decimate the turtle population.

I understand the new plan will be to leave the nests on the beach - this is sheer idiocy. IF TURTLE NESTS ARE LEFT ON THE BEACH, THEY WILL BE DESTROYED, either by the local high tides, or definitely 100% predated by coyotes, fire ants, opossums, or raccoons.

Staff, Rangers, and volunteers need to continue to make sure the beach is clear of predators and raise netting over the hatchlings as they make their necessary crawl across the sand to the sea. If the nests are left on the beach, there will be no eggs left to hatch and no other protection will be given as a hatchling makes that perilous crawl to the Gulf, if by some miracle an egg even manages to survive to hatch.

According to your document - The Seashore is considering potential options for sea turtle management, including:

- Adjust research and operations (e.g., do not relocate every nest)-- THIS WILL KILL ALL THE HATCHLINGS.
- Strandings / rehabilitation / release of juvenile and adult rehabilitated turtles - redefine extent of Seashore involvement and release locations--THIS IS THE WHITEWASH. They will turn over turtle management (really mismanagement) to a nonprofit.
- Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education --THEY ARE ALREADY DOING THIS. They have gone from 24 plus a year to 5 or fewer. Public education was the reason public releases were started in the first place! The hatchling releases were the biggest draw to the park. They do not want visitors to the park!

And this is the really crazy part - BEACH DRIVING WILL BE PROHIBITED APRIL THROUGH JULY. The rest of the year, people will pay a hefty surcharge.

It was beach driving that let people KNOW about these turtles and got protection/volunteers for them.

This area of National Seashore is 60 miles of undeveloped island beach that is largely inaccessible to birdwatch or fish without driving. This document could also open the door to development on the Laguna Madre side of the beach, which is the area opposite the Gulf coast. Currently this is undeveloped National Park Service land and is an undisturbed eco-system that was in place before the Karankawa tribe was exterminated or displaced.

A way of life on Padre Island National Seashore is being threatened, not only for turtles, but also for tourists and residents. The sea turtles which nest at Padre Island National Seashore don't belong to the park or to Texas. They should be protected by the National Park Service which should be stewards for them. An unspoiled area basically

unchanged since recorded time will pass into history along with these turtles.

DO NOT DO THIS.

Correspondence ID: 139 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 20:31:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I spend 5 months in Padre Island each year and regularly use the Padre Island National Seashore. It is not right that Funding for the Turtle Program is being transferred to Florida. Furthermore, dismantling the PINS turtle program because of Florida is not ethical. I request a study be completed against the current turtle program to "prove" that it is not successful instead of the Malaquite Pedestrian Beach study which is trying to say "it works here, so it will work at PINS.

Shame on Superintendent Eric Bruneian for trying to dismantle the PINS turtle program.

Correspondence ID: 140 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 20:59:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Beach Management Plan?? From what I've heard, what you are trying to do is close the beach for an extended period (March-September?? or something like that) to protect the turtle eggs and completely prevent public access during that time.

FIRST: That is NOT in line with the intent of the Texas Open Beaches Act ("TXOBA"), passed in 1959, protects public access to the 367 miles of Texas coastline along the Gulf of Mexico. The act is a unique codification of rights held by the public in Texas since time immemorial: the rights to access and use the area of the beach located between the mean low tide mark and the line of vegetation. Expressing these rights, the law states that the public:"...shall have the free and unrestricted right of ingress and egress to and from the state-owned beaches bordering on the seaward shore of the Gulf of Mexico, or if the public has acquired a right of use or easement to or over an area by prescription, dedication, or has retained a right by virtue of continuous right in the public, the public shall have the free and unrestricted right of ingress and egress to the larger area extending from the line of mean low tide to the line of vegetation bordering on the Gulf of Mexico."

SECOND: Currently, the turtle program extracts the eggs from the beach into a controlled environment for hatching and later release if my understanding is correct. Leaving the eggs on the beach "undisturbed" would NOT benefit the turtles at all. Furthermore, there is an increase in the number of predators down there on PINS. We haven't been down in a handful of years, but even then, we were seeing an alarming number of coyotes down there. On the forum sites and social media I follow, I'm hearing reports of wild hog activity. Each of those species would take a large portion of those "undisturbed" eggs and significantly DECREASE the percentage of eggs that could even reach the point of hatching. IF you truly want to enact something that will help manage the beaches and the species, I suggest you initiate an aggressive HOG trapping program on PINS if their population is making a presence down there.

THIRD: Fisherman like me ARE the best conservationists on that beach and spend the most time down there. Most people don't venture past the 5- or ten-mile marker except fisherman. We also have worked with the turtle patrol to ensure the protection of egg sites, and report/cooperate with them. We take part in tagging programs, and provide valuable information on fish species, shark activities, beach conditions, etc etc. Take the example from hunters as well; as a group, we provide the greatest level of conservation on a broad level because we are spending the most time with the animals, the fish the ecosystem etc.

FOURTH: An effective beach management plan would have more law enforcement available down the island. I've never seen a game warden, or police officer past the 10 Mile marker. Because of this, there is a lot of reports of drug imports and illegal immigrants using this area as an entry point. Not only that, there is no assistance

provided if a vehicle recovery is needed. We are left on our own to self-recover, or hope for assistance from a fellow fisherman. An effective beach management plan might take this into account and provide a service to extract stuck vehicles and assist the public. A beach management plan might also figure out a way to improve the cell service while down the island so we could at least call a tow truck or extraction company, have better cell service during a medical emergency, etc.

FIFTH: An effective beach management plan would also include a first aid station available either at the entry of the beach, or possibly add a small "manned" first aid station halfway down the beach with a mobile vehicle (4x4 ambulance or similar) capable of traveling to an emergency and extract/transport a person off the beach to meet an emt service at the pavement for transportation to a hospital. That would provide a safety net for the people using the beach down the island in the case of heart attack, heat exhaustion, shark attack, Sting ray sting, allergic/cardiac event due to jellyfish sting, etc etc etc.

SIXTH: An effective beach management plan would have trash cans or some type of trash collection areas down the island or at least for the first 5 or 10 miles where most of the public access the beach to ensure they can keep the beaches cleaner. I dont remember seeing those on the beach when we were down there, but I may be mistaken...going off memory. We travel further down, and always have trash bags with us. We haul our trash out, and typically also clean up any trash washed up around our camp areas to "leave it cleaner than we found it";

SEVENTH: Care to explain why it took so long (two to three weeks) to reopen the beach after that hurricane? From what I'm hearing it's because it was held closed to allow "certain people" to walk the beach and look for artifacts, use metal detectors, etc. BUT....that should have been allowed by THE PUBLIC! Not held back for certain individuals. If this information im hearing is true, THIS GROSSLY defies the Texas Open Beach Act, will hopefully be further investigated and brought to light. VERY DISTURBING to hear this. MISUSE OF superintendent rights, Park managers, etc if researched/investigated and proven to be true/accurate.

EIGHT: An effective beach management plan would do ALL of the things i've mentioned, while still allowing people to enjoy the vastness and quiet feel/undisturbed presence of the beach. We go down island to get away from the traffic, people, annoyances, stereotypes, etc and enjoy the simplicity of it.

NONE of this is what I'm hearing regarding your beach management program initiate. Instead, what we are hearing is that yall are trying to CLOSE the beach and ELIMINATE access for a large period of the year. And the methods you are trying to quietly enact are NOT for the benefit of the Texas beaches or the turtles. It's to shut down the existing programs and further take away our rights to access the beachline along PINS, not to mention the funds that would be re-allocated elsewhere.

Correspondence ID: 141 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 21:03:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been visiting pins since I was 4 trars old. It's a part of my life and always will be. Not only did my parents teach be valuable life lessons on pins, but I am now teaching the next generation how to appreciate the beach and all that comes with it. We have visited many turtle releases, assisted in turtle releases, and helped the park rangers with injured turtle that wash up. Closing the beach to the public will significantly impact the turtle population in a negative way. If you have ever spent time on pins, you would know it's with the publics help that the turtle program is what it is today. Leaving the beach to the "animals" is going to undo many years of hard work that was put into building the turtle population to what it is now. Although many people have visited the civilized beaches of Florida, there is something soul touching about pins. There are not many untouched treasures in this world, leave this one alone. The impact of your short term plan will be felt for generations, negatively. Coming from someone who has spent a life time on pins, and you want to make a difference - have your rangers to patrol the beach more. Additionally, having a first aid station in pins to help in the unfortunate encounter with a rattlesnake or a sting ray or a wild hog. And for those that dont know.,Yes, there

are wild animals on pins. This land was donate to the state for everyone to enjoy. Not for one, obviously bored, politician to "propose" closing it for nature to be nature. Do more for your community by educating yourself and those around you by visiting pins and embracing it.

Correspondence ID: 142 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,18 2023 21:15:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been visiting pins since I was 4 trars old. It's a part of my life and always will be. Not only did my parents teach be valuable life lessons on pins, but I am now teaching the next generation how to appreciate the beach and all that comes with it. We have visited many turtle releases, assisted in turtle releases, and helped the park rangers with injured turtle that wash up. Closing the beach to the public will significantly impact the turtle population in a negative way. If you have ever spent time on pins, you would know it's with the publics help that the turtle program is what it is today. Leaving the beach to the "animals" is going to undo many years of hard work that was put into building the turtle population to what it is now. Although many people have visited the civilized beaches of Florida, there is something soul touching about pins. There are not many untouched treasures in this world, leave this one alone. The impact of your short term plan will be felt for generations, negatively. Coming from someone who has spent a life time on pins, and you want to make a difference - have your rangers to patrol the beach more. Additionally, having a first aid station in pins to help in the unfortunate encounter with a rattlesnake or a sting ray or a wild hog. And for those that dont know.,Yes, there are wild animals on pins. This land was donate to the state for everyone to enjoy. Not for one, obviously bored, politician to "propose" closing it for nature to be nature. Do more for your community by educating yourself and those around you by visiting pins and embracing it.

Correspondence ID: 143 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Stop trying to fix what isn't broke. Concentrate on the border if you want to do something constructive,

Correspondence ID: 144 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 07:27:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a native Texan who frequently visits Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS). I the past all Park superintendents had good communications with the public. For what ever the reason, things seemed to have changed within the management style which is having an adverse impact on our community. The Beach Management Plan that the Park is proposing is not a good fit for Texas. We feel more time and effort needs to be put into the study. Texas beach environments are unique and not at all like Florida beaches.

Please allow our local community beach advocates to work alongside the NPS. Presently, we feel NPS/PAIS is making unfound decisions without scientific based information.

We look forward to working with the PAIS management team to voice our concerns.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 145 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 08:07:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: PINS

Alright you Primitive Screw heads, enough is enough!

First, your biggest problem about the Park, is you, the so called Management. All of y'all need to go back to whatever rocks you climbed out from. Our Park never needed fixing. You basically stole this away from the People, especially us Texans, and have ruined it with all of your past boneless decisions. Your current "Leader" should go back to Florida, as should the rest of you. You already ruined those parks, so leave ours alone.

Second, the Rangers must have been imported from another planet, since none of them have a clue about anything. One example; is their Gawd Awful IGNORANCE of the Environment and the People who regularly use this Park. Shame on all of you for ignoring our advice and insisting on a "Us vs Them" mentality. Wait, that applies to the current Leadership too. Case in Point, an incident where a Lady was stung by a Stingray, and both of those buttheads that stopped and detained the couple trying to leave the Beach in a safe and quick manner to receive treatment. I hope she sues ALL of you jackasses.

Third, your Asinine Turtle plan. We already had a very successful plan that was working fine. Then you toads appeared and undid just about every good thing that was done. Ganging up on Donna, trying to turn people against her, then basically eviscerating her is probably the most self-serving and childish thing I have seen in a very long time.

In closing, and I will speak louder since you all cannot obviously hear, and ignore whatever else comes from anyone who has a personal knowledge of the Beach, GO BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM, AND LEAVE THIS BEACH AND US, ALONE. NOBODY WANTS YOU OR YOUR SELFISH IDEALS NEAR OUR BEACHES. KEEP IT UP AND WE WILL HAVE YOU FIRED, NOT RETIRED. We have had this under control for a very long time. Don't Mess With Us Texans!!

Correspondence ID: 146 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 08:09:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I wish I could be here for the open house meetings, but unfortunately due to work I can't. I've heard that the intentions are to close off a very large section of PINS for multiple months during summer time. I really hope that's not the case because I honestly think that would do a lot more harm than good. This is a very big decision and it shouldn't be taken lightly because it would have a huge impact on so many people & businesses here in Corpus. It would be a long lasting impact too, and one with many ripple effects down the road. I think we should find a responsible & reasonable way to handle this as a community.

Correspondence ID: 147 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 08:37:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: we fight for what we love.

Correspondence ID: 148 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 08:55:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Stop playing with the sand on White Cap beach. Let it settle. My car gets stuck!

Correspondence ID: 149 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 11:22:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am thinking that decisions have already been made to modify the turtle program, cut back patrols, leave nests insitu with the knowledge that vehicular traffic will cause hatchling's demise. The next action would be to close at least portions of the beach during April thru July. Too bad an archeologist cannot understand what "endangered species", "safety net" or "reintroduced" mean. I no longer take pride in National Park System.

Correspondence ID: 150 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 11:50:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I've used PINS for twenty years, my sons, friends and family all use the area. I can't count all the folks I know that use PINS for fishing, wildlife viewing, or just enjoying a day on the beach. I know people that come to PINS from San Antonio and Houston so the attraction is not just locals. I've had friends that volunteered in the turtle program to help these endangered animals. The locals as well as the thousands who come to Corpus Christi yearlong to enjoy activities on the PINS will be effectively shut out if access is restricted during the nesting season.

Stopping access during turtle nesting season will endanger the turtles further, nest and tracks to nests will be missed and not reported to the visitors center. These unfound nests will be dug up and eggs eaten by the abundant predators on the beach. Our turtle program is covering 60 miles along a wild beach. Local beach goers report turtle tracks, these reports equal turtles that survive. Without a helping hand these turtles would be extinct.

I'm against limited access to PINS

Everyone I know that uses the PINS beach is apposed to limited access. Garry Hutchins

Correspondence ID: 151 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,19 2023 14:17:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Look I'm disabled and if you cut off the beach to motorized vehicles then you cut me off from the beach, along with anyone else that has to use some form of motorized transportation to get around. So IMHO that would be discrimination against the disabled.

Correspondence ID: 152 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,20 2023 08:19:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Our beaches need to stay how they are and allow access by vehicles throughout the entirety of PINS. The blocked off section in PINS for pedestrian only access is plentiful, no need to add any more.

Correspondence ID: 153 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,20 2023 12:16:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: PAIS is missing a wonderful opportunity to proclaim to the world that they employ the foremost expert on the critically endangered Kemps Ridley sea turtle and are helping to save these turtles. They should be welcoming the people who drive from all over the state to watch the hatchling releases. If the park is going to charge people who attend, they should share the proceeds with the Turtle Program. It would be a win for everyone. The releases help educate the public about sea turtles and what Dr Shaver is doing to save them. We cannot rely on what is being done in Mexico. The PAIS should be proclaiming to the world that they are helping to lead the fight to save the Kemps Ridley sea turtles. We applaud Florida's efforts to save sea turtles and they should be applauding ours. We have very different challenges here and we do not need them to tell us how to run our program. We Texans are proud of Dr Shaver and her 40+ years to save them. BP Oil Spill money was given to Florida and we want it back for our program.

Correspondence ID: 154 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,20 2023 12:27:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear Park Service,

I am writing today pertaining to management on PINS (Padre Island National Seashore). I am overly concerned that a hasty decision to close a portion or the entire beach for vehicle access will decrease research, tourism, fishing(recreational and for food), and funds to this area of Texas. Not only that, I believe the current proposal

will not aid in the restoration of the Sea Turtles. This Texas beach is unique, we only have a Eastern Coast with unique tidal and wind changes on that beach. This is not Florida and should not be managed as such. This beach needs eyes and ears that are concerned for its well being. I think the park service can and should work with the local industries and peoples who call it home. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 155 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,20 2023 12:56:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: WTF are you people doing? Allowing driving on the beach where an endangered turtle lays its eggs?

How dumb are you? You have no right to do this, the people own the beach and we say NO WAY!

Get your heads out of your asses and accept that you work for US the american taxpayers and we don't want this. at all!

Correspondence ID: 156 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,20 2023 13:04:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I strongly urge the National Park Service to keep the Padre Island National Seashore open to the public all year long. The reason for blocking the public from driving on the beach between April and July is in direct conflict with the reality that local residents see every day. Without public access to the beach, the turtle program will end.

It seems obvious to local people that the National Park Service has another anti-public agenda. That of shutting down access to beaches in Texas and giving them to corporations and developers.

Do not take away our beach!

Correspondence ID: 157 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,20 2023 16:20:45

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am not in favor of making any changes to the Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 158 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,20 2023 22:21:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I'm completely against the closing of our beaches and public access for any reason. I've never ran over or do I know of anyone who has hit,run over or even come close to a accident with a turtle or wildlife. Drive speeds are limited and people aware of the abundant wildlife.

Correspondence ID: 159 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 06:07:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We chose North Padre Island to start our small business specifically for the unique ability to drive miles of undeveloped beach. The research we did prior to expanding our business down south gave us the confidence this right would never be taken away. Conditions of the agreement guarantee public driving on the beach would never be taken away or the deed would revert back. The NPS is mistaken if they think they will attempt to take this right away and not face litigation. This has been attempted in the past, and our state leadership thwarted that effort. I am confident that will be the outcome if this proceeds past the pre-planning phase.

Correspondence ID: 160 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 06:14:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The pre-planning product that was put out and made available to the public states 'safety & visitor experience' as a reason to reroute or close down driving on PINS. What studies or surveys have been done to show driving on the beach is such a significant threat to safety or visitor experience?

Correspondence ID: 161 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 06:26:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I've never been a fan of the National Seashore oversight and totalitarian control of our only open beach left in the country. Unrealistic restrictions over the years have made our valuable resource more compliant to the whims of the park and not of the public. Restrictions you propose on beach travel will violate the Texas beach open beach act! Doing this in the name of "protecting the turtles" is ludicrous! Saving the turtles and eggs from predation is actually enhanced by the people you plan on prohibiting from beach access. Your policies have become more of "Do as I Say, not as I Do".

Correspondence ID: 162 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 06:52:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please include an online meeting options for inclusivity of all in in our community and those that have a vested interest and do not live locally. An inclusive meeting means that the meeting is truly open to all (not only those that can attend in person) and includes the opportunity to discuss in a online forum for those that can not physically attend the meetings. This is common in all resource agency and environmentally focused meetings since COVID began. Allows resource agency staff and others to attend and discuss online.

Thank you for promoting an inclusive meeting process (not just thru written opportunities)

Correspondence ID: 163 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 08:20:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I live on North Padre Island and walk the beach every morning. I walk 5 miles on the beach every day. Thousands of miles walked on this beach. I collect trash, shells and rescue stranded sea animals out there on the beach. I've called Turtle Patrol to collect the eggs from nesting sea turtles. Closing the beach and doing away with the Turtle Rescue program is wrong. There are a lot of us island folks taking better care of this beach than the person reading this comment. We appreciate what we have. Leave the beach alone and open during turtle nesting season.

Correspondence ID: 164 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 08:26:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We chose to move to the coastal region of Texas, in large part due to full access of the beach year round. We utilize the beach almost daily and are proud of our sealife planning programs that identify, save and improve the odds of the Kemp Ridley turtle hatchlings in the coastal bend. The program provides a positive impression of the coastal bend but, also has a significant economic impact to the local economy. Hundreds of people plan and show up when the hatchlings are released into the sea. Elimination of the program and minimizing full access to the beach will be a dual slap in the face to local economies and all of the positive outcomes that have been achieved, in the preservation of an endangered population.

Correspondence ID: 165 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 09:33:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I use the PINS several times a year for fishing. I find no reason to change or restrict driving the entire length of the beach.

Respectfully

Correspondence ID: 166 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 10:26:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I real think that building a road back of the duns for the first 5 miles is very wrong. that is not going to help the habitat and it just leads to someone asking for another 5 miles later. It is just a bad president.

as far as closing any part of the beach for get it.

Correspondence ID: 167 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 10:45:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: From the Civic engagement newsletter:

Are there other potential options for management of sea turtles that could result in less human interaction with wildlife?

Respectfully, this is the wrong question to ask. Conservation of these sea turtles requires human interaction. It is because of our human attention and interaction that their numbers are improving.

- Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education

NO!

From the park service mission -

"preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations"

The Kemp ridley baby sea turtle releases were one of the most inspirational events myself and my children have ever participated in. It becomes increasingly difficult and crowded to participate in these events when there has only been a handful in the last few years. There used to be at least a dozen every season. My children have a healthy respect for the baby turtles and thier endangered status after watching a few releases. I can think of no more impactful "enjoyment, education, and inspiration for this and future generations."

The releases are already focused on public education! Keep doing them. This is a huge draw from all over our area. I have friends from all over the country who would love to witness one of these beautiful events. And I cannot invite them because they are so sporadic with none or sometimes one or 2 a season. How can we educate the public if we continue to severely limit them?

Kemps ridley are still an endangered species and the National Seashore is equipped to help mightily in conservation efforts.

Correspondence ID: 168 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 10:47:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Don't take our Beach access away! We need this for not only us to enjoy but our future generations. The Padre Island National Seashore is not only therapeutic for many people, it provides revenue for many many businesses and brings in so many tourists. Taking away access from our beach is not the answer go find something else to make money on. Don't take my children's beach access the people will be present to keep our beach. Don't hurt the revenue and tourism our beach provides for our great city of Corpus Christi here in the Gulf coast. We don't want your proposals they don't work. Listen to the people who are avid visitors who have been able to enjoy the beach since childhood. There doesn't need to be a 5 mile road the first 5 miles this will not work. There is not an issue with this. Why create a problem when there is not a problem? The problem I see is a tyrant force patrolling only the first few miles of beach. The law enforcement on the beach area causes every trip to be miserable. It seems they target the wrong things like going 1 mile over the speed limit when they could be assisting someone in real need or dangerous wreck less driving.

There should be educated individuals and a place for first aid. The majority of the trash on the beach is coming from over seas and not from the people using the beach . Anyone who spends a lot of time out there knows this is common sense. We do not need more fees to drive on the beach we already pay a hefty fee to enter and wait in line when entering the beach every year.

There is already a section for people to park and walk to the beach if that is the way they want to enter. You may not take these access rights from the people who use this as therapy don't ruin something that is great and make it in to a bureaucratic nightmare. The turtle program was great don't put a failing program that doesn't work into place. Don't mess with the peoples rights to their beach access stop and find something else to invest your time and money into.

"Changes in visitor access on the beach is illegal as per the Texas Open Beaches Act and the Deed from the State of Texas to the park.

The State of Texas has the right to take back the park if they do not follow Texas law or the deed as written."

Don't mess with our beaches!

Correspondence ID: 169 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 11:44:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Why chang what is about as perfect as it can get..I love PINS and us it several times a year to fish.

Respectfully

Correspondence ID: 170 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 12:13:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a strong advocate of open beaches and full access. I do not agree with closing any portions of the beach to vehicular traffic from where it is today. I believe that this is an example of overreach due to an agenda developed by someone internally to the agency without fully considering the needs, wants and desires of the public.

Do not close any areas of the beaches to people or vehicles.

Correspondence ID: 171 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 12:15:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There are policy changes yall are considering implementing on the National Seashore which are highly concerning to me and other beachgoers alike. There many talking points to discuss:

- Beach scraping procedures
- Potential PINS capacity limits/closures
- Potential changes to current driving access
- Potential additional beach driving permits
- Potential "vehicle-free pedestrian areas";

If you guys are going to start increasing "beach maintenance practices" through beach-scraping procedures, PLEASE don't follow the lead of what the City and County does on the beaches near Bob Hall and Packery Channel. They dredge a depression in the middle of the beach by pushing sand towards the waters edge building a lip. This is NOT a natural beach structure as natural beaches have a gentle slope from waters edge to the dune line. What happens at these other beaches now is they become flooded any time there is a high tide or rain event. They essentially create a pond that does not allow for natural drainage because of how they "scrape/maintain" the beach; which makes driving conditions more difficult and makes access more difficult when it shouldn't be. Beaches drain fine from tides or rain when left alone.

Capacity limits to the park is a scary proposition. My favorite stretch of PINS is the very end. I drive down the beach to spend time at the Mansfield jetties. Most people tend to stay well within the first 20-30 miles. Closing down the beach to those of us who wish to go the further run and experience true TX open space because the first 20 miles is "at capacity" is asinine thinking.

The construction of another road running 5 miles further into the park to "bypass" the first 5 miles is a good idea but half-baked. It's not going to change anything from the 5-20 mile range, except put more people down the Island further. Also, you have to build a NEW ROAD through a fragile dune ecosystem, while thinking about taking pressure off of the beach ecosystem. You're tearing up additional wildlife zones to build a road which isn't really affecting beach access at all.

Additional driving permits? Is paying the park admission fee not enough? The people who wish to park in your your parking lots you have to spend money to build and upkeep get to enjoy the beach for cheaper? You want to charge the people who are most likely NOT using your infrastructure more to access the beach? This idea makes no sense as well.

Potential more vehicle-free pedestrian zones? I looked on Google Maps, and seems yall already have 4.5 miles of car free zones. Do you really need more?

Any time a single stretch of beach is taken away and access is limited, we head towards a new future where beaches become private and access is denied to the Public.

Yall also mention potential beach closures after storms and such. The beaches should never be closed, especially if the beach is fine, and it's your buildings that are damaged. To keep that stretch of beach closed because yall are doing work on your park interior goes against what the beach was deeded to yall for in the first place.

Remember, the Texas Open Beaches Act guarantees public beach access to our beaches. Don't be a part of the system that is slowly eroding away at that right. PINS is in a position of strength or be a stronghold for Texans and a pillar of the Texas Constitution. Of course we must all work together to keep the beach safe, clean, and usable; but closures are never in the best interest of everyone.

Correspondence ID: 172 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 14:19:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: DPINS is the only place I go fishing with my husband. we drive and fish, some times as far as the 35 mm. I really have never found any problems with the system as it is. we have seen big crowds on special holiday only and have never thought of it as a problem. the beach is so long that it is never a problem to just dive

a little further down the beach to find a spot that is wide open.

Respectfully

Correspondence ID: 173 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 14:44:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I feel the direction that the Park Service wants to take is wrong in so many ways. Closing the beaches at Padre Island National Seashore during turtle nesting season (March thru June) and letting the Turtles depend on nature is a very bad move. 80% of turtle nests can be lost to predators such as coyotes, raccoons and opossums. Ridley Sea Turtles are on the endangered species list and have been making a comeback with the Turtle Program that is currently in place. The Turtle Releases attract many tourists that bring money to the local economy.

Another reason I oppose the closing to cars on the Padre Island Nation Seashore is that I am a resident who loves to visit the Seashore. I am handicap and rely on being able to drive onto the beach in order to enjoy it. It would be impossible to walk that far. I know that many of the local islanders rely on PINS in order to enjoy the beach during tourist season because the other, public beaches are just way too crowded.

This will not only be devastating to the turtles, but it will highly impact the residents and the local economy.

Correspondence ID: 174 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 17:57:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Prefer straight drive to open beach for driving. Walking area near pavillion...protect all nesting turtles.

Correspondence ID: 175 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 18:49:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The last review that was done did not include input from the leading expert, Donna Shaver. Her options and scientific input matter. The opinions of Florida scientist does not do our beach justice. The turtle program at PINS should continue as is, so that the turtle numbers can continue to GROW. Harvesting the eggs and hatching them is what has worked and is working until Brunneman tried to dismantle the program. Driving on the beach has always worked for the benefit of the turtles, the wildlife, and the overall daily existence of the beach. People are the eyes and ears of the beach. Fisherman, wildlife enthusiasts, surfers, photographers, trash picker uppers, etc. Our 60 miles of beach is the last stretch of coastal wilderness in the US. MY BIGGEST FEAR US THAT PEOPLE LIKE BRUNNEMAN are here to destroy it. Just like he destroyed the black footed ferret program and tried to dismantle the condor program. The people in South Texas LOVE our seashore and are BETTER stewards of the park than BRUNNEMAN could ever be. Can he explain the tides? The waves? Water temperature? Condition of the dune line? Wind speed? Rip current? Has he ever been to a public turtle releases. No on all accounts. Therefore, he and his buddies from the East Coast should have absolutely no say in what happens to our turtle program! Consideration of closing driving on the beach! Or any park plan. Local scientist should be part of a new review, and Donna's input should be included.

Correspondence ID: 176 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 19:29:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not support or agree with any type of closure or restricted access to the beach. I personally have traveled that beach hundreds of times and have never seen any reason to change anything now. I have personally rescued countless cold stunned sea turtles along with other birds/animals due to having full access to the beach. Restricting access to the beach in anyway would be a poor decision in so many ways and ultimately

have a poor effect on what makes PINS so great. Thank you for considering my opinion.

Correspondence ID: 177 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 19:36:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please note, I am not in favor of restricting vehicles on the beaches of PINS.

As for the budget for the turtle rescue, those funds need to be restored to properly funding the project. The releases that current Park management wants to severely limit, greatly limits public awareness of the turtles issues with survival. By getting as many eggs in protective care as possible helps the survival of the Kemps-Ridley Turtles.

Thank you for your attention in this matter,

Best regards,

Correspondence ID: 178 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 20:05:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Padre Island National Seashore is the pride and gem of our island. My husband and I made it a lifetime goal to live here. Generations of our family have enjoyed and appreciated the turtle program, fishing, camping, hiking, and all of the wildlife PINS has to offer. My children love and look forward to the turtle releases. We all participate in the beach clean ups and always make sure to take out anything that may wash up. Dr Donna is an absolute inspiration to them. They recognize and are excited to see her and the PINS staff even when the releases are on Whitecap. Please do not change the turtle program or restrict driving down South Beach. This would be absolutely devastating to my family personally, as well as the local economy. We deeply love PINS and want our future generations to value, conserve, and enjoy this truly magical place. I read the entire proposal from NPS, however I disagree that the changes are needed. Please do not change this place that we love and is key to our hearts.

Correspondence ID: 179 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 20:17:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My name is and I am 10 years old. If you stop turtle releases, I would be very sad. why would you do this? I love the turtles and nature, and we always look for the nests on the beach. When camped, turtle patrol was so nice, and when we fish we always wave. I always look forward to watching the turtle releases. Last year me and my dad caught so many fish on South Beach. Grand mommy was even with us and she was impressed. It would be so disappointing if people can't come from Austin or other places to see the turtles because my friends come down here for that. We always drive down to beach to fish and swim. Why would you change this? I do not understand but it would be really sad. Farewell, do not close the turtle program and keep letting us drive down the beach. Peace.

Correspondence ID: 180 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 20:25:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Park should remain open to vehicles driving down the beach and fishermen fishing down the beach . I think it is out right to do so. While the Park service manages the park, ultimately the park belongs to us the citizens. I really do believe that a change would be detrimental to the turtles. I truly believe the complete turtle program should be reinstated to keep the turtle population thriving.

Correspondence ID: 181 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 20:28:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My name is, and I am 7 (almost 8) years old. I would be super sad if you close the turtle program. I have 2 tortoises, and we always go see the turtle releases at PINS. Imagine driving 4 hours to not see the turtle release or be able to drive down the beach. We used to (and my friends still do) drive 4+ hours just to see the baby turtles. The coyotes are cool too. We always drive down South Beach and there are even deer. I live here now and PINS is our beach. We always fish and take our family from Michigan and Texas to PINS. Sometimes we take my dads truck just to pick up big things on the beach. Please do not take my turtles or beach. Love,

Correspondence ID: 182 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 20:38:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: If it ain't broke don't fix it.

That beach has been there for

1000'S OF YEAR AND WILL BE THERE 1000'S OF YEARS AFTER WERE GONE

SPEND MONEY ON HUMANS THEY NEED HELP IN YOUR CITY.

Correspondence ID: 183 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 21:37:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There are many different ways of doing business with the State of Texas and the private sectors that have interest in this geographic location in question. I personally don't have a financial gain in this matter but the future generations will have to accept our failures to protect the rights of every person who utilizes the rights of their predecessor that gave and encourages these rights and limitations with their powers of law. Please do not fail our future generations of beach enthusiasts who will have this opportunity to live in an American free Society as written by Law.

Correspondence ID: 184 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 21:44:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There are many different ways of doing business with the State of Texas and the private sectors that have interest in this geographic location in question. I personally don't have a financial gain in this matter but the future generations will have to accept our failures to protect the rights of every person who utilizes the rights of their predecessor that gave and encourages these rights and limitations with their powers of law. Please do not fail our future generations of beach enthusiasts who will have this opportunity to live in an American free Society as written by Law.

Correspondence ID: 185 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,21 2023 22:58:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The proposed pre-NEPA "meetings" were a joke! They were staged like a cocktail party without drinks where you walked around and spoke to Rangers who said things like, "There is no plan to stop driving on the beach." The Superintendent said the "meeting" was not to discuss the turtle program. He also said Dr. Donna Shaver could not attend because she was traveling. Both those statements are lies. The pre-NEPA document discusses the turtle program, so why were we told not to comment on it? Dr. Shaver was at home on the Island, two minutes from my house, so she could easily have attended if she was not under a gag order.

There is something terrible going on at Padre Island National Seashore. The new superintendent of Padre Island National Seashore, a man who is not a scientist, has endorsed a changes that will gut and defund the Kemp's ridley sea turtle program run by Dr. Donna Shaver, a celebrated scientist.

Although a Review gave them the authority to defund the sea turtle program (accomplished), leave all nests on the beach to be destroyed, and prevent driving on the beach, the National Park Service wrote it in such a way that some people thought there was no threat and did not believe us.

Now the National Park Service is clearly saying what they will do and are asking for public comment on their plans to destroy what makes Padre Island Seashore special. The National Park Service is speaking clearly because now they are sure YOU cannot stop them.

We believe they are working with a Texas State Legislator to revise the Texas Open Beaches Act to prevent a lawsuit over the changes. Although the news stories are about property owners, we believe the real purpose of the bill is to prevent lawsuits when Padre Island National Seashore closes driving on the beach.

This is something that non-locals do not understand. They think driving on the beach must be dangerous to the turtles. It is just the opposite. No turtles have been hit by cars, but many nesting or injured turtles are reported by visitors, allowing the turtles to be helped. The only practical way to get 20 miles down the beach to fish or bird watch is to drive!

We are also concerned that a local nonprofit will be cooperating with the National Park Service and Padre Island National Seashore to "whitewash" changes to the turtle program. In other words, this nonprofit will take over turtle management from the National Park Service scientists to make it look as if the turtle program is in good hands, while at the very same time taking unscientific actions that will decimate the turtle population.

**IF THE TURTLE NESTS ARE LEFT ON THE BEACH,
THEY WILL ALL BE DESTROYED.**

If not destroyed by our high tides, they will be 100% predated by coyotes, fire ants, opossums, or raccoons. Right now, the Kemp's ridley is our most endangered sea turtle. The only thing protecting this turtle is the collection of their sea turtle eggs, which are then monitored and released with as much protection as is possible.

Staff, Rangers, and volunteers make sure the beach is clear of predators and then they raise netting over the hatchlings as they make their necessary crawl across the sand to the sea. If the nests are left on the beach, there will be no eggs left to hatch and no other protection will be given as a hatchling makes that perilous crawl to the Gulf, if by some miracle an egg survives to hatch.

The two primary nesting locations for this most endangered of sea turtles are Padre Island National Seashore and a beach in Mexico. Reducing this program in Texas will put the entire Kemp's ridley species at even higher risk of extinction.

Dr. Shaver was not invited to contribute to or even read the Review or the new Pre-NEPA document which will destroy the sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore. She is the foremost authority on the Kemp's ridley turtle and it is her sea turtle program. Instead, she was preemptively placed under a gag order not to comment before the Review was ever released. Dr. Shaver, who is celebrated worldwide, is sacrificing her career in an effort to save these sea turtles.

SHE HAS BEEN UNDER A GAG ORDER FOR YEARS AND MUST ONLY SAY WHAT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ALLOWS HER TO SAY! She should be asked for comment.

Here is some of what is proposed in the Pre-NEPA document. There are a number of proposals in the document to camouflage what they are really going to do.

From the document - The Seashore is considering potential options for sea turtle management, including:

- Adjust research and operations (e.g., do not relocate every nest)-- THIS WILL KILL ALL THE HATCHLINGS.
- Strandings / rehabilitation / release of juvenile and adult rehabilitated turtles -

redefine extent of Seashore involvement and release locations--THIS IS THE WHITEWASH. They will turn over turtle management, I should say mismanagement, to a nonprofit.

- Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education --THEY ARE ALREADY DOING THIS. They have gone from 24 plus a year to 5 or fewer. Public education was the reason public releases were started in the first place! The hatchling releases were the biggest draw to the park. They do not want visitors to the park!

The Pre-NEPA document also addresses beach driving. Remember how the review spoke in coded language so people did not believe what we said was being said? Let us just put the changes to beach driving in our own words, not the coded language of the Pre-NEPA document. BEACH DRIVING WILL BE PROHIBITED APRIL THROUGH JULY. The rest of the year, you will pay a hefty surcharge.

Our National Seashore is 60 miles of undeveloped island beach. If you are not driving, you cannot go very far down that 60 miles to fish or birdwatch. We also believe this document could open the door to development on the Laguna Madre side of the beach, which is the area opposite the Gulf coast. Currently this is undeveloped National Park Service land and is an undisturbed eco-system that was in place before the Karankawa tribe was exterminated or displaced.

A way of life on Padre Island National Seashore is being threatened, not only for turtles, but also for tourists and residents. The sea turtles which nest at Padre Island National Seashore don't belong to the park or to Texas. They should be protected by the National Park Service which should be stewards for them. In this case, the stewardship has failed, so contact your Senators and Representatives and object to this travesty. An unspoiled area basically unchanged since recorded time will pass into history.

We demand this proposed changes be turned down.

If we save the park, we must amend the Padre Island National Seashore enabling legislation to include sea turtles, so future park management will be under a mandate to protect the program.

Correspondence ID: 186 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 05:33:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Pre-NEPA document makes 3 changes that will decimate the turtles, the attractive tourist draw.

1. Not relocating every nest, thus killing the hatchlings.
2. Turning over management--strandings, rehabs of adults, release of juveniles--to a nonprofit; how is this appropriate for a national park?
3. Holding even fewer releases, minimizing public education.

In addition, the Pre-NEPA document limits beach driving. The National Seashore is 60 miles of undeveloped island beach. If you are not driving, you cannot go very far down that 60 miles to fish or bird watch.

Could this document open the door to development on the Laguna Madre side of the beach, which is the area opposite the Gulf coast. Currently this is undeveloped National Park Service land and is an undisturbed eco-system that was in place before the Karankawa tribe was exterminated or displaced.

A way of life on Padre Island National Seashore is being threatened, not only for turtles, but also for tourists and residents.

Correspondence ID: 187 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 05:34:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leave everything the way it is. Closing the beaches will impact every business on the Island and Corpus Christi. Golf Cart and ATV Rentals and Sales. Food industry. HEB, IGA, Boat Rental and Sales, Fishing, Guides, Bait Shops, Hotels and Tentsls.
We would be come a South Padre Island. No, leave us the way we are. We love it here!!!

Correspondence ID: 188 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 05:37:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Malaquite beach is already vehicle free and it appears to me that the general public doesn't go further than a quarter mile down the beach. My suggestion is to turn the road that goes to the park ranger barracks into a beach access road which will access the beach somewhere in the middle of malaquite beach area. This road will now allow the public more access to an existing vehicle free area not in use.

Correspondence ID: 189 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 06:01:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This park should not be closed, this will ruin many lives including mine. I Coyotes will be so bad without traffic you won't have any turtles . We do our part to keep the turtles safe. We do OUR PART!! We should not be punished this way. That beach has been part of my life for 25 years and I will not let it go down hill. Best time to fish during those months I don't know what I would do without it. WE TAKE CARE OF THE TURTLES. DO NOT close the park down.
So many people will lose there lively hood . Fishing guides, Tourists. Don't take away our rights

Correspondence ID: 190 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 06:25:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I want funding for the sea turtle program and the right to drive on the beach. Do not take away what drives our tourism and are strong reasons why people move here. This is my home and I feel my representatives are always trying to ruin the good things we have. Shame on you.

Correspondence ID: 191 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 07:08:45

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It makes no sense to endanger the turtles. Beach driving has not hurt turtles, but has helped them. The turtle program with Dr. Shaver was working great! Closing beaches to driving will NOT be accepted in this town! It's people wanting to make more \$\$\$ money. So, NO! Keep beaches open. Tourists can go to the area that has no traffic - it is available now.

Correspondence ID: 192 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 07:46:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

In Response to National Park Services'

PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA

(<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=114475>)

22 February 2023

My comments are organized according to headings and subheadings within the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA. PAIS represents Padre Island National Seashore, Texas.

My initial, overarching comment is that National Park Service (NPS) should have used a pre-NEPA approach in 2020, rather than releasing its 2020 REVIEW of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program Padre Island

National Seashore.

NPS' 2020 REVIEW was recommended by Patrick Malone (Regional Chief, Natural Resources), reviewed and concurred by Jennifer Carpenter (Associate Regional Director, Resource Stewardship and Science), and approved on June 8, 2020 by Michael T. Reynolds (Regional Director, NPS Regional Office serving DOI Regions 6,7,8).

See: REVIEW of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program Padre Island National Seashore (https://www.nps.gov/pais/learn/management/upload/PAIS-STSR-Review-Report_20210507_FINALamended_508.pdf)

See: Ruch, Jeff. 2020. Park Service Slashes Sea Turtle Rescue Program. (<https://peer.org/park-service-slashes-sea-turtle-rescue-program/>)

See: Repanshek, Kurt. 2020. UPDATED | Funding Cuts Imperil Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Program At Padre Island National Seashore (<https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2020/07/updated-funding-cuts-imperil-kemps-ridley-sea-turtle-program-padre-island-national-seashore>)

Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program

To inform commenters, the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have included time series graphs of annual results from all research and conservation actions and activities conducted by the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program (STSRP) in each year during 1978-2022, to show whether and how they contributed to restoration and enhancement of the Kemp's ridley population's growth toward recovery, downlisting and delisting under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended. It should also have mentioned that Dr. Donna J. Shaver successfully supervised and managed the STSRP, until her roles were diminished following release of NPS' 2020 REVIEW of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program Padre Island National Seashore.

History of Sea Turtle Work at the Seashore

- In the 1970s, the Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) was on the brink of extinction. Historical literature should have been cited and discussed within the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA, to provide commenters with background information and context regarding Kemp's ridley reproduction and nesting along the western Gulf of Mexico (GoM) coast of Texas, during the years preceding and following initiation of the U.S.-Mexico Kemp's Ridley Restoration and Enhancement Program (KRREP) in 1978. NPS was a major participant and champion of the KRREP, along with other agencies of the U.S. and Mexico, in planning restoration and enhancement of Kemp's ridley reproduction and nesting along the GoM coasts of PAIS and Tamaulipas, Mexico. Restoration and enhancement of reproduction and nesting along the coast of PAIS was planned and conducted to provide a safety net for this species, in case its primary reproductive and nesting site along the western GoM coast of Tamaulipas was destroyed by natural or anthropogenic catastrophes. To my knowledge that purpose has not been changed.

See: Environmental Assessment/Review/Negative Declaration, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Ridley Turtle Populations. Playa de Rancho Nuevo, Mexico and Padre Island National Seashore, Texas 1978-1988 (https://docs.google.com/document/d/11AYjPec7E2bdJ1xINp1AjZa-s6giIqk5aw2g5fZ_U8g/edit)

See: Wauer, R.H. 1978. "Head start" for an endangered turtle. National Parks & Conservation Magazine, November 1978:16-20. (<http://www.npshistory.com/npca/magazine/nov-1978.pdf>)

See: Woody, Jack B. 1986. Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles. Pp. 918-931 In: Eno, Amos S. (Project Director), Roger L. Di Silvestro (Editor), and William J. Chandler (Research Director). Audubon Wildlife Report 1986, The National Audubon Society, New York, New York. 1094 pp.

See: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr. and André M. Landry, Jr. (Editors). 1989. Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Biology, Conservation, and Management, October 1-4, 1985, Galveston, Texas. TAMU-SG 89-105. 260 pp. (<https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/12397>)

See: Phillips, Pamela. 1989. The Great Ridley Rescue. Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, Montana. 180 pp. Copies of this out-of-print book are frequently offered online by used book sales companies (e.g., eBay).

See: Márquez M., René (Compiler). 1994. Synopsis of biological data on the Kemp's ridley turtle, *Lepidochelys kempi* (Garman, 1880). NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-343. 91 pp. (<https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/6184>)

See: Wauer, Roland H. 1999. Birder's Mexico. Texas A&M University Press, College Station, Texas. 304 pp. Although focused on birds, this book gives an account of Wauer's participation in the 1978 Kemp's ridley nesting season at Rancho Nuevo, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Wauer also described the native vegetation of the littoral and thorn forest zones existing at Rancho Nuevo in 1978.

See: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr. 2010. Hildebrand (1963): A Transcription and Translation. Marine Turtle Newsletter Archives.

(http://www.seaturtle.org/PDF/CaillouetCW_2010_Hildebrand1963ATranscriptionandTran.pdf)

See: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr. (Compiler). 2010. Marine Turtle Newsletter Articles On Status Of The Kemp's Ridley Population And Actions Taken Toward It Recovery.

(http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/special/MTN_Kemps.pdf)

See: National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and SEMARNAT. 2011. Bi-National Recovery Plan for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), Second Revision. National Marine Fisheries Service. Silver Spring, Maryland 156 pp. + appendices. (<https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/4368>)

See: Wauer, Roland H. 2014. My Wild Life: A Memoir of Adventures Within America's National Parks. Texas Tech University Press, Lubbock, Texas. 250 pp. (<https://www.ttupress.org/9780896728851/my-wild-life/>)

See: National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Protected Resources Silver Spring, Maryland and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Region Albuquerque, New Mexico. 2015. Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) 5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation. (<https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/17048>)

See: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr., Donna J. Shaver and André M. Landry, Jr. 2015. Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) Head-Start and Reintroduction to Padre Island National Seashore, Texas. Herpetological Conservation and Biology 10(Symposium):309-377.

(https://www.herpconbio.org/Volume_10/Symposium/Caillouet_etal_2015.pdf)

See: Shaver, Donna J. and Charles W. Caillouet, Jr. 2015. Reintroduction of Kemp's Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*) Sea Turtle to Padre Island National Seashore, Texas and its Connection to Head-starting. Herpetological Conservation and Biology 10(Symposium):378-435.

(https://www.herpconbio.org/Volume_10/Symposium/Shaver_caillouet_2015.pdf)

Predicted effects of global warming, climate change and sea level rise, should have been discussed within the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA. They are existential threats to Kemp's ridley and other sea turtle species. The annually recurring Kemp's ridley reproductive and nesting aggregation along the coast of PAIS in the most northerly of the three major Kemp's ridley reproductive and nesting aggregations, and it is the only one in the U.S. The one along the coast of Veracruz, Mexico is secondary in size, and the one along the coast of PAIS is tertiary in size. Kemp's ridley reproduction and nesting along the coast of Tamaulipas are the dominant sources of Kemp's ridley clutches and hatchlings in the world. The increasing threats of global warming, climate

change and sea level rise to the Kemp's ridley population's existence and recovery need NPS' attention and mitigative actions, rather than the changes proposed in the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA. Those changes will likely diminish the contribution of PAIS to Kemp's ridley population diversity, growth toward recovery, sustainability and resiliency.

The abstract of Laloë and Hays (2023) stated:

“How species respond to climate change may impact their extinction probability. Here we link climatology and ecology to tackle a globally important conservation question. For sea turtles, there are concerns that climate warming will cause both the feminization of populations as well as reduced hatchling survival. For 58 nesting sites across the world spanning all seven sea turtle species, we investigated whether warming might be avoided by shifts in nesting phenology to a cooler part of the year. We show that even with the most extreme phenological shift that has been reported to date—an 18-day advance in nesting per °C increase in sea surface temperature (SST)—temperatures will continue to increase at nesting sites with climate warming. We estimate that SST at nesting sites will rise by an average of 0.6°C (standard deviation = 0.9°C, n = 58) when we model a 1.5°C rise in SST combined with a best-case-scenario shift in nesting. Since sea turtles exhibit temperature-dependent sex determination, these temperature rises could lead to increasingly female-biased sex ratios as well as reduced hatchling production at sites across the world. These findings underscore concerns for the long-term survival of this iconic group.”

See: Laloë, Jacques-Olivier and Graeme C. Hays. 2023. Can a present-day thermal niche be preserved in a warming climate by a shift in phenology? A case study with sea turtles. *Royal Society Of Open Science* 10: 221002. (<https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.221002>)

In 2021, I wrote:

“If age-structured modeling shows abundance of neritic immatures to be excessive, then consideration should be given to translocating excess clutches from Tamaulipas to other beaches throughout the northern GoM, to bolster the existing nesting colony on the coast of Padre Island National Seashore, and to establish new ones. Nesting on GoM beaches north and east of Tamaulipas, and along the eastern coast of North America may eventually become more important to Kemp's ridley population growth, recovery, resiliency, diversity and sustainability as climate warms and sea level rises...”

See: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr. 2021. Substantial Reduction in Annual Production of Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Hatchlings on Beaches of Tamaulipas, Mexico May Allow Abundance of Adults to Increase. *Marine Turtle Newsletter* 163:1-7. (<http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/PDF/MTN163.pdf>)

As far as I am aware, there has been no age-structured modeling of the Kemp's ridley population that focused on determining whether abundance of neritic immatures is excessive. However, age-structured modeling by Arendt et al. (2022) showed (in their Figure 4) that annual abundance of neritic immature Kemp's ridleys (ages A1 to A9) increased at a much more rapid rate than did annual abundance of adults (ages A10+) during 1990-2010 within the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. Thereafter, annual abundances of neritic immatures and adults declined, while the annual proportion of adults increased.

See: Arendt, Michael D., R. Pearse Webster and Jeffrey A. Schwenter. 2022. High annual survival suggested by size structure of Kemp's ridley sea turtles captured by coastal research trawling in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean since 1990. *Endangered Species Research* 48:107-121. (<https://www.int-res.com/articles/esr2022/48/n048p107.pdf>)

See: Caillouet, Charles W. Jr., Scott W. Raborn; Donna J. Shaver; Nathan F. Putman; Benny J. Gallaway; Katherine L. Mansfield. 2018. Did Declining Carrying Capacity for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Population Within the Gulf of Mexico Contribute to the Nesting Setback in 2010–2017? *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* 17(1):123-133. (<https://doi.org/10.2744/CCB-1283.1>)

See: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr. and Benny J. Gallaway. 2020. Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Emigration and Immigration Between The Gulf Of Mexico And North Atlantic Ocean Should Not Be Ignored In Age-Structured Population Modeling. Marine Turtle Newsletter 161: 9-14. (<http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/PDF/MTN161.pdf>)

- In 1974, the first plan was implemented at the Seashore to establish a secondary Kemp's ridley nesting population.

See: National Park Service. 1974. Natural Resources Management Plan for Padre Island National Seashore. Prepared by PAIS Staff and Southwest Region Office of Natural Science. Division of Natural Sciences, Southwest Region, NPS, Department of Interior, 23 December 1974. Robert G. Whistler (PAIS) drafted this 5-year plan, Roland H. Wauer (Chief Scientist) recommended it, John W. Henneberger (Associate Regional Director, Professional Services) concurred, and T. R. Thompson (Acting Regional Director) approved it. All except Whistler were located in the NPS Southwest Region Office, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

National Park Service (1974) contained Project No. 9, entitled Atlantic Ridley Turtle Reestablishment. Project No. 9 is quoted verbatim in Caillouet, Shaver and Landry (2015) cited above.

- In 1978, the first bi-national action plan was implemented to protect Kemp's ridley populations in Playa de Rancho Nuevo, Mexico, where 99% of Kemp's ridley sea turtles nest, and the Seashore, which is the primary nesting area for Kemp's ridley in the United States.

See: Environmental Assessment/Review/Negative Declaration, Restoration and Enhancement of Atlantic Ridley Turtle Populations. Playa de Rancho Nuevo, Mexico and Padre Island National Seashore, Texas 1978-1988 (https://docs.google.com/document/d/11AYjPec7E2bdJ1xINp1AjZa-s6giIqk5aw2g5fZ_U8g/edit)

See: Caillouet, Charles W., Jr. 2021. Substantial Reduction in Annual Production of Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Hatchlings on Beaches of Tamaulipas, Mexico May Allow Abundance of Adults to Increase. Marine Turtle Newsletter 163:1-7. (<http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/PDF/MTN163.pdf>)

- The bi-national plan was last updated in 2011, and today the program continues to carry out many of these recovery tasks that started over 30 years ago.

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained what it referred to as “the bi-national plan”; updated in 2011. It could be the bi-national recovery plan: National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and SEMARNAT (2011) cited above, but this should have been made clear in the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA.

In 2023, the recovery tasks associated with KRREP had been ongoing for at least 44 years, along the GoM beaches of Tamaulipas and PAIS. Beginning in 2020, these tasks and their management began to be altered under NPS' REVIEW of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program Padre Island National Seashore (cited above).

Current Management of Sea Turtles at the Seashore The work of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery program is inside and outside the Seashore, studying and protecting all five species of sea turtles that nest here: Kemp's ridley, loggerhead, green, hawksbill, and leatherback. Efforts include:

- Turtle patrols and partners locate nesting turtles and collect eggs

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have indicated how successful those patrols and partners have been in locating nesting turtles and collecting their eggs in each year during 1978-2022.

- Staff at the corral and incubation facility care for turtle eggs until hatching

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have shown annual results for clutches incubated in the corral, incubation facility and left in situ in each year during 1978-2022.

- Staff and volunteers release hatchlings, including at events open to the public

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have shown results for annual numbers of hatchlings released from the corral, incubation facility and left in situ in each year during 1978-2022.

- Stranded turtles are taken to rehabilitation facilities

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have shown results for annual numbers of sea turtles (by species) rescued and taken to rehabilitation facilities in each year during 1978-2022. It should also have listed, described and given locations of those rehabilitation facilities.

- Staff conduct research on sea turtles

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have included links to sources of all publications and reports covering PAIS research on the following topics during 1978-2022:

- Nesting (mark-recapture tagging, genetics, disease occurrence)
- Stranding (necropsies, disease, entrapment, etc.)
- Authored and co-authored almost 200 research papers over the past 30 years

The Seashore is considering potential options for sea turtle management, including:

- Vary sea turtle patrols, including the timing, frequency, and methods

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained the scientific rationale for this option, based on statistical analyses of NPS data on the effects of timing and frequency of sea turtle patrols in each year during 1978-2022.

- Limit egg collection to within the park boundary

This may be a reasonable option, but the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have mentioned the NPS policy or requirement that all sea turtle clutches found on the Texas coast north of PAIS by non-NPS agencies, organizations and individuals be translocated to PAIS for incubation. The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should also have given the scientific justification for such policy or requirement, especially in the context of the threats of global warming and sea level rise.

Curiously, this policy apparently does not apply to clutches found south of PAIS by non-NPS agencies, organizations and individuals. The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have mentioned this difference in policy or requirement, as well as its scientific justification.

- Adaptively manage corral location to provide for hurricane resiliency

This is a reasonable option if its purpose is protection of clutches from negative impacts of hurricanes, but it is not clear what is meant by “adaptively manage corral location.” The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained what it intends to do regarding corral location that is different from what it has done in the past, with regard to providing resiliency of the corral from hurricanes.

- Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained NPS' rationale for holding fewer public hatchling releases and/or limiting crowd size. A focus on public education could be counterproductive to Kemp's ridley conservation and recovery, if it interferes with hatchlings reaching the GoM. However, the presence of public crowds could enhance survival of hatchlings during their crawls to the surf by preventing or discouraging and reducing natural predation on hatchlings. A comparison of results obtained from hatchling releases without public participation or viewing to hatchling releases with public participation or viewing should have been made by the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA for every year during 1978-2022. Allowing presence of the public during releases of hatchlings is very popular, and it contributes to NPS' and Texas' ecotourism.

- Adjust research and operations (e.g., do not relocate every nest)

Nests that are not found are not translocated. The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained its rationale for not translocating every nest that is found. Research is an essential component of NPS' actions and activities: "Parks are living laboratories where scientists ask questions and conduct research. Scientists observe and experiment. They learn from interactions of plants and animals in their natural environment. The National Park Service preserves the places and stories of discovery and uses what we learn through science to manage our natural and cultural resources."

See: (<https://www.nps.gov/nature/science-and-research.htm>).

A comparison of annual numbers and survival rates for clutches left in situ versus annual numbers and survival rates for clutches translocated to incubation facilities should have been included in the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA for every year during 1978-2022.

- Alternative incubation facility(s): in-park facility may not survive direct hit from hurricane

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have listed all PAIS' incubation facilities, along with their descriptions and locations, indicating which if not all are vulnerable to direct hits from hurricanes, and what changes are planned to protect them from hurricanes. Clutches left in situ are likely much more vulnerable to direct hits from hurricanes than those translocated to incubation facilities, depending on where those incubation facilities are located.

- Strandings / rehabilitation / release of juvenile and adult rehabilitated turtles - redefine extent of Seashore involvement and release locations

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained PAIS' past involvement in documenting strandings, rescuing and rehabilitating stranded sea turtles, and releasing rehabilitated juvenile and adult sea turtles, including release locations in every year during 1978-2022. It should have explained its reasons for redefining the extent of PAIS' involvement in these activities. It should have noted that Dr. Donna J. Shaver has been Texas' coordinator for the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network.

Ideas for Pilot Studies

To understand how we might manage sea turtles in the future, the Seashore is considering pilot studies. A goal of the Kemp's ridley bi-national action plan is for sea turtles to exist without human assistance. Currently, sea turtle eggs are reared at the incubation facility or corral so that natural processes like predation, inundation, and other threats are eliminated. Pilot studies can help us understand if we can protect against predation, inundation, and other threats with less human intervention.

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have provided results of what it has accomplished toward Kemp's ridley restoration and recovery by human intervention in each year during 1978-2022. It should have explained what it referred to as the "Kemp's ridley bi-national action plan." Was it the bi-national recovery plan (National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and SEMARNAT (2011), cited

above? If so, that plan needs updating and revision. A 5-year review of Kemp's ridley was initiated in 2021, but it has not been completed. Therefore, at this time, changing PAIS' management of sea turtles seems premature. The Kemp's ridley population abruptly ceased increasing in 2010, the year in which the Deepwater Horizon oil spill occurred in the northern GoM, but the causes of this setback have not been determined with certainty. If NPS changes its management of sea turtles at this time, the consequences likely will be counterproductive to the goal of the "Kemp's ridley bi-national action Plan"; i.e., for sea turtles to exist without human assistance. Kemp's ridley is the most endangered of the sea turtles, and it is considered critically endangered by IUCN. The Kemp's ridley population has not yet reached a level where it can be considered for downlisting to threatened status, much less expected to exist without human assistance.

Potential Pilot Study 1: In-situ nesting - can predation be reduced without moving eggs?

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have provided results on its past comparisons of hatchling production by clutches left in situ versus clutches translocated to the corral or hatchery facilities, as well as results on survival of hatchlings (from these two groups) during their crawl to the surf. Obviously, predators are not the only threats to clutches left in situ. Survival of eggs within in situ clutches no doubt is much lower than that in clutches translocated to the corral or hatchery facilities, and the same is true for hatchlings during their crawl to the surf.

Test predation mitigation measures for effectiveness in the protection of Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests at the Seashore. Study areas would be Malaquite Beach and/or near the research cabin (40 MM).

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained why this pilot study is limited to Malaquite Beach and/or the research cabin. It should also have explained what kinds of predation mitigation measures would be tested for effectiveness. Again, predation is not the only threat to in situ clutches and hatchlings produced from them. Other threats to in situ clutches and hatchlings should be included under this option.

Is NPS considering termination of translocations of clutches found beyond the boundaries of Malaquite Beach and/or near the research cabin?

Potential Pilot Study 2: Does moving nests protect them from inundation, or flooding?

It depends on the location to which the clutches are translocated. The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained where clutches would be located after translocation. Location to which clutches are translocation should be included under this option.

Inundation, or flooding, of nests can kill the eggs, depending on how long the nest is under water. Would relocating the nests higher on the beach improve chances for survival? This measure has been successful elsewhere for other sea turtle species. Study areas would be Malaquite Beach and/or near the research cabin (40 MM).

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have explained why this pilot study is limited to Malaquite Beach and/or near the research cabin. Effectiveness of translocating clutches to locations higher on the beach will depend on whether they receive protection from predators and other threats in the new locations.

Is NPS considering termination of translocations of clutches found beyond the boundaries of Malaquite Beach and/or near the research cabin?

Potential Pilot Study 3: Remove or reduce NPS vehicles from Malaquite Beach, except for emergency use.

Malaquite Beach is closed to visitor driving. NPS staff drive here, potentially impacting wildlife and visitor

experience. Would reducing NPS vehicle use improve the visitor experience and better protect sea turtles, in-situ nests, and other wildlife? Exceptions would be allowed for emergencies.

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have listed and characterized what it considers to be emergency use of NPS vehicles. Protections of nesters, clutches and hatchlings are needed only during the reproductive and nesting season. Also, the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should acknowledge that some of the changes in vehicle driving on beaches of PAIS that NPS is considering may be constrained or prohibited by Texas' Open Beach Act as amended.

See: (<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/NR/htm/NR.61.htm>)

See: Rolling Easements & the Texas Open Beaches Act ([https://coastalresilience.tamu.edu/home/wetland-protection/policy-framework/bay-and-ocean-side-submerged-lands-some-fundamental-differences-in-law-and-management/the-texas-open-beaches-act-an-exceptional-example-of-a-rolling-easement/#:~:text=The Texas Open Beaches Act \(TOBA\) was passed,of vegetation and the mean low tide line](https://coastalresilience.tamu.edu/home/wetland-protection/policy-framework/bay-and-ocean-side-submerged-lands-some-fundamental-differences-in-law-and-management/the-texas-open-beaches-act-an-exceptional-example-of-a-rolling-easement/#:~:text=The Texas Open Beaches Act (TOBA) was passed,of vegetation and the mean low tide line))

Potential Pilot Study 4: Would unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology be effective monitoring for nesting sea turtles?

This is an excellent consideration, but the PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have cited literature covering use of UAVs to monitor abundance and distribution of sea turtles. UAVs used for monitoring of sea turtles, both on PAIS beaches and in adjoining waters may provide threats to other natural species and humans.

See: Rees, Allen F. et al. 2018. The potential of unmanned aerial systems for sea turtle research and conservation: A review and future directions. *Endangered Species Research* 35: 81-100.
(<https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10161/19302/Potential of UAS.pdf?sequence=2>)

The PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA should have cited the studies conducted by Dr. Thane Wibbels and others along the coast of Tamaulipas regarding the use of UAV monitoring of abundance and distribution of adult Kemp's ridleys, crawls and nestings on beaches, and in adjoining coastal waters.

Unfortunately, I was unable to access the Gladys Porter Zoo Annual Report or Reports in which these studies and their results are included. However, PAIS likely has the report or reports in its possession.

However, the use of UAVs for such monitoring is still experimental, and such techniques will require ground-truthing by beach patrols.

Sand Management

Being a barrier island, sand is constantly shifting, impacting access to Seashore roads and facilities. The Seashore moves large quantities of sand. This requires effort and heavy construction equipment that can impact resources and visitor experience. The Seashore may explore options for sand management.

It is reasonable and important for NPS to explore options for sand management and the impacts of sand management options on sea turtles, their clutches and hatchlings at PAIS. Some of NPS' changes in sand management may be constrained or prohibited by Texas' Open Beach Act as amended.

Potential option: North Beach Access Improvements

North Beach Access requires regular maintenance to keep access open. Erosion causes holes, ponding, and other problems. Improvements to the South Beach Access improved similar issues there. Improvement measures could similarly improve North Beach Access.

It is reasonable and important for NPS to improve South Beach Access and North Beach Access, and to assess the

impacts of those improvements on sea turtles, their clutches and hatchlings at PAIS. Some of NPS' changes in sand management may be constrained or prohibited by Texas' Open Beach Act as amended.

Potential option: Adjust current sand management to be more protective of sensitive habitats.

It is reasonable and important for NPS to adjust sand management to be more protective of sensitive habitats as well as sea turtles, their clutches and hatchlings at PAIS. Some of NPS' changes in sand management may be constrained or prohibited by Texas' Open Beach Act as amended.

Currently, sand management does not specifically address habitat protection.

Integrating maps of sand management activities with maps of sensitive habitats could enable the Seashore to better protect these resources.

It is reasonable and important for NPS to integrate maps of sand management activities with maps of sensitive habitats to enable the Seashore to better protect such resources, especially sea turtles, their clutches and hatchlings at PAIS. Some of NPS' changes in sand management may be constrained or prohibited by Texas' Open Beach Act as amended.

Beach Driving

The Seashore's Gulf beach is divided into three areas:

- North Beach
- Malaquite Beach
- South Beach

Driving allows visitors access to opportunities for beach recreation, such as beachcombing, swimming, picnicking, camping, sunbathing, fishing, and bird and other wildlife watching, in a comparatively pristine and solitary environment; but can also impact visitors' experience if they prefer a non-motorized experience.

As visitation increases, the number of vehicles can also be expected to increase. The National Park Service is obligated to assess visitor capacity to protect resources and visitor experience. Once capacity is determined, if visitation exceeds capacity, the Seashore may need to take action. Would changes to the current driving program better protect visitor experience and Seashore resources?

Potential option: Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience.

Potential option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island.

It is reasonable and important for NPS to assess visitor capacity at PAIS to determine the need for beach driving permits, to protect visitor experience and to better protect sensitive resources, especially sea turtles, their clutches and hatchlings. Some of NPS' changes in beach driving may be constrained or prohibited by Texas' Open Beach Act as amended.

- Moving vehicles headed down island to a back road could improve visitor experience and safety for visitors recreating in the first five miles of the Seashore and for visitors traveling down island.

No Comment.

Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience

Some of NPS' changes in vehicle access may be constrained or prohibited by Texas' Open Beach Act as amended.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures

The Seashore's Hurricane Response Plan provides direction for closures before a hurricane but does not provide guidance for re-opening. Options for managing the Seashore after hurricanes include varying levels of documentation and recovery before re-opening to ensure staff and visitor safety and to protect resources. If facilities are damaged or destroyed, the park will assess whether to repair, rebuild, or permanently remove them.

Potential option: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only

- Re-open the Seashore after an initial safety and resource check and basic visitor safety is provided.

This seems reasonable.

- Limited facilities would be available as repairs and clean up continue.

This seems reasonable.

Potential option: Similar to the Hurricane Hanna Response

Keep the Seashore closed until staff records the conditions of infrastructure, facilities, and resources (closure time would depend on the severity of impacts). Open facilities in the following order:

- Front country, visitor center, and boardwalk (beaches remain closed).
- Other facilities as storm impacts are documented.
- Criteria for opening areas include safety, resource protection, and public preference.

All of this seems reasonable.

Potential option: Similar to Hurricane Hanna response, but areas would open earlier.

- Record damage in front country, then open (beaches may remain closed).

This seems reasonable.

- Document damage at other areas, then open other facilities as work continues.

Potential option: Remain closed until all facilities and infrastructure are repaired, clean-up is completed, and resources are surveyed.

This seems reasonable.

Marine Debris

The Seashore is located where two currents within the Gulf of Mexico converge, bringing large volumes of marine debris to the shores of Padre Island. These currents carry debris until they collide with opposing currents, often offshore of Padre Island, pushing marine debris onto the beach. Large marine debris that washes onto the beach includes buoys, drums, boats or boat pieces, and tanks. Removal of large debris is usually completed by park maintenance staff. Several annual and on-going volunteer efforts help reduce small- and medium sized debris.

Potential option: Increase beach clean-up activities with local organizations.

- Coordinate volunteers
- Coordinate removal of collected garbage

All of this seems necessary and reasonable.

Potential option: Consider ways to market trash cleanup and reduce trash left by visitors.

This seems reasonable.

Potential option: Consider bi- or multi-lateral agreements at both the state level and the international level to address the source of marine debris, as most of the marine debris that washes onto the Seashore comes from offshore.

This seems reasonable, but enforcement of prohibitions on beachgoers leaving trash on the beaches is also needed.

Correspondence ID: 193 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
 Received: Feb,22 2023 08:01:56
 Correspondence Type: Web Form
 Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern:

It has been brought to my attention that the National Park Service is considering dismantling the Padre Island National Seashore Sea Turtle Restoration program. The dismantling of this legacy program would be detrimental to the community as the significant amount of eco-tourism dollars would be halted as well as a beloved tourist attraction would vanish.

Not only would this affect small businesses, but it would affect the amount of tourist that come to Padre Island National Seashore Beaches. It would also be detrimental to one the most endangered species of Sea Turtles, the Kemp Ridley. The Padre Island National Seashore is home to the species and tourist from across the nation come to the Seashore to witness the releasing of these incredibly, and some may consider, rare, Sea Turtles.

The closure of the Sea Turtle Restoration Program and the elimination of beach accessibility by motor vehicle will be devastating to this community, the Kemp Ridley Sea Turtles, and all the Sea Turtles who nest at the Padre Island National Seashore.

I urge you to continue with the Sea Turtle Restoration program and to not eliminate or hinder the beach accessibility, in any way, as the Sea Turtle program and the Seashores are the heart of this community. Attached is the resolution passed unanimously by the Nueces County Commissioners Court expressing our overwhelming support for the Sea Turtle Program.

Correspondence ID: 194 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
 Received: Feb,22 2023 08:51:16
 Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My husband and I regularly spend time at the PINS beach. Do not close public access! We are VERY aware of the turtles, turtle tracks and other wildlife. In 20 years of driving the beach we've never been involved with any animal accidents nor have we ever seen anyone involved with an accident with any animals. People are very aware and keep an eye open for the wildlife, in fact many people are slowly driving just for viewing wildlife and birds.

Correspondence ID: 195 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
 Received: Feb,22 2023 08:56:16
 Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Protecting our environment should be our first priority. The enjoyment of use of the beach should be our second priority.

More and more people are visiting our National Parks. People want to get out and enjoy the outdoors. However, the more people visit, the more wear and tear occurs on our parks. Management of the influx of people is important and should be considered.

In addition, please keep our sea turtle program! It is such a critical program and is a wonderful asset for our local community. The sea turtle program is beneficial to both the animals and the visitors of our the park.

Correspondence ID: 196 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 09:00:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please leave Padre Island National Seashore alone.. it's worthless to not have beach driving access. Thousands of people fish there , watch the wildlife, camp, just hang out and enjoy the wildness of it. Those people, me, spend lots of money every year in town and at the park. We don't need more development,. There's plenty of that every where else. That simple fact makes the wild nature of PINS even more valuable in the long run. I'm uncertain of the real story but in indeed smells of corruption in the political ranks from city, to county, to state and beyond. A slow methodical campaign to strip a bit of access here,, close down a part there all to push us plebs out. It's sand and nature let us keep that as it is.

Correspondence ID: 197 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 09:02:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We are in I favor of keeping PINS beaches open to vehicle driving and continuing Dr Shaver's turtle research and the beach management that we have supported in the past. The Turtle Releases draw thousands of spectators and are an educational experience for people of all ages.. The open beaches draw fishermen and Shelling enthusiasts to the beach. People move to the Island because of these opportunities. Please continue to keep Dr Shaver at PINS and allow her to continue her research.

Correspondence ID: 198 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 09:46:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 1. Do not shut the seashore down to driving. It is the fisherman, surfers, campers, wildlife enthusiast, photographers, families, trash picker uppers, and turtle lovers that have eyes and ears on that stretch of beach. If anything, we need more Park Rangers involved and knowledgeable regarding the seashore. Rangers who can help educate the public about the flora and fauna. Our seashore should be more inviting than limiting.
2. The PINS turtle program has been a successful program. It has taught stewardship to millions of park goers over the years. The turtle populations BENEFIT WORLDWIDE from the knowledge gained and shared internationally. It is NOT an improvement to shut it down or put limits on it. Leaving an endangered species to FEND FOR ITSELF is absolutely ridiculous. Stand behind the science that this program has followed. (You have the plan that works!!! Follow it!!! Why do you need to reinvent the wheel for a plan when you have a plan that works)?
3. The NPS, the superintendent, the rangers need to be more forthcoming with information about park planning. (REGAIN THE TRUST OF THE CITIZENS)

Correspondence ID: 199 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 10:09:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As it pertains to the potential of limiting access to PINS, I disagree with the idea that eliminating access will improve wildlife sustainability in the area. With the amount of conservation minded individuals that enjoy PINS and help protect, rescue and report troubled wildlife, there is no way that a handful of park rangers could patrol the area effectively at the same level that the people that enjoy PINS every day. While I recognize that there are people that abuse this amazing natural resource, those people should be targeted

individually rather than eliminating access to all else who enjoy and protect it. In my opinion, an annual access pass that could be purchased on an annual basis could help fund conservation efforts and greater ranger presence in the park.

Correspondence ID: 200 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 11:16:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Your statement that PINS currently has no beach management plan is ludicrous on its face. You would have us believe you've been flying blind all these years?!

I am not in favor of eliminating public driving on the beach, but would support vehicle free areas that don't preclude access down the beach.

I am not in favor of any efforts to reduce, eliminate or minimize the turtle program. It's has been a source of public engagement, education and pride for years. What the heck is up with all the nasty comments I see in public media regarding squashing a \$300k grant won by Dr Shaver, but rejected by a new superintendent? Makes no sense and failing to address it transparently just casts a really negative hue on park management.

The responses I've seen on the PINS (Padre Island Neighbors)Facebook page are concerning. Requesting public comment on a proposed plan without publishing the proposed plan is a waste of our time. I looked and looked online for the "proposed" plan but was unable to find one. What exactly are we commenting on, rumor?

Thanks,

Correspondence ID: 201 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 11:49:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am very concerned about the sea turtles!! I have read that you are not going to protect there beaches from human interference. I am horrified and disgusted by the Texan government for their lack of action and protect of the voiceless! Why does the Texan government hate turtles? We know it is more important than ever to protect our planets plants and animals over human greed... this is perfect example were humans must step up no question!! The lack of protection is not ok!! Texas step up and you must do more! Show the world that Texas isn't just an anti female rights/ climate killing state... prove to the world you actually care about wildlife! Do all you can to protect the turtle now!!! No to human greed, the planet is MORE important always!! The world is watching Texas!!

Correspondence ID: 202 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 12:34:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I grew up in Corpus Christi, spending all of my beach days on the National Seashore due to the fact it was quiet, peaceful and relaxing. It is a natural shoreline, not polished and cleaned like Port Aransas beaches. We still visit the National Seashore on a regular basis, it is our favorite beach to explore, fish from the shore, or in my case, read a book while listening to the waves. We drive out to Big Shell regularly because I can search for shells and my family fishes.

Growing up, we did see many sea turtles at the beaches or at Port A jetties. Now, over the past 10 -15 years, there are sea turtles everywhere! It is amazing and fun to watch how they have bounced back through the years of conservation efforts from local organizations and the awareness for beach goers who may not be aware of the turtles. Closing the beaches and changing who is in charge of sea turtle conservation does not seem like the best response to conserving the beaches.

As for debris control, there are regular beach clean ups on Big Shell that were implemented by Billy Sandifer and

continue to this day in his name. These localized clean up efforts organized citizens to keep their open, natural beaches clear of debris. Those of us who go to the beach clean up what we can while we are there. Perhaps, instead of trying to wipe the beaches clean of debris, you can send out reusable mesh bags, like St Joe Island does, and encourage beach goers to fill the bag and bring it to a drop off location. This would help minimize some of the smaller debris. I realize there have been some rather large debris items on the beach: the boat, the buoy, various pieces of wood, logs, etc. (it does make for a fun drive to see what made it up) but those clean up efforts for those items occurs with some of these beach clean ups, depending on the weight and size. (the buoy and boat are another issue)

Closing the beaches down for months at a time is not a good solution for anyone. Texas has the open beaches act for a reason; to keep our beaches available to the citizens of Texas. Please keep it that way so we can enjoy nature and the shoreline.

There is a proposal for a road to be maintained that will connect to the beach further down for those of us who drive miles down the beach to Big Shell and beyond. If the road is maintained, then this would serve as a way for those of us traveling long distances to avoid driving on the first few miles of the beach. Those beach goers who only want to be at the first few miles, will have less traffic and less folks driving through their fun day at the beach.

Much like cities, the park should open each portion that it can after a hurricane. No city stays shut down until the entire city is back to pre-hurricane status, so the National Seashore should follow suit. Clean up efforts can be community based, folks want to help out where they can after a storm, so utilize those groups. When it is safe, open those parts of the park and keep working on the others.

I respectfully submit my comments and hope that you will take all views of the issue into consideration as you make these plans. Please keep our beach open to driving all year long. It is one of the happiest moments for me and my family to drive down the beach. It is serene and beautiful. It is my happy place.

Correspondence ID: 203 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 12:51:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please keep the beach and park pretty much as is!! There are thousands of families that enjoy driving down the beach to explore and see the beauty of the National Park. Big Shell, Little Shell, Mansfield cut are things we grew up with. Leave them alone!! if need be set up some type of maintenance program to keep beach in shape, add additional camping fees or access fees on top of Park Pass. And PLEASE SAVE THE TURTLES.

Correspondence ID: 204 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 13:39:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I never saw any issues with the turtle program when Donna was running it and from my understanding it was funded by grants and donations! As a Fisherman that frequently visits the national seashore and always purchase a yearly pass I personally have turned in information on located turtle nests and the eggs were collected as have many other Fisherman up and down the beach. If you are trying to restrict access to the islands beach and surf I'm thinking of just how much revenue you would loose from just the surf fishing community which I would bet is over 75% of your total revenue! I myself and other surf anglers would probably just find other places to fish and spend our money! I'm willing to actually pay more per year just to keep our beach access open 12 months out of the year and which could fund many more programs! No access no revenue!!!

Correspondence ID: 205 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 14:08:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have read The Review of the Turtle Program from a few years ago and it seems like some of the proposals listed are taken from that document. For instance :"vary sea turtle patrols" is listed in the Review as limiting patrols to 5 days a week. I don't think a study is needed to prove that lessening the number of patrols per week will lessen the number of nests found and the subsequent number of hatchlings produced. This is not keeping with the mission of increasing the Kemp's ridley species to provide the necessary safety net PAIS agreed to be.

Correspondence ID: 206 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 14:09:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have read The Review of the Turtle Program from a few years ago and it seems like some of the proposals listed are taken from that document. For instance :"vary sea turtle patrols" is listed in the Review as limiting patrols to 5 days a week. I don't think a study is needed to prove that lessening the number of patrols per week will lessen the number of nests found and the subsequent number of hatchlings produced. This is not keeping with the mission of increasing the Kemp's ridley species to provide the necessary safety net PAIS agreed to be.

Correspondence ID: 207 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 14:38:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Capacity Limits are Maybe Not the Best Ideal Unless in the Millions a Year. The Closings from "Expected Tides" is Maybe a Bit Off from Reality.

Correspondence ID: 208 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 14:50:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The sea turtle program that was initiated 30 years ago due to possible extinction was put in place obviously because leaving the turtle nests to themselves led them down that path. This program is invaluable to the Kemp's Ridley species and a marketable asset for the National Seashore. Adding educational programs around this could better fund the program and so no changes would need to be made to it. Closing the beaches to driving is also not a great way to market the National Seashore. It would appear to me that this is another means of Corpus Christi moving backward instead of forward. Why isn't the college involved in research for the national seashore? Why aren't you applying for federal grants to conduct your research? Management of our assets needs to take precedence. Our turtle program is priceless.

Correspondence ID: 209 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 14:56:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am writing in response to the National Seashore beach management plan. I am unable to attend the public meetings for health reasons, but I'm handicapped and the national seashore beach is very important to me and to my health. I would like to address three problems at the national seashore.

Problem #1:

PINS Superintendent Eric Brunnemann and NPS Regional Director Mike Reynolds are trying to kill Kemp's Ridley sea turtles, one of the most endangered species of sea turtles in the ocean, by restricting and reducing the work of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program directed by Dr. Donna Shaver. Instead of commending Dr. Shaver for her incredible 30 years of work in restoring the secondary nesting sites of the world's smallest and most critically endangered sea turtles, Brunnemann has done nothing but try to kill the program since he arrived in 2020. Yes, I believe in natural habitats, but when humans are one of the biggest threats to the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, then we as humans must also step forward and be part of the solution to their endangerment. Dr. Shaver has done this. Instead of trying to destroy her program, the National Park Service should be showering her with

awards and financial support. Texas is the only state in the U. S. where Kemp's Ridley sea turtles are native. The Gulf of Mexico is one of the major nesting areas. Saving the Kemp's Ridley sea turtles should be one of the primary concerns and projects of the National Park Service. Humans are the biggest danger to the Kemp's Ridley sea turtles: boats, nets, propellers, fishing gear, oil spills, trash, plastic, dogs running free on the beach digging up eggs.... every single one of these dangers is caused by humans. If you do not think boats are a problem, go down to the Texas State Aquarium and look at the injured turtles. Climate change and the hotter sand is also an endangerment to the nesting areas. We do not need Brunnemann to destroy Dr. Shaver's Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program. What we need is for her to be given more support and financial backing. The very survival of the Kemp's Ridley sea turtles depends on people like Dr. Shaver and her team. Please do not murder the Kemp's Ridley sea turtles.

Problem #2:

Since PINS Superintendent Eric Brunnemann arrived in April of 2020, Padre Island National Seashore, particularly Malaquite Beach, has gone downhill. We have a major dog problem. Yes, we have a leash law at Malaquite Beach, but, as one woman explained to me, "the Rangers do not care, and they will not do anything about my dog being off leash." Unfortunately, the lady was correct. I've almost been bitten twice, I have been knocked down in the water by a big dog jumping on me, and I have seen a person take a dog off leash right in front of a Ranger--the Ranger did nothing. This was not a problem before Brunnemann arrived in 2020. Yes, I understand that people see the Ranger arriving in the white pickup and put their dog back on a leash. Then, take the dog back off leash as soon as the Ranger drives on by. Perhaps if the Rangers actually patrolled the beach, it would help. We rarely have Ranger patrols on the beach anymore. I walk on Malaquite Beach 3 to 5 times a week in the morning, sometimes afternoons, and sometimes early evening. In the last three months, I have only seen two Rangers even pretending to patrol on the beach. Why can we not have a Ranger patrol on a bicycle? Or perhaps, the solution is that we need a new superintendent. Maybe it is time for Brunnemann to go to a different national park. I understand he was moved here because of problems at his previous position. He has caused enough problems for us. It is time for a new superintendent.

Problem #3:

Beach access is very important for those of us who are handicapped. On October 28, 2021, I was told to "go to another beach" by Kelly Taylor and Joe Roberts of the NPS because I cannot climb the ramp at the Malaquite Visitor Center. Handicapped parking is not available connected to the road that actually leads down to the beach. Handicapped parking is only available for the ramp at the visitor center. I have a permanent handicap, but I am still able to walk. I cannot climb stairs, ramps, or inclines. I cannot even step up on a curb. I have a congenital bone disease, degenerative disc disease, and degenerative joint disease. I walk on the beach at Padre Island National Seashore 3 to 5 times a week as part of my physical therapy as prescribed by doctors. If I do not keep walking, I will be permanently paralyzed. My husband and I moved to Padre Island so that I could walk on the beach. If you close road access to the "south area," I cannot get on the beach. Not every handicapped person can manage a ramp. Yes, I know that there is a problem in the south area. It is a problem because you let people park on both sides of the road going down to the ocean and because you let people put trailers and campers parallel to the steel posts. These are not people with handicaps. These are people who want to avoid paying the camping fee at the campground. Yes, controlling parking right next to the steel posts, improved sand removal where the concrete and beach connect, and, again, improved Ranger patrols could possibly slow down the speed of the drivers. I actually saw a man walking with a cane up to the restroom almost get run over. There was no place to walk because Rangers were allowing cars to park on both sides of the road. I even spoke to a Ranger about the problem--nothing. The Jeep that almost ran over the poor man with a cane was definitely speeding.

My husband and I have always been strong supporters of national parks. My father-in-law even worked for the National Park Service as a lawyer. We love Padre Island National Park and the sea turtles. Please do not destroy our park.

Correspondence ID: 210 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,22 2023 15:04:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: PAIS is trying to say that they're being transparent about their plans, but that isn't true. If they were being transparent, they would give a presentation and allow questions and answer them. Most importantly, they would allow Dr. Shaver to speak publicly. Instead of listening to Dr. Shaver who is a recognized expert on Kemps Ridley sea turtles, they are listening to the Florida people. PAIS is trying to shut down the turtle program and everything else they're talking about is just a smokescreen.

Correspondence ID: 211 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 16:45:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We come year round ,please keep the beach like it is. No need to change the way things are now. Closing the beach for this long will definitely hurt our local economy, tourism amd our Mom and Pop shops and services. The turtle program in place is fine. We have 2 ppl handicapped in pur family and not being able to drive on beach will exclude them from all our family functions and visits.

Thanks,

Correspondence ID: 212 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 19:37:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Give the Seashore back to the state. Since its been federally maintained its been nothing but problems. Closing any portion of the shoreline is not an option for any reason. Go close the border instead and do something useful.

Correspondence ID: 213 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 19:41:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I feel that the way it is now is acceptable. Free rights to drive on the beach and Donna's program for the sea turtles is ver much an active part. Everyone can coexist. Stop trying to scare people into changing the perfectly good way it is now.

Correspondence ID: 214 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 20:36:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This is about driving on the beaches. All of a sudden this turtle thing and driving on the beaches is a problem? Why all of a sudden? Wasn't there as already an area where they lay eggs, hatch and return to the water? Yes.

Stop making up stuff as an excuse to pull a power play and take away from the people. Government should always be "For The People", and that's constitutional, the declaration of independence, biblical, and God given rights.

Start acting like a government for the people, or leave your positions immediately. We have enough problems with government, you probably didn't notice.

Correspondence ID: 215 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023 20:49:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Having a few strategic beaches with no driving for a few miles would enhance the seashore experience. It could also benefit wildlife. If the beach bypass roads are designed properly safety could be improved.

Changes to the successful sea turtle program are a terrible idea. I agree with Texas A&M University-Corpus

Christi researcher Philippe Tissot who said he doesn't see the need to change it.

Thank you for the informative open house sessions. The park's team was cordial and improved my understanding of the complex issues. A special thank you to John and Natalie.

Correspondence ID: 216 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 04:22:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please don't make major rule changes to PINS! We all love driving down the beach, fishing, swimming, etc. As mentioned by other commenters, people really do care for the sea life and frequently call the turtle hotline. One MAJOR improvement needed is cell service signal for emergencies. After more than a few miles, if anything happens medically, people are on their own unless a passerby stops or park ranger shows up. Maybe put together a team for literal beach maintenance purposes, solely cleanup, instead of relying on volunteers to make cleanup efforts all the time.

Correspondence ID: 217 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 05:15:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments from local citizen about the development of the Padre Island National Sea Shore Beach Plan 2/23/2023

The current turtle activities are unsustainable in the long run.

1. The current number of hours required to patrol such a large area of the beach, requirement for incubation, corral methods, and manual release of most of the turtles for so few Kemp's Riddley Turtle nests is financially unsustainable.
2. The constant 4 wheel traffic up and down the beach during nesting season disturbs bird populations and visitors. It also packs the sand and makes shelling more difficult as the vehicles often drive down the beach. Picking up of shells by the patrolling vehicles provides much competition to the shelling visitors.
3. The return on the investment with so few nests every year is questionable. For a supposed secondary nesting site in case the one in Mexico is damaged - This site is so spread out and limited returns of the 40+ years of hatchling release question its success. Yes we have some nesting turtles returning, but never in large enough number to leave the nests where they are and survive natural predation, and meteorological events. The small number of nesting turtles over such a huge area of beach makes leaving the nests unattended unviable. Local predation is high. The cost for number of returning turtles every year is very high.
4. The founding rules of the beach from the State of Texas maintained the beach driving is required. This was known when this beach was chosen a secondary site. Now the turtle group wants no driving during nesting season. A restricted speed limit or no driving during the nesting season will severely impact the recreational fishermen, beachcombers. and campers on the beach
5. Continue the static programing of the turtles and in person programing when available. The visitors really enjoy.
6. The Public release of turtle hatchlings is a good teaching tool. I would like to see more data about hatchling survival and numbers of returning hatchlings. There is a great deal of data being collected. It would be nice to see it organized in an accessible data base. Accessible to the public. Perhaps more outreach programing to schools and local organizations. Some of the past releases had so many people that access and information to the visitors was limited. More controlled and size limited releases will provide a better experience with more information to the visitor

Additional program at the seashore

Birding

1. We are in one of the highest bird migration corridors in the nation and there should be more emphasis on

birding during the migration season.

2. Static displays and in person programming for the visitors

Beach Combing

More programs/displays - identify places and what to beach comb. Programs to see what creatures are living on the beach and in the sand.

Plants

1. More botanical displays
2. More programming in the field with plants and insects
3. We have great botanical resources in house that need to be expanded to the visitors.

Historical

1. Open the historical sites up to easier visitor access. Finish the renovations that were started and not finished. Some static display or perhaps a periodic ranger program

Trash pickup.

We're doing a good job of trash pick up advertisement and providing trash bags. With displays of beach debris

Astronomy

Night sky programs. Certainly, take advantage of the annular eclipse.

Staffing

Keeping staff at full force seems to be a problem which really impacts programming

The National seashore is certainly a tourist destination for many including the local population. Any amenities to enhance their visit will make this a better park.

Correspondence ID: 218 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 06:30:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The beach belongs to the people of Texas, we let you operate it. Keep it open and allow us to drive on it or I will lead the movement to take it back.

Correspondence ID: 219 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 06:31:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Corpus Christi and a frequent visitor of the Seashore, i want to provide input on the proposed beach management changes.

Sand Management: Other than regular maintenance of access points, no changes needed.

Beach Driving: I completely oppose any restrictions to vehicular access to North and South Beaches, including the use of permits to regulate beach access, and the creation of new vehicle free areas. Malaquite beach already exists to fulfill the need for a pedestrian area. The idea of creating a bypass road to the 5MM is appealing, but I imagine the environmental issues involved in creating this road and access point will be prohibitive.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery: The Seashore should be reopened as soon as staff are able to verify that roads/access points are safe. Structures/facilities should be reopened in a similar manner.

Marine Debris: The National Park should continue to engage with volunteer groups and organizations such as the Billy Sandifer Big Shell Beach Cleanup and Sharkathon, and seek to create linkages with other volunteer groups as well. Given the limited staff at PINS, volunteers are absolutely necessary for cleanup of anything other than large debris.

I hope these comments are found useful, thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Correspondence ID: 220 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,23 2023 06:49:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Good morning,
Subject: PINS Beach Management Plan Public Input.
My discussion as follows;

Concerning Sand management Plan,

1. Identify wildlife areas of interest.
2. Designate sand spoil/ Reclamation/ storage areas.
3. Identify and plan maintenance activities and set frequencies to control.

Concerning vehicle access and control,

1. Use buss transport system to limit number of vehicles
2. Install bypass to allow for vehicle free sections of beach.

Concerning public safety,

1. Install solar powered call stations/ repeater.

Concerning Trash;

1. Recycling program.
2. Set up collection stations.

Concerning Native animals and habatatats;

1. Identify critical areas.
2. Set in place programs to create new.
3. set up viewing areas.

Hope this helps!

Correspondence ID: 221 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,23 2023 06:52:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: My opinions are:

A bypass road to the 5-mile marker might be useful.

Pedestrian-only areas on South Beach should not be an option ever. Pedestrians can enjoy Malaquite Beach or North Beach areas, but South Beach should remain entirely drive-able. That is a main reason why many people visit.

-thanks

Correspondence ID: 222 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 08:06:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I'm concerned about the plans to limit driving on Padre Island National Seashore. Not only does this violate the Texas Open Beaches Act (yes, I know it's a national park as well) but even without that, the plan limits access to our beach and park land.

NPS has stated it would consider creating an alternate road and pedestrian beach access. This is a detrimental plan to bring in construction to a pristine area where there has been little to no construction. Also, it seems you're encouraging construction for easier access which would bring larger crowds rather than actually preserve the area as it is.

I'm also a believer in keeping the long tradition of driving the open beach as it is. There's an allure to it that would be lost by building a different road, especially if it encroaches on the untouched dunes. Park Rangers have always been helpful and informative about driving conditions and answer questions so that individuals can make appropriate plans if they visit.

Lastly, it's been said this is to protect the sea turtles, but why were funds for the sea turtle release program already redirected to observe a less common species here? If protecting the sea turtles is the goal, why has NPS already begun dismantling the programs they do they?

I believe creating a different road and more pedestrian access further down the beach would actually hurt nature.

Overall, please keep the National seashore driving as it's been. Don't take away the public's right to explore on our own. I don't believe the government should encroach on that right. And it is a right! It's our land.

Thank you,

Beach lover, beach town resident for 10+years

Correspondence ID: 223 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 08:09:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leave it as is!

Correspondence ID: 224 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 08:41:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I wholeheartedly support an evaluation of beach management activities so to determine the level of plan required for the future management of PINS.

As a regular visitor to the park, I've witnessed the ever increasing population visiting the seashore. I have also seen the resulting damage to park resources from such heavy population influences, too. Is it time for the park to implement a "max capacity" on the number of 5th wheels and the like on the beach? A reservation system (similar to what's used at Big Bend and other NPS parks) could be an ideal solution for PINS. I'd also like to see restrictions on the bright lights adorned from each camper. Should the park consider a "dark sky" designation?

I am hopeful the NPS will continue to protect the sensitive back side of the island. It would be heartbreaking to see pristine flats destroyed by visitors who'd trample and litter this most precious resource.

Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 225 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 09:36:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There are SEVEN species of sea turtles in the entire world. ALL SEVEN ARE ENDANGERED. I thought the e national park system was supposed to be good stewards of our environment. How can you be if you treat the leading turtle scientist like someone who should be swept under the rug. Put the turtle program back into place as it should be. Let the scientist do her job. Continue working internationally to support the turtle numbers. All of the wildlife in the park is important. WHY THEN DID I NOT SEE ANYTHING ON YOUR POSTER BOARDS ABOUT OTHER WILDLIFE THAT IS IN THE PARK????

Coyotes, rabbits, plovers, pelicans, cranes, egrets, migrating birds? Very little mention of the wetlands??? Why???? Or should I say why not??? The park mentioned sand management. Wow, so they use a machine and clear the sand off the entrance road. This has been done since the day one the park has been opened. If they don't know how to do this by now??? If they need public comment on this now??? Then they really don't know what they are doing. Leave the turtle program the way it was, leave our driving rights alone. As for hurricanes, they continue to come and go. Can't manage that. As each storm leaves its trash the beach goers have always helped manage it. Wow, NPS, the park belongs to the people. So LISTEN!!!!

Correspondence ID: 226 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 11:44:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Regarding changes to the Sea Turtle Program

Currently: Turtle patrols and partners locate nesting turtles and collect eggs.

Proposed: Vary sea turtle patrols including timing, frequency and methods. Limit egg collection to within park boundary.

Given the severity of decline in turtle populations, it is essential that as many eggs as possible be collected.

Hatchlings have an extremely low survival rate upon release as it is, so in order to provide these animals with the highest chance of ability to increase populations, the maximum amount of turtles needs to be released.

Proposed: Do not relocate every nest.

Eggs left alone will most certainly never make it to the point where they hatch. Just about every predator will consume eggs. Coyotes, raccoons, fire ants, the list is long. Not relocating them is a basically a death sentence.

Currently: Staff and volunteers release hatchlings, including at events open to the public.

Proposed: Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size.

Already the number of public releases has been reduced. For a community to care about the conservation of a species, they need to witness firsthand the work that is being done and see for themselves how important it is.

While hearing about the program or seeing videos is educational, true desire to become an advocate for wildlife occurs when people connect at events like the releases. Having attended a release, I know firsthand what an incredible experience it is to watch the hatchlings venture towards their future. The passion that the staff shows for the work they do is truly inspiring.

Regarding Pilot Studies

Potential Study 1 - can predation be reduced without moving eggs.

In a perfect world, sea turtles would be able to thrive without the need of human assistance. Unfortunately we are far from that, and it would be devastating to lose a species, just to see how they do on their own. Clearly they got to this point of decline for a reason, and it should be no surprise what the outcome will be if we just stand back and watch.

Potential Study 3 - Remove or reduce NPS vehicles.

Nests are very rarely ever harmed by NPS vehicles, and in fact it is due to driving that the majority of them are found. I have no doubt staff can be trained to drive in such a way that wildlife and visitor experience isn't impacted.

Potential Study 4 - Unmanned aerial vehicles or video to monitor sea turtles.

If budgets are being cut from the program and staff hour involvement reduced, how is it that there would be funding for this type of technology? Drones flying overhead or cameras are more likely to impact visitor experience than a vehicle on the beach.

Correspondence ID: 227 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 12:00:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea Turtles:

I am not opposed to any of the pilot studies, as long as they do not affect my vehicular access to the beach.

Sand Management:

The current maintenance program seems to be working just fine. No need to restrict the access to certain areas of the beach.

Beach Driving:

I am opposed to any changes that will affect vehicular access to any part of the beach. There are over 60 miles of beach with plenty of room for people to spread out during times of heavy use.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery:

It is logical to assume that the park will need to shut down during a storm or for short time afterwards to make repairs to the roads or facilities.

Marine Debris:

Bring inmates from the local jails out to the beach to clean up the debris with their consent. I would bet that many of them would jump at the chance to get out of the prison for a day at the beach. Working at the beach could be used for community service hours etc.

Correspondence ID: 228 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 12:34:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This is a good opportunity to address climate change and its potential hazards and challenges to coastal activities and habitats. What are the current predictions for sea rise and potential flooding? What effects would a shrinking shoreline have on turtles and other marine life? What would be the minimum beach width for driving, camping, and beachcombing? Will there be a decline in bird migration and can PINS do anything to mitigate such changes? Will turtles continue to nest on the shore if it shrinks by any means be it climate change or hurricane?

Should beach clean-ups expand across the island to Bird Island Basin and Laguna Madre? Asking because debris does not stop at the first dune, it continues to blow across the prairie. I have seen bags stuck on tall grasses, cans and bottles get buried by sand, and misc trash blowing.

Should beach management include future means of communication with the public regarding changes and challenges to the beach plan (assuming there will be one)? This might include publicly reporting natural and human caused incidents, determining which law enforcement issues (i.e speeding) should be brought to the public's attention or what natural resource subjects would be valuable for the public to learn about. Is it valid to consider and define what communication means--monthly beach report, webpage updates, social media, press release, media days, some type of program etc.--would be appropriate and necessary for this document.

Correspondence ID: 229 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 13:01:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am writing to strongly oppose any changes made to the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program, unless they are made under the direction and with the approval of Dr. Donna Shaver and/or a person she designates.

Allowing Dr. Shaver to take the lead in any programmatic or resource allocation changes to the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program is in keeping with the request made by the office of the National Parks Service Regions 6,7 & 8 in the Memorandum dated 06/08/2020 wherein the office requests that the superintendent of the Padre Island National Seashore "Develop a nesting beach management plan, identified in the 2011 Kemp's Bi-National Recovery Plan." Dr. Shaver was one of the principal contributors to that plan. Her work, and the data generated by the program she oversees is quoted heavily in the document, and 32 of her scientific publications are cited in the document.

Dr. Shaver therefore must take the lead in developing any nesting beach management plan in order to comply with the spirit of the request in the memo.

Allowing Dr. Shaver to decide exactly what procedures and goals the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program should be based on, and how best to deploy resources to achieving those outcomes is indicated by the aforementioned directive, and it is logical. This applies to the nesting turtle program and all other aspects of the sea turtle program.

She is a senior staff member of the National Park Service who has devoted her career and decades of her life to the turtle program and to the Padre Island National Seashore. Nobody knows the unparalleled resources and challenges of the park better. And, as the preeminent global expert on Kemp's Ridley sea turtles, and one of the leading experts on sea turtles of all kinds, nobody knows how to study and protect sea turtles, and especially nesting sea turtles on Padre Island better than her.

The National Park Service has a mission to "preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations."

Nobody understands the natural and cultural resources of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program, and the Padre Island National Seashore better than Dr. Shaver. Making any major changes to the program without her approval and guidance would not be in keeping with the mission of the Park Service, and it would simply be wasteful to the level of malfeasance to not utilize her skills, experience, and knowledge. Her work has led to the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of thousands of park visitors. Please allow her to continue, unimpeded.

Correspondence ID: 230 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 13:04:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is critical that PINS continue to incubate turtle eggs found on both Mustang Island and San Jose Island, and not just on Padre Island. Why was this left out of the proposed plan?

Correspondence ID: 231 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 13:52:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I support Dr. Donna Shaver's approach to turtle conservation. I support her patrols and applaud her efforts on conservation. I appreciate and embrace the fact that all of the Texas coast is open to driving and I am against banning driving on the beach during turtle nesting season. I think Dr. Shaver has been treated abominably and should be encouraged to continue her revolutionary conservation work instead of defunded and discouraged.

Correspondence ID: 232 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 16:14:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I've lived in Texas for over 50 years, and have spent many pleasant hours on our beaches. And yes, driving on those beaches feels like part of our heritage. But when we know better, we do better. Giving up the right to cruise around is no big deal, no sacrifice at all, if it means preserving the turtles that are also a part of our wild heritage. Let's put an end to a practice that is never more than a brief thrill, to help save something far more important.

Correspondence ID: 233 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 16:23:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Any implemented management plan should create safer, and greater access to the beaches. Elected officials need to be aware, understand, and accept that if the management plan reduces access that it will negatively impact businesses in the area, and the voting public will respond accordingly.

Correspondence ID: 234 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 16:50:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Vehicles on a beach are not only dangerous and detrimental to wildlife, but also pollutes the beach itself. Nesting turtles need undisturbed beach, for both laying and hatching.

Correspondence ID: 235 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 18:15:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I personally do not have any issue with not being allowed to drive out there. There is really only a few options, as I see it. Not allowed at all, only during a limited time during the year, or all the time. Limiting the driving to a few times when the turtles are not nesting, and the eggs are being laid, and incubating, then during hatching season. During those times there should not be any driving or 4 wheelers, or side by sides, etc. only by authorized personnel to check nests and hatches. Other times of the year when no turtles are around could be an option and you could even limit the hours of that, so only during day time hours in between high tides, for example.

Or eliminate it all, which would probably be the least popular option. These turtles have to have support and be given a break and receive some protection. They have lost some since the Trump era. I hope a decision in favor of helping these amazing animals be around for a long time to come is made! Thank you for all your efforts and supports with this issue.

Correspondence ID: 236 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 18:31:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We need to protect the turtles. Don't let people drive on the beach.

Correspondence ID: 237 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 21:37:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Wildlife needs to be protected. This is also part of the tourism issue industry. Driving on The beach causes the same issues as a road. The beach is for relaxation and home to endangered species.

Correspondence ID: 238 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 21:49:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The eggs and nest do need protection. Leaving them to the elements around them Will only up the amount of turtles or eggs that do not make it. They have been successful so far And should continue.

Correspondence ID: 239 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,23 2023 23:48:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: How does the NPS ask for comments, for a proposed beach management plan, that is not really a plan, but vague ideas, that might become a plan, and the rangers do not know what to say, because there is supposedly no plan yet, but the public is supposed to comment on the non-plan. Does the park service realize how ridiculous they appear right now?

There is not one single person I have spoken to that really understands what is going on. I believe we all expected

at least a clear explanation of the pre planning to the plan that is not made up yet but we need to comment on the plan.

What the heck is a pre-nepa? What is the time line? What are the parks thought? I mean, if you think you might want to put X plan into action then you must have some kind of idea of what you should be telling us. Right?? After pre nepa what is next? A nepa meetings? When does the plan get tested? How do we learn of impacts to the wildlife after the EPA studies it. Why does the park say they have no current plan?? You mean to tell me the park has been operating for 65 years WITHOUT A PLAN!!!! Well dang it, great job for operating with no plan (sarcasm here). The pre-nepa meeting was really a non meeting to discuss a non plan that the park will not discuss because, ummmm, when you want to hide something then you do not discuss it. Right? Okay, my main comment here is that this whole thing is fishy wishy washy fishy and no one really has any faith nor trust in the leadership of our seashore. How about leave it the way it is! Or better yet, offer a partnership with the community with clear, concise, factual, meaningful, open, honest DISCUSSION !!!!!!!

Correspondence ID: 240 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 07:00:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Beach Driving: From the current potential options listed in the Beach Management at Padre Island National Seashore Civic Engagement Newsletter

(file:///C:/Users/MarkEbertowski/Downloads/PAIS_PAIS_Beach_Newsletter_Final_508_Eng (1).pdf), I am in favor of the potential options to assess visitor capacity to determine the need for beach driving permits. I am not in favor of creating a new road for thru traffic. I am in favor of vehicle-free pedestrian areas.

I would also like to see considerations made for the environmental impact that vehicles have on the beach with regards to pollution in the form of motor oil leaks, transmission fluid leaks, coolant leaks, brake fluid leaks, fuel leaks, brakes dust, tire particulates, emissions, etc. I understand that conservation is a balancing act in considering this issue (between the environmental impact and engaging and creating awareness in the civilian population). Perhaps beach driving could be further limited to only certain parts of the year, or restrictions could be placed on certain types of vehicles, or beach driving could be limited based on the number of vehicle passengers with a required minimum to access the beach.

Correspondence ID: 241 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 08:29:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Vehicles don't belong on beaches. They destroy the natural beauty, pollute and damage wildlife. Please keep vehicles (including electric) off the beaches. Let us enjoy the peace of the ocean and help save the sea turtles!

Correspondence ID: 242 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 09:38:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There was a review completed TWO years ago. It was a review of the current beach management plan including the turtle program.

1. Why did the superintendent Eric deny they have a current plan? Of course they have an operating plan
2. The review done TWO years ago is what they are basing the NEW PLAN ON, so why are they not giving us MORE of that information.
3. Why were there pre-nepa meetings A) acting like ground zero for information? B) considered listening sessions and NOT two way dialog 3)did not educate the public about the review completed TWO YEARS AGO that the new BMP will be based on
- 4) The NPS has KNOWN for TWO YEARS what they hope to do with beach management going forward. Why not create your preliminary plan and have the community comment at that point. NOPE, the park will create the FINAL PLAN AFTER park comment so that we have ZERO influence to change it at that point.
- 5). Or, maybe, just maybe I am wrong! ??? UMMMM, I don't believe so because even the news station said the

park will be designing their FINAL PLAN AFTER THE LISTENING SESSIONS.

6). So now for my FINAL QUESTION -.IS YOUR FINAL PLAN GOING TO FINALIZE THE END OF OUR TURTLE PROGRAM AS WE KNOW IT??? IS YOUR FINAL PLAN GOING TO LIMIT BEACH DRIVING AND CREATE HEFTY \$\$ PERMITS??? IS YOUR FINAL PLAN GOING TO BUILD A ROAD BEHIND THE DUNES??? IS YOUR FINAL PLAN GOING TO GO FORWARD WITH YET ANOTHER 5 MILE WALKING BEACH??? IS YOUR FINAL PLAN GOING TO CONSIDER PUBLIC COMMENT OR WAS THAT SO CALLED MEETING JUST A FARCE DISPLAY OF ACTUON TO CHECK OFF A BOX THAT THE FEDS REQUIRE???

7). Be it known that myself, and many included, DISAGREE ONE THOUSAND PERCENT with your new plan. We also DISAGREE ONE THOUSAND PERCENT with the way the NPS has gone about creating their new beach management plan that has TOTAL DISREGARD to what the beach users believe.

8). Build community relations instead of tearing them apart.

Correspondence ID: 243 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 09:45:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am passionate about marine conservation, and have a background totaling 3+ years of experience in sea turtle research and field work. I spent a season doing daily nesting patrol for 5-10hrs/day, completed a masters with research focusing on sea turtle movement ecology and distribution, and am currently in graduate school researching drivers of movement, habitat selection, and habitat use of Kemp's Ridley, loggerhead, and green sea turtles. Due to this ongoing experience, I have significant concerns about the proposed cut to PINS sea turtle program funding. I have separated several of my concerns, and included data-driven questions. I look forward to your response detailing the data supporting this decision, and hope that what is best for the species is at the forefront of the decision being made.

Kemp's Ridleys are still critically endangered. While the funding was originally intended for green sea turtles, it has indubitably benefitted Kemp's. Why is this funding being cut and not being reallocated to Kemp's? Is the US nesting population of Kemp's stable enough to persist if nesting success sees a sharp decrease when nests are left in situ along the coast? If so, please provide the data supporting this.

Most Kemp's nesting takes place in the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. What data exists for the genetic diversity of that population? How does it differ from the US nesters? Could the US nesting population of Kemp's be an asset to the genetic diversity of the species? Since their nesting range is more northward, do they have increased adaptive potential in the face of warming waters and incubation temperatures? If this genetic diversity is lost, how will it impact the ability of the species to persist in the future?

Unlike in Florida, there is no state administrative code for artificial coastal lighting. There, designated reviewers with FWC review all new builds and modifications to existing builds to ensure that health and human safety standards are met, while also minimizing the impacts of artificial lighting on marine turtles and their nesting habitats. This is done by recommending low-mounted fixtures at the minimum intensity required to meet safety codes, ensuring lighting fixtures are adequately shielded to avoid directing light upwards, and only installing exterior lights that are 590nm and above (true amber or red LEDs). Hatchlings use the brightest horizon to find the water. Texas has none of these regulations. Would the hatchlings that die as a result of the disorientation be considered "take"? As a critically endangered species, what consequences would NPS see as a result? Would the take fall onto the business owners causing the disorientation? The state, for the cars and street lights?

If this finding is cut and Padre Island is unable to conduct nest patrols, will there be other staff instated that are dedicated to stranding? For a critically endangered species, necropsy data and rehabilitation of stranded animals boosts the population and provides important data for the risks these turtles face.

I am concerned about the hurt to tourism this will cause. Can you guarantee this will not harm the economic prosperity of Padre Island? What mitigation strategies are proposed to combat this?

The NPS has commented that this is an effort to help sea turtles "to exist without human assistance." When the nesting population went from nesting arribadas of tens of thousands on a single day to well below 500 individuals in the matter of decades as a result of human poaching and fishing activity, what is the benefit of nixing efforts to reverse this anthropogenic loss? If the species is still listed as critically endangered as per the IUCN due to human activity, what is the thought process in putting the species at the same risks that almost caused them to go extinct?

Currently, nesting patrols happen along the coast. Nests are excavated and brought to Padre Island for incubation. Based on the risks of washouts, overwashes, predation, and negative effects of beach driving on incubating nests, will there be funding instated for each individual nesting patrol entity to create their own corrals for nests? What data exists on nest success for the Texas Coast? What data exists for disorientations along the Texas Coast?

Sea turtles often act as a charismatic umbrella species, with management decisions based around sea turtles benefitting the ecosystems and organisms they cover. How will cutting this funding affect the ecosystem function and resilience of Padre Island?

Correspondence ID: 244 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 09:55:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 1. Please in your planning, Plan for increased Park Ranger presence. Especially on holidays and weekends. The park is open 7 days a week and park ranger presence is merely a scheduling issue, unless you just don't have park rangers available of which leads to increasing the size of the staff.

2. A first aid station is a must for a park of this size and that is open 7 days a week.

3. Saving the Turtles. I'm for conservation of the species and wildlife in the park. Donna Shaver's program has proven to be successful without limiting driving on the beach. I am against limiting access to beach driving period. The turtles were introduced here after the beach became a national park to help the species thrive and should not be the reason for beach closures or limited access. I'm not sure if the Texas Open Beach Act comes into play here.

4. Proposed road behind the dunes for the first 5 miles? No. Absolutely not. I feel like the park has a hard enough time managing the beach sand entrance off the black top, much less having continued resources to manage a five mile road. Cutting a pass through the Dune would be destructive and be hard to manage considering how much the sand shifts and storm surges that could push debris in the cut and destroy the road, hence blocking access to the beach. Look at Yarbrough Pass, how many times is the gate locked and we do not have access. Is this documented?

5. Safety of visitors parking on the beach for the first 5 miles. The northern part of the park already has bollards limiting access to the beach, move the visitors from the first 5 miles to north of the park and change the bollards to protect the visitors from vehicles, kind of like a corral. Port A does it and its being done on Padre Island by Bob Hall. Safety of the visitors definitely can be achieved by increased Park Ranger presence.

6. Hurricane and Storm closures. Re-open the Seashore after an initial safety and resource check and basic visitor safety is provided. • Limited facilities would be available as repairs and clean up continue.

7. Marine Debris and cleanup. Propose 2 times a year. Involve the National Guard and their resources. National Park Services has a huge staff, consider transfer of staff for the annual cleanup.

8. Thank you. Thank for your service to our park and its resources. Lets keep it alive and accessible for our grand children and future generations. Its the last barrier island of its kind. Lets continue to treasure it.

Correspondence ID: 245 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 11:35:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not take away the things we love most about living on the island. We moved here because of the beach and all it has to offer. Driving/parking, bonfires, turtle releases, and how clean it is kept up. Why would you want to take this away from us or change it. No driving on the beach - where would everyone

park - we saw that nightmare during covid. There are so many more dire items to focus on. Leave it alone. Don't fix what isn't broken please.

Correspondence ID: 246 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 13:40:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I guarantee the management of Padre Island National Seashore did NOT conduct a meeting as stated on their page.

They had "informational" posters on a variety of beach issues. However, there was not a meeting. Very disappointing.

I do not think/feel this bodes well for our future beach access.

KEEP EVERYTHING AS IT IS...THE OLD ADAGE APPLIES....IF IT AIN'T BROKE DONT FIX IT!

Correspondence ID: 247 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 15:14:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: REGARDING RESTRICTION OF BEACH ACCESS: QUITE SIMPLY-DO NOT!!

Potential option: Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience: WE ALREADY PAY AN ENTRY FEE TO ACCESS PINS. CONSIDERING ITS 60 MILES OF BEACH IT MUST BE DRIVEN. NO OTHER FEES SHOULD BE ASSESSED OR NO PERMITS REQUIRED.

Potential option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island.

WHAT WILL A NEW ROAD DO TO WILDLIFE HABITAT OR WETLANDS? WILL IT NO ALSO ALTER THE DUNE LINE WHICH IS INTREGAL TO MINIMIZE FLOODING? HOW MUCH MORE LAND WILL BE USED TO BUILD PARKING AREAS DOWN THE PROPOSED 5 MILES OF VEHICLE FREE BEACH? OR DOES THE GOVERNMENT EXPECT PEOPLE TO HAUL THEIR GEAR BY WALKING 5 MILES DOWN BEACH. HOW WILL THIS 5 MILE STRETCH OF BEACH BE ADA ACCESIBLE?

Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience.

SERIOUSLY??? PINS ALREADY HAS THIS AT MALAQUITE & THE BEACH DOES NOT EXPERIENCE OVECROWDING. THE PARKING LOT AT MALAQUITE IS NEVER EVEN 1/2 FULL.

Correspondence ID: 248 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 15:44:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: First, I have questions about the current turtle program. Has it been successful and are the turtles establishing nesting areas on Padre Island? Has there been a study of the program of gathering eggs and then releasing baby turtles showing that it is on longer necessary and the turtles will thrive if the nests are left alone. Do we think the Florida program would work here also?

Does driving on the beach impact turtles in a negative way? Does driving on the beach cause more work for park employees?

If the current turtle program is working, why stop it now? I thought the original idea was to save the turtles because there original nesting sites were threatened. Is this no longer true?

My preference would be to keep the current program of egg gathering and turtle release. Increase funding if needed and make the public more aware of protecting and reporting nest sites. Ask for more volunteers to assist park staff.

We should be able to continue driving on beaches unless there is proof that it is harming the turtle population

Would it be possible to extend the paved road further into the park that would allow visitors to the beach to be spread out more.

Hopefully both the current turtle program and beach driving can be continued.

I was unable to attend the public hearing. Many of my questions have probably been answered. Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 249 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 21:08:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Climate Change:

The National Park Service must confider climate change and the effects it will have on the national seashore in any potential management plans.

Sea Turtles:

The current sea turtle program is unsustainable and does not have a long term plan to phase out with the success of the reintroduction of the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle species. It is widely understood that the original purpose of the program was to establish a secondary population of Kemp's outside of their main nesting ground in Mexico. At what level is the original program deemed successful? Seeking a 100% survival rate of Kemp's born on and returning to the national seashore is a unrealistic dream. The NPS should begin to study alternatives to the current practice of relocating all sea turtle nests on the seashore in order for the population to be self sustainable. Predation of eggs is a natural occurrence but one that can be mitigated with the use of predator exclusion fences or corrals in areas of the seashore with lower visitation, such as mm-30 to mm-60, Areas with higher visitation may still need to be relocated.

Marine Debris:

The NPS should actively work to manage marine debris through increased scientific study, community education and outreach, as well as volunteer management. A dedicated full time volunteer and outreach manager can build a program that connects the local and larger state communities to the seashore and better organize cleanup efforts. Large cleanup events like the Big Shell Beach Cleanup are a successful way to clean a large area in a short amount of time. Having a better established volunteer program could make having cleanup events like this happen throughout the year, and not be limited to Big Shell Beach.

Beach Driving:

Beach driving is a well loved tradition in the state of Texas and clearly gets many people fired up when they believe that is being taken away from them. However, beach driving in the park should be better studied to understand the impacts on wildlife, plants, dune erosion, etc. The park currently does a poor job with communicating conditions of when 4x4 is truly needed vs just recommended. When it is truly needed, having a enforceable regulation may provide a better incentive not to take 2x4 vehicles on the beach at these times. Providing alternative recreation opportunities to beach driving, such as established and maintained front country hiking trails may give some visitors a way to experience the park in a way that doesn't involve bringing on the beach when they are not prepared. The park should also look into the pros/cons of offering and maintaining a tire air up/ air down station. This amenity may help to reduce the number of vehicles stuck on the beach. Several types of vehicles like large RVs and fifth wheel trailers are not designed to drive on the beach and should be better regulated to limit them.

Correspondence ID: 250 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,24 2023 21:39:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: There should be no changes made to the status quo regarding beach access.

Being able to do so is a blessing as there are no other comparable experiences for the general public in this part of

Texas.
Losing this access would be claustrophobic.

Correspondence ID: 251 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,25 2023 05:49:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I already previously submitted comments.

However, I have not been able to view my comments nor those of any other commenters, on the PAIS pre-NEPA website.

Yet, before I submitted my comments, I read the pre-NEPA notice (Privacy Act Statement) below that they could be viewed by others.

I have no problem with that.

However, I have a problem with my comments and those of others not being viewable on the pre-NEPA or any other National Park Service website.

This suggests that National Park Service does not want comments that it solicited from the public to be available for viewing by the public, but to keep the public's comments secret.

I hope this is not true. It concerns me.

I recommend that all comments received be made public at any time, and before the March 14, 2023 deadline for submission of comments.

Correspondence ID: 252 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,25 2023 07:32:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: You do not fix something that is not broken. Limiting the publics access to such a wonderful stretch of beach would be a shame. Let the people decide what happens. The beach belongs to the national park servcie, but the national park service belongs to us, American citizens. Remember that.

Correspondence ID: 253 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,25 2023 08:21:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Recycling: Bring back Recycle bins at Bird Island. Don't make me pack it out to somewhere else.

Showers: reopen the inside showers at the visitor center. There isn't enough parking and showers at the small campground.

Interpretative indoor center: reopen the "museum" area and gift shop where you could watch videos and talk to rangers. Also add back ranger led events. The park is under utilized due to lack of programming.

Vault / pit toilets: Continue extra clean bathrooms. The ones at Bird Island by the windsurf place are almost always very clean.

Correspondence ID: 254 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,25 2023 08:28:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I agree with Rachel 100%. Keep the beaches open. Please resign Eric Britterman we don't need you in around here. We don't need you controlling our parks.

Correspondence ID: 255 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,25 2023 09:33:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We fully support the current efforts of Sea Turtle Research and Recovery Program at the Padre Island National Seashore. We strenuously object to any efforts to amend or terminate the operations of the current program.

- As a result of Herculean intervention, during the winter of 2021, in response to a massive cold stun event, the program saved 4,000 threatened sea turtles which would have otherwise perished.
- Every year the program rescues countless stranded turtles and transfers them to rehabilitation centers in the area.
- The successful focus of the program has been saving the critically endangered Kemps Ridley Sea Turtle which is facing extinction without continued intervention. Then program also pursues rigorous scientific research investigating the nature of and threats to all species of sea turtle.

- o Without the excavation and incubation of sea turtle eggs (the majority of which are Kemps) it is estimated that 10,000 eggs and hatchlings will be lost to predation while still on land during a single summer. Further curtailing the numbers of hatchlings successfully entering Gulf with further imperil the species.

- o NOAA states that only one in 10,000 sea turtles (all species) reaches maturity to breed.

- o The Sea Turtle Research and Recovery Program is internationally revered and is a model for the preservation and reestablishment of a very fragile species that has been decimated by fishing and egg gathering.

- o The Federal Government is not retreating from the protection and propagation of endangered species as evidenced by the hatchery operations in Uvalde, TX. Concurrently, state and Federal governments are operating fish hatcheries, to restore fish populations that are depleted through commercial and recreational fishing. The mission and operations of the Sea Turtle Research and Recovery Program are consistent with current national efforts to preserve endangered species and restock reduced and depleted aquatic life. There is no regional precedent to abandon or modify the Sea Turtle Research and Recovery Program.

- o Commercially, the Sea Turtle Research and Recovery Program has been a boon to the City of Corpus Christi and surrounding municipalities. Volunteers from throughout the state have permanently relocated here to be a part of the program. Volunteers from all over the nation come during the summer to participate in beach patrols and egg excavation. The program employs 50 seasonal biologists from throughout the nation, who rent living quarters and purchase goods and services in the area. During the summer of 2019, over 16,000 visitors from all over the world, attended hatchling releases at the seashore, occupying hotel rooms, and utilizing regional resources such as restaurants and retail establishments.

- o The Sea Turtle Research and Recovery Program is considered a local, state, national and international jewel which should not only be protected, but replicated.

- If the park administration does not choose to continue to sponsor the sea turtle, we respectfully request that it be returned to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The sea turtle program is a critical part of our community.

Correspondence ID: 256 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,25 2023 12:02:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Absolutely nothing was broken at PINS until this new superintendent came along. Leave PINS alone and let Dr. Shaver continue her great work. I would say more about Eric Brunneman, but these comments are public. Send Brunneman packing and let things get back to normal!

Correspondence ID: 257 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,25 2023 13:49:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: TURTLES: please provide more access to turtle rehab center in the park so visitors can see how the labs work. Also provide recordings and short videos by turtle scientists on YouTube.

DRIVING ON BEACH: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island.

Also: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience.

Correspondence ID: 258 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,25 2023 14:48:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The BIG question I was presented with during a discussion with staff at PINS today is this: Is PINS really the right beach to have a secondary nesting colony of Kemp Ridley's? Is there a beach that is more PERFECT or suited for the turtles

Well, here is my response.

1. If there ever was a perfect beach it would be PINS. (Isn't an undeveloped barrier island an idea location. It was selected and preferred BEFORE the program was started)

2. If the concern is inundating tides because of global warming,,,,,, well,,, that is an issue at every beach in the world

3. If the concern is trash and debris,,,,,, well,,,,, that is an issue on every beach in the US, as well as, every single ocean around the world

4. If the concern is driving on the beach.... well,,, show me documented cases of turtles being run over, or nest destroyed by vehicles

(If anything the drivers are an asset to the program and not a creator of issues)

5. Has it taken our turtle program TOO LONG to be successful?? Doesn't it take 10 to 15 years for a turtle to begin mating and nesting?? well, doesn't that leave at least the first decade and a half not even countable towards success?? Think about that one!

6. Turtle numbers are growing, and they are returning to nest. If you cancel out funding for our program,,,, well,,,,, how do you tell the hundreds, if not thousands of turtles that you changed their nesting beach?

7. A SECOND nesting colony was determined to be critical to the survival of the species. Why? Because what if the primary nesting colony was stricken with a major chemical spill? With disease or illness? With unknown factors? This is WHY our seashore began the program in the first place.

8. I was informed today that the review done TWO years ago was reviewing the turtle program and has NOTHING to do with the pre-nepa. I SO VERY MUCH WISH that the NPS would have explained this in more detail. The pre-nepa posters talked about the turtle program, AND ALSO, talked about driving. But now I am told the driving issue has to do more with visitor experience and visitor safety and nothing to do with the turtles. So which actions are we supposed to be commenting on?

9. I was informed also that the reason for scaling back the turtle program has more to do with budget and overtime. I am told there is employee and volunteer burnout caused by A) early morning shifts B) too much overtime C) all park staff is needed on turtle releases days. I would ask how has it been managed and done for the past 20 plus years?? What changed all of a sudden that it is now not manageable? The program has always relied on volunteers in the past. Is that more of a problem now, if so why? How can the public comments on facts we are not given?

10. I see lost opportunity for open, honest, clear discussion. First, the park refused to attend the commissioners meetings. Second, the pre-nepa LISTENING MEETINGS was NOT two-way dialog, and third has the park provided ample speaking points than can be found on the website listing their concerns (example the posters used at the meeting are not even on the website), lastly, anyone I discuss this with really wants more clarity. Clarity is not some huge ambiguous request.

Correspondence ID: 259 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,25 2023 19:10:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do not restrict our beach access by placing any regulations on driving on our texas beaches.

Correspondence ID: 260 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,26 2023 06:52:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I've been using PINS for over 30 years for surf fishing. I can say that the beach is in far better condition now than it was back then, all with no "management plan," and lots of beach traffic. Wildlife is flourishing. The Ridley turtle population is improving. DON'T FIX WHAT IS NOT BROKEN! Listen to your biologist. Get the funds needed to continue/improve the turtle management program in place. Don't let it become broken!

I can see that at some point beach traffic could become problematic because of sheer volume. Determine how much is too much and figure out how to regulate it.

If there is one thing I would like to see it is cross island access to the Laguna side of the island

Correspondence ID: 261 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,26 2023 10:52:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Beach Management and driving

This document does not address how much of the beach is now used by vehicles vs pedestrians so it is hard to know what the balance is. Do vehicles have an outsize share? The park should definitely assess vehicle capacity . I would be concerned about a new road being constructed. Will this be thru the dune area, and further impact habitat? This is a national seashore, not a national recreation area, so all uses should not have equal or outsize emphasis, and protection of natural resources should always be a given.

Sea Turtle program

This is an exemplary program, that has improved the survival of the turtles and been a very good educational outreach effort, really the best in-person kind of interpretation. So, I think it would be a mistake to stop the public releases. But consider issuing tickets, so that the crowd numbers do not reduce enjoyment.

Other suggested options should be studied, as listed. All longterm programs need an occasional revisit of their management, making sure that the staff most involved in these programs have an important role. It would seem obvious that anything susceptible to hurricane destruction ought to be relocated accordingly.

Pilot Studies

Yes to doing these studies, as long as the outcome is not predetermined, that it is an open minded review.

Sand Management

I am surprised that is not already a priority to consider sensitive habitat. It definitely should be.

Hurricane and storm recovery

Seems like the efforts made and closure length should depend on the nature of the hurricane. The staff is best situated to know when it is safe to open, erring on the side of safety versus fastest reopening.

Marine Debris

Yes, if the staff needs help, use local volunteers, if it is safe. I doubt it is possible to make a national or international outreach about the problem. All beaches now are subject to this unfortunately. But it might be useful to have an exhibit inside or outside of buildings that remind the public of this big problem.

Correspondence ID: 262 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,26 2023 11:14:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I went to your calendar for events. I searched all the way through MAY. It was empty. Some helpful topics to get events going may be as simple as following the Mustang Island State Park calendar. The rangers out there does quite a bit. WITH THE COMMUNITY. They are building relations DAILY. Example:. He walks the beach and does live videos with q & a. They have crafts on Saturday like in December they assembled ornaments. The Aransas wildlife place walks the beach and does posts on Facebook about what they found on the beach, shells and what the names are. You could showcase shells, birds, jellyfish, sharks teeth, trash, debris, wetlands, Laguna Madre side, dunes, snakes, crabs. Endless topics. Maybe have an endangered species day each month and highlight n a park animal. What about walk the beach with a ranger. Is your Jr. Rangers program still active. What about highlighting what shipwrecks are off the coast with a talk to a ranger session, monthly or two or three times a year. What about photography classes, a series held in spring. Fill up that calendar. Get the rangers involved with beach goers. Highlight what YOUR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS ARE. What are the biggest opportunities at PINS. Do you have a suggestion box, hey maybe keep a suggestion box open on your website. I was told you have a flyer, but I have not found the info yet on it. Is it updated regularly.

I cannot wait to see how the new rescue center will be engaging with the local national seashore. I hope that PINS is able to work with them on outreach educational programs.

Correspondence ID: 263 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,26 2023 12:12:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for offering the open forums and information provided.

I think creating a new road to bypass the first five miles of seashore is a great idea. This area is full of families and for those who want to go past mile marker 5 it would be a great benefit.

For hurricane recovery, the concern should be focused on the wildlife and structures. If I have to wait additional couple weeks to access the beach it's fine. Knowing the birds, turtles, deer and coyotes are safe is important

While marine debris is an issue so is trash left behind by campers and day visitors. I am unsure of the fix but we always remove more than we bring and stop at the dumpsters when we leave.

Correspondence ID: 264 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,26 2023 13:04:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not limit the sea turtle hatching releases and please do not eliminate driving on the beach. We have been going to PINS for over ten years with our children, every year driving down there in our camper to camp on the beach. Eliminating the ability to drive down the beach will be devastating. There will be no reason for us to come to PINS any longer. You already have a section of beach that is closed to driving for good reason and that is big enough. Please do not close the beach to driving. You can find ways to perfectly manage the beach without doing that. It is completely unnecessary.

Correspondence ID: 265 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,26 2023 16:56:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While volunteering at the Billy Sandifer Beach clean up Feb 25, 2023, I spoke with fishermen from out of state who come to North Padre Island for the winter months. They knew very little about Kemp's ridley sea turtles or the Beach Management Issues. They love coming to this area because they can drive on the beach. They said in their opinion, Texas is doing things right regarding beach access especially driving on the beach. They questioned why a system of incubating turtle eggs in corrals or a facility which has been successful for many years would be up for debate.

Correspondence ID: 266 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,26 2023 20:49:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As for the proposed Padre Island National Seashore closures I would like to make a few points.

First- Think of the economical devastation that closing the beach down would cause our local area. We would lose untold amounts of revenue in tourism, not only hotels, but restaurants, small businesses, and misc. money that is spent right here in our area. Think of all the money that the Federal Government will lose from no more campers, no more visitors coming to the National Seashore. What is the Federal Government prepared to do when they lose all that money?

Second- Think of the many poor families that cannot afford to to vacation and they choose to vacation right here in Corpus at the National Seashore. I live here and I moved here specifically for the beach access and fishing. My plan was to retire here. You take that away and the first thing I will do is move my 10K plus in taxes somewhere else. And I bet that others will too.

If there is no more fishing on the National Seashore, what will happen to so many fisherman crowded into smaller spaces such as the Bob Hall area where there are so many beachgoers? Who do you think the public will blame when someone pulls in a big shark and the beaches are full of swimmers in a very congested area?

Lastly- Why was this property given to the federal government in the first place? It was given for conservation, tourism, and recreation. If you restrict beach access from not only the fisherman but also the beachgoers, and non local tourism, you have will have broken a sacred trust between the government and the civilian populous.

My wife had a conversation recently with a local elderly lady who has been coming to the National Seashore for over 75 years. And for 75 years this beach has remained a sanctuary; a place to go to get away from it all. Taking this away from so many like her is a crime and should not be done.

In closing, as has been done in the past at least 75 years, all people will continue to notify the proper authorities when a turtle has been spotted.

Correspondence ID: 267 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,26 2023 20:53:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: NO beach vehicle restrictions and no management plan.

Correspondence ID: 268 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,26 2023 20:54:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As part of the local community, I value the PINS and those involved who run the park. Having volunteered for sea turtle cold stunning and other activities, I understand the concern for decreasing the amount of traffic during nesting season. There should be more units patrolling for nests during the active season. Limiting traffic during nesting season sounds reasonable. However, I would like to retain the right to drive on the beach year round. My wife and I have physical limitations and need our vehicle to traverse the beach. Without it, we won't be able to enjoy the beach and would likely not come to visit. Maybe segregating areas of the beach that are active nesting sites would help. Please allow everyone access to the beach with their vehicles. We can all try to be mindful of nesting season. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 269 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,27 2023 08:30:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I'd like to recommend the park consider developing its own version of the NOAA and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary program, Blue Star Operators, in effort to partner with and recognize local fishing guides/sportsman.

Local fishing guides/captains live and work in the community surrounding PINS. They are the backbone of our local economy. They are also educators, too. As true sportsman, they know the regulations, advocate for responsible and sustainable fishing practices, believe in ethical fishing practices to ensure the delicate ecosystem of the Laguna Madre is preserved for the next generation. Local guides are able to provide a tremendous amount of valuable data for research and studies, and serve to educate future stewards of our waters.

For additional information, please visit: <https://floridakeys.noaa.gov/onthewater/bluestar.html> and <https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/bluestar/operators.html>

Correspondence ID: 270 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,27 2023 15:51:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I do not and will not EVER agree to ANY type of closures to Padre Island National Seashore.

Your plan, or "no plan", will be fought at all costs.

At this point, we should starting considering to defund the National Parks program.

Correspondence ID: 271 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,27 2023 15:55:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I would like to request the immediate removal and termination of Eric Brunnemann. He is leading a tyrannical program and has been providing mediocre service to the patrons of PINS.

He does not return phone calls or emails and is NEVER available to speak to customers.

He is unprofessional, uncaring and unqualified to deal with the public. It is very apparent that he does not care about our sea life either.

Correspondence ID: 272 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,27 2023 21:30:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments on the PINS Pre-NEPA management plan:
According to the information provided in the plan, 99% of Ridley turtles are hatched at Playa de Rancho Nuevo, Mexico. So, the efforts at PINS to save turtles are really insignificant, toward overall survival of the Ridleys turtle. For this reason I'd urge the NPS to preserve all public events surrounding release of the turtles. The public releases serve to educate the public about turtle ecology. Any harm created by the public involvement in the releases would result in no harm overall to the turtles' survival. However, preventing the public from viewing this event would create huge harm in the overall perception of protection as sustainable for the turtles. My children experienced a turtle release when they were young, and I know this experience had a permanent positive effect on them. Watching some video about a turtle release, in a park theatre setting, would not have had the impact that personally witnessing a release had, on them.

Since driving on the beach is allowed, I'd suggest PINS continue gathering eggs, rearing them in a controlled environment till the turtles hatch, and then releasing them (with public involvement). This seems like a prudent means to ensure successful hatches every year. Plus, it provides a means for researchers to study turtle ecology, and a way for PINS to continue advertising the preservation movement. If PINS wants to assess the differences in natural vs intervene survival, post off an area of the shoreline from vehicles (but provide a way for vehicles to get around this area) and allow the eggs to hatch (or not hatch) naturally, undisturbed. Again, this would provide an opportunity for additional research.

I suggest that PINS encourage visitors to pick up trash, by providing re-useable net bags for trash collection at the entrance. Just provide a list of items you recommend people to pick up and drop off on their way out of PINS. Then the park employees can focus on picking up the big debris that washes ashore.

I suggest building a bypass road to bypass the first miles of the shoreline. If a significant portion of visitors state that they want an auto-free area, create that area when you build a bypass. However, don't restrict vehicular access to the shoreline. That's the only access option some people have.

When a hurricane hits PINS, assess and resolve safety concerns to the employees and visitors, address those safety concerns, and then get PINS reopened. The park service can continue to assess damage while PINS is open. For instance, if a road is damaged, place signs as necessary to warn public of the problem, then reopen if the road is still safe, and repair when conditions allow. Don't keep PINS closed because everything isn't perfect.

thanks for giving me the chance to comment.

Correspondence ID: 273 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,28 2023 09:12:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is not only foolish and untrue but downright deceitful to the people of Texas for anyone to pretend that halting a conservation initiative for an iconic species, which has known our great state as its home since time immemorial, will be justifiable in the name of "progress" and "development" of the beach. If the individuals involved actually cared about the natural lands over which they have been given the reigns, they would have seen the error of their ways a number of times over by now. If Texas leaves the international effort to reconstitute sea turtle populations, the people of Texas are stabbing yet another of its timeless endemic species in the back. Make the right choices, stupid!

Correspondence ID: 274 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,28 2023 11:05:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Happy that we are developing a plan to manage the park. I believe something that should be considered is working with the city to develop a glass recycling program for the city. This seems like left field but one of the items the park has to worry about is sand erosion. Several cities and even Disney have built out programs where they take used glass and grind the glass down to the point that the glass is sand again. The recycled glass is soft enough to walk on and Disney even uses it on their beaches and horse paths. The glass in Corpus Christi has not been recycled for over 10 years and this would be a great opportunity to use something already available to help the park. If there is extra sand created, it could be used for sandbags that are often needed for hurricanes.

Please consider this project. It would take a partnership with the city, some trucks, and the machine used to grind the glass.

Correspondence ID: 275 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,28 2023 11:37:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In 1962 the Padre Island National Seashore opened. That was 61 years ago. You say you have NO PLAN??? OH PLEASE!!!

You have daily operations plans, beach management plans, turtle recovery plans, sand management plans, building maintenance plans, park visitor enhancement plans, wildlife management plans, wetlands plans, storm recovery plans AND NPS operational plans! If you DO NOT!!! What have you been doing for the past 61 years is what I want to know???

SERIOUSLY, just stop with the crazy talk!

If you have NO plans, for example, you say you have no plans for continued operations of the turtle program. You say you are UNABLE to make changes without approval from the EPA, etc. YET, IT IS IMPORTANT TO

NOTE, that you have limited the programs spending to include NOT ONE DOLLAR MORE THAN BUDGET! Instead of saying you have NO plans, please PUBLICLY EXPLAIN THAT THE BASE BUDGET was left alone. Yet, your current restructuring plan has removed and prohibited grants and extra money from going into the program. THAT PLAN YOU ARE IMPLEMENTING NOW, DOES EXISIST! It is a downsizing plan, and a restructure of the program! You see, those are the types of plans we WANT to hear about. The national park should not move forward with ANY future park planning until it learns to be more transparent, open, honest and forthcoming about ALL daily operations of past, present, future plans. Honesty should thllbe the number one goal. Hey, LOOKY there, planning is part of setting goals. Have we the public been asking the wrong question???? WHAT ARE YOU FUTURE GOALS FOR THE TURTLE PROGRAM AND FOR DRIVING RESTRICTIONS ON OUR BEACH. PUBLIC STATEMENT IS REQUESTED!!!!!!

Correspondence ID: 276 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,28 2023 13:38:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I have two requests:

1. Please fund and support the sea turtle hatchling program and sea turtle rescue programs to the fullest extent, and according to scientific expertise, not according to the opinions of a park director. These programs are too important to our ecosystem and to tourism to erode them by pulling support.
2. Please allow kiteboarding at the park. See the Cape Cod National Seashore for input on how another national park did it. It doesn't have to be a free-for-all. With some guidelines and organization, kites can responsibly enjoy this special place and coexist safely with other users and wildlife.

Correspondence ID: 277 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,28 2023 19:05:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: This is the 1st step before Developers get their claws on the land and start Destroying it. Leave it as is. Wild and Free is how it should stay. ANY Development on this land would be unfortunate.

Correspondence ID: 278 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,28 2023 19:27:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: If we as a community stop the sea turtle program and stop letting people drive on the beach, all the new canals will have built in vein, because no one will want to vacation to our island. Vacationers are what built this island. If we don't cater to them we will loose 30% of the total gross revenue the city brings in every year period.

Correspondence ID: 279 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,01 2023 09:56:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: After attending the meeting in San Antonio, I was concerned about quite a few things. Learning that there was not a presentation of an official plan and also that the public was not well informed of this public meeting. It was also interesting to learn that the posters and the proposals/ideas were not anything more than a year's worth of brainstorming.

I spoke at length to a few park employees and your consultant. They were very careful to not divulge too much information on how this process works.

The public may comment on the "Beach Mgt Plan", despite the fact that there isn't a plan. We may comment on your ideas and make suggestions on what we would like to see happen at the Park.

BEACH MGT PLAN - However, what I saw was a Park Mgt Plan. Restoration of infrastructure isn't beach mgt. Hurricane or disaster recovery isn't beach mgt. Turtle monitoring and protection is not beach mgt. Marine debris, sand mgt, and beach driving are and should be included in beach mgt.

I was told that visitors don't want to hear traffic while on the beach. It would be an amazing feat to hear any vehicle over the roar of the wind and surf.

It was evident that beach access by the public will be affected greatly by what ever plan is finally proposed up the chain at the NPS.

In Port Aransas, wooden bollards have been used successfully for many years to separate the pedestrians, sunbathers, fisherman, campers, etc. from traffic flow. If that is a goal I suggest using that method for the first 5 miles of the beach to ensure visitor safety.

Building a bypass road through the wetlands and dunes would cause more of an environmental impact to habitat and maintenance costs would be too high. As it is, the park seems to struggle with funding.

Those that venture down the beach are the eyes and ears of the park, they report debris, injured/stranded animals, provide valuable shark research data, etc. Elimination of any access is in my opinion WRONG.

The NPS should develop individual plans for the other necessary issues in the park.

Do not try to sneak, in any form, reduction of access to OUR beach in some all encompassing Park plan.

Additional permits to drive on the beach are not necessary. If they become a reality, then the park needs to improve driving conditions daily via extra sand mgt. The money collected from the permits should only go for that purpose.

While I agree with protecting sea turtle nesting sites, I have yet to hear of any negative impact from visitors to the beach. Using turtles as an excuse to restrict access is not acceptable.

I'm 52 and have been visiting the park for almost all of my life. I've attended 20+ beach clean ups in the park. I've also patrolled the beach as a US Coast Guardsman, responded to oil spills and toxic waste. This beach is special to me and my family. I've contributed a lot of my time to the park.

I hope you hear the voices of the people who are genuinely concerned that this plan will reduce access to the beach.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 280 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 11:24:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We travel to PINS 6-12 times a year. There should be no vehicle management to keep us from driving on the beach. As a matter of fact PINS is as it should be as natural as possible. Let nature take its course! Over management of an area stop the police actions and take care of the park!

Correspondence ID: 281 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 11:58:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Sea Turtle program is effective and productive. It is making a positive impact on these very endangered animals.

- Please do not disrupt or make changes to this successful program.

- Patrols to locate nesting turtles is vitally important, and protection of the eggs is imperative to the continuation of this species

- Public hatchling releases provide the opportunity for the citizens to witness and understand the importance of these animals. It educates our children and teaches them to be good stewards to all wildlife. We need MORE public releases rather than fewer. It is not a financial strain on the resources of the park to allow people to watch these small turtles begin their lives in the sea. It lets people know that the work done here is important and positive and that we are helping to leave this world a better place. We are working to reverse the damage of mankind from harvesting the turtles for their meat and the harvest of their eggs.
- In-situ nesting is not a good option at this time for these critically endangered animals. The worldwide population has not recovered enough to just step back and quit protection.
- Limiting patrols is silly, the turtles do not recognize days of the week, they nest when weather conditions are favorable. The Sea Turtle program searches for turtles during daylight hours for four months, when the turtles are likely to nest.

- Sand Management: Keep only the entrances maintained, otherwise leave it alone. The sand is very dynamic and changes daily, allow it to be natural.

- Seashore Storm Recovery related to closures: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only. Our beach belongs to the public, we like to see what the storm brings in too. We the people, deserve to have access as much as possible to our beach. Our beach is only a resource if we can see it and use it. The National Parks mission statement "for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations".

- Linda Reed, fourth generation native to Corpus Christi, worked 12 years as a biological technician under four different Superintendents.

This Superintendent, Eric Brunnemann, has created more angst and discord between the people of South Texas and the national Park Service than anyone in the history of this park. Access to the beach every day in as much as is safely possible, is our right.

Correspondence ID: 282 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 14:49:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been a long-time volunteer for the Sea Turtle Project (STSR). I have been frustrated by the lack of transparency by the Supt Brunnemann and NPS and its effort to dismantle the STSR. My previous high opinion of the NPS has been demolished. I have read the Review of the STSR and this beach management plan is an effort to further hurt the efforts of STSR to protecting Kemp's ridley sea turtles. The NPS has a duty to protect endangered species.

I am frustrated by the wording of the Pre-NEPA document. It is so vague and I think that was intentional. The first one says: Vary sea turtle patrols.....To me that means reduce. The Review specifically mentions reducing patrols to 5 days a week. This would definitely reduce the amount of nests detected.

The difference between Kemp's nesting habits and other sea turtle is a major factor is the way patrols are conducted. Kemp's nest during the daylight hours and on windy days. A calm day with no nesting can change instantly when a localized wind picks and turtles come ashore all at once. I have seen it many times. While excavating nests I have watched the tracks disappear before my eyes. It happens very quickly.

Pilot Study 3: This is a direct assault on to the STSR. Right now the STSR uses Ranger Road to access the beach. How are their UTVs going to access the beach with Ranger Road closed.

Pilot Study 1 & 2: There is no question that leaving nest in situ will result in less hatchling making it to the water. A recent paper (2020) by the STSR documented a 20% decrease of in situ nests hatchling success compared to corrals or incubation facility.

Everyone involved in the STSR knows that the ultimate goal is to leave nests in-situ. We are not there yet in Texas.

Bottom line is that I do not trust Brunnemann or the NPS to be fair in this process.

Correspondence ID: 283 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 14:53:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The coastal community that's Willowbend is very unique and unusual. We are one of the only bitches that you can drive up to, and on to a void caring so many items and easy accessibility for those who are handicapped. Taking this right away from the citizens of Corpus Christi, and Texas in general, will curtail tourism and dollars for the local community. Locals and visitors are very mindful of the turtle hatchlings already. There has not been an issue prior about the turtle hatchlings and vehicles. It is a very unique opportunity to be able to drive on the beach, get out of your vehicle and get your feet in the sand without walking from a parking lot or miles away. Not to mention the memories family will make when they find those special shells further away than they can walk. My plan would be to leave the area the way it has been for years and focus on other things such as educational visits to schools, field trips & volunteerism from adults & students.

Correspondence ID: 284 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 15:10:45

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: LEAVE IT ALONE. TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT STICKING THEIR NOSE WHERE IT SHOULDN.T BE. Texas beach are for the PUBLIC. i can see the writing on the wall, government sells out for a profit and Padre ends up with mega hotels. A natural resource gone for money. Leave it alone.\

Correspondence ID: 285 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 17:18:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leave all Texas beaches open. No need to fix something that is not broken. This beach is a treasure to the fishing community

Correspondence ID: 286 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 17:50:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We need to Save the Turtles.

Correspondence ID: 287 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 18:52:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a frequent visitor to PINS I am opposed to the idea of closing the beach down to vehicles, the impact on removing people from the beaches to the turtle population is difficult to gauge considering those people help keep coyotes away from areas of the beach when they are there.

Correspondence ID: 288 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,01 2023 18:58:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please don't close the beach. We take care of the turtles. This will ruin fishing for all of us and just ruin people's lives

Correspondence ID: 289 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,02 2023 08:27:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns for beach management of The National Sea Shore. I have been a visitor and resident since 1996. My wife and I travel at least a dozen times out the beach to the port Mansfield channel. We are offshore fishing enthusiast and enjoy camping for several days on the beach. This is one of the reasons we moved to the coastal bend area! It would be a travesty to many fisherman & campers to see this treasure disappear due to the pressure from environmental groups, courts and those few discontented individuals who would up arms to stop the travel down this beautiful area in our country and state. I have seen the evolution of the Sea Turtle and recovery program come a long way. The only thing I see at this time that should be addressed is the limitation of how many people gather for the release. Currently the impact to the beach by so many travelers who have no idea how to drive or what kind of auto it takes are tearing the beach up! I would implement a public raffle. this would also be a way to raise funds for the park. I think signs should be put up to inform the public about the flagging program that the turtle group is using to track movement. Most all of us who travel out the beach are stewards for the turtles! Regarding sand management, I see no problem with the current policy's. Especially when one travels past the five mile marker the current sign tells you what you need to know. We all help one another who have trouble. this is the Texas way and we are a community more than ever on the beach. The proposal for another route to travel around the five mile marker so as not to impact the novelist beach goers. would be an unnecessary impact the dunes and wildlife. The current 15 mph is good. Maybe more fines to those who break the law and possibly a radar monitoring system like state roads put out during construction. People must learn to get along and be respectful of each other. This is a hard thing for most, but you can only so what you can. Lets not destroy our park for the few idiots out there .Now the subject of marine debris. Once again I have seen great strides in current policies. The trash cans was one of the best. Keep up the good work. We fill the back of our truck with trash every trip. Thanks for the good job to all. Hurricane management: Safety is always first! But we the people who love our beach and the National Sea shore are your best resource and friend. We come together to clean and restore our homes and community back from these natural disasters. So reach out to your community neighbors and we will be there for you. In my 68 years on this earth, I am saddened at how we keep taking away our lands. The few destroy it for the many. Lets not let this happen to the National Sea shore. We have something very special down here. It would be a shame to lose it. This is what has happen to Florida, California and most all beaches in the United States .I will pray for you to find the strength & guidance to say NO to the special groups and courts who would take away our treasure. Sincerely yours

Correspondence ID: 290 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,02 2023 12:10:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Almost all species are better served by leaving the beach open. We, as a community, have done a great job of protecting and serving the wildlife at Pins. Also, it's only fair to consider making the greater public aware of your plan to close the beach, as many residents don't even know you're planning on closing it. I assure you, nothing fires up this community more than closing the beaches.

Correspondence ID: 291 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,02 2023 13:27:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To consider you are again trying to close the beach in Turtle and leave eggs in situ is not conducive to the survival of the young Turtles. You have plenty of data to support what you are planning is not for the benefits of the Turtles.

Taking vehicles off the beach during turtle season again is not for the benefit of Turtles the Island or the city of Corpus Christi. Wanting extra police on the beach is a joke, what you need is a first aid center and better training for your current rangers.

Regards

Correspondence ID: 292 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,02 2023 15:00:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To begin with, I want to let you know that I enjoy going to PINS as well as other national parks and hope that my input is actually read.

I had thought the meetings would be more structured to allow the EA engineering people the opportunity to talk about their ideas for the management plan instead of being a cluster of people grouped around and them having to continually repeat themselves when new people came close. The Corpus paper implied the meetings would be different and a comment from one of the EA people was that they were also surprised by how the newspaper presented the meetings to the public. My thoughts are that if they read it in the newspaper why did they not get a retraction or get a correction done? Many of us felt as if this event was set up just to "check a box", meaning that decisions had already been made about PINS, but the NPS or Dept of Interior requires public meetings to be held before making any changes. I will still provide my thoughts and wishes even if it is futile.

1. It seems that since Mr. Bannerman has taken over PINS the attitude of the employees and park has changed. I know a "gag" order was placed on the leader of the turtle program and \$300,000 was taken from the PINS budget. At the meeting, Mr. Bannerman did not want to get into why that money was directed elsewhere, he said it was a long story. The turtle program draws a lot of people to the area and should not be cut, as it is a win-win program.

2. The public should be able to be represented at all times by the park management. I feel it would be a good idea to create an advisory board that included Mr. Bannerman, other representatives from the PINS employees, a representative from the City of Corpus, both affected counties, along with volunteers from the island and the mainland who would represent the average person. I am not sure how the residents could be vetted but they should at least be required to submit a reason why they want to be part of the advisory board.

3. I understand that fishing is very important to many of the residents and visitors. I feel that a great solution would be to divert the folks who wanted to fish and explore past mile marker 5 to a road of their own that bypasses the beach from restrooms up to mile 5.

4. Revenue is very important to PINS so having the entrance booth manned during regular hours 7 days a week is important. Maybe it is possible to manage it with volunteers? Yes, I understand they would need to be vetted, etc. but it is an idea.

5. You must realize how many of us want to help by the large turnout at the Beach Clean Up last Saturday. Find creative ways to let us help. If this management plan was so important to the park, why has it taken this long to have it come to light? Something is not making sense and smells fishy.

Last but not least, I have heard and read about "limiting driving" and am afraid that it actually means NO Driving. I am hoping that is not what it means, as I feel that will change the park in a bad way.

Thank you for reading.

Correspondence ID: 293 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,02 2023 16:36:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am interested to know how the nesting turtles are doing on Matagorda Island. In the past they patrolled their beach and collected the Kemps ridley eggs for incubation at PINS. A number of years ago, they stopped the patrolling and collecting eggs. A study could be done this nesting season to see if turtles are still nesting there and what the hatching success might be.

Correspondence ID: 294 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,02 2023 20:03:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please keep the beach open for the public to drive through. I live in Austin and PINS is what makes corpus christi so special compare to other beaches in Texas. The possibility of leaving city life behind and enjoys the natural beauty of the secluded coast line. Taking that away and Corpus loses that special thing which draws in tourist from all over Texas. Summer months are the busiest travel season and losing tourist during those time would hurt the local businesses tremendously. PINS is different than other beaches on the texas coast because of its proximity to local accommodations and restaurants. It offers clearer water and low surf condition and the main draw are the miles of beach that is accessible via driving. PINS already has a well maintained pedestrian only beach at Malaquite and a small section north of that. It doesn't need another section for

pedestrians traffic only while the other have not been fully utilize. The beach should remain open to public driving year round because thats what makes Corpus area special.

Correspondence ID: 295 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,02 2023 23:45:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do not stop the driving on the beach. That is one of the joys, You visitors who want to experience no vehicles? You have closed beach at the north end of the park, Isn't that enough, I see it rarely used!! Nobody want to carry their stuff a mile to get to the beach. You need us visitors that pickup the trash on the beach, to help notify a turtle coming in, or some other injured wildlife life. I believe this is just all about money!!! You want to make the Park cost more, You surely don't want people to visit, the Rangers are so rude these days, they use to be friendly.

Correspondence ID: 296 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,03 2023 06:54:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The park needs to stay how it is and repair existing facilities to their proper function. The current superintendent has done a terrible job in managing this park. It no longer has a welcoming feel to it and feels more hostile than anything. The turtle program needs it funding back and does not need to be changed. Beach access and recreation are OUR RIGHTS as fishermen and visitors. There is zero need to create a bypass road and zero need to extend pedestrian only beach length. Not a single member of the public has asked for more non-driveable beach. The park rangers need better training on how to properly interact with the public. A citizen was recently stung by stingray and park rangers refused to help her any. That is unacceptable! They should be trained in first aid and minor wound treatment. All normal law enforcement officers are trained in those. This beach is a very sacred place for generations of fishermen and visitors and it needs to remain open for all to use and protect.

Correspondence ID: 297 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,03 2023 09:28:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Potential option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island. YES!

Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience. YES!

I am in favor of these two options. More miles of vehicle-free beach would improve my visitor experience and also help preserve the natural environment. On a recent walk at high tide on South Beach I witnessed trucks and campers parked in the fore dunes and driving across vegetation, some zig-zagging at high speeds without regard to pedestrians. Malaquite Beach is great, but 4.5 miles is not much compared to more than 60 miles of beach to drive on. We should make more of an effort to preserve our beautiful park.

Correspondence ID: 298 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,03 2023 09:38:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My family and I have been going to PINS for over 20 years and to hear that there is a possibility of public access be denied is heart breaking. Please let us know what else we can do in order to keep PINS open to the public.

Correspondence ID: 299 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,03 2023 09:47:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The National Parks were created to preserve areas for all Americans to experience nature. By prohibiting vehicles on a 60 mile stretch of the National Seashore, you are doing the exact opposite. Is this intentional to then us busses to transport visitors along the beach? I have memories of taking my children to this National Park and would like to have those same memories with my grandchildren. The Park Service could strongly enforce current regulations concerning driving in areas of the turtles during certain seasons but closing 60 miles is an over reach of power. This is the 100th anniversary of National Parks and citizens have enjoyed them all across America. Don't be the National Park that takes that away from American citizens.

Correspondence ID: 300 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,03 2023 13:11:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In 2012 the NPS completed an Environmental Assessment and Beach Vehicle Environmental Assessment Finding of No Significant Impact after doing a comprehensive and extensive analysis of beach management issues for PINS, and established a beach management plan for PINS, particularly with respect to its turtle recovery program and vehicles on the Beach (which are discussed in more detail on page 3 of the Comments). On its website, the NPS have labeled such documents as a Management Plan. No material changes have occurred on PINS which justify a change to its current beach management plan with respect to its turtle program and vehicles on the beach. We believe that having a new NEPA study within approximately ten years when no material changes have occurred at PINS to justify such study is an abuse of NEPA. The current Scoping Request with respect to the PINS turtle program and vehicles on the Beach is not needed and should not be included.

We believe that many of the actions that the NPS is considering implementing, as revealed in the Scoping Request, will result in significant economic damage to cities and communities in the Coastal Bend, and its businesses.

We do not believe that the actions that the NPS desires to implement are in the best interest of the cities and communities in the Coastal Bend and its business and thought that you might desire to offer your comments to the Scoping Request.

Correspondence ID: 301 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,03 2023 19:05:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a graduate student in biology with 7 years experience working with nesting sea turtles, including time at Padre Island National Seashore. I have seen firsthand the difference this program makes in the survival of a critically endangered species, and how much it means to the park and the community. Without the years of effort, intensive monitoring, public outreach, nest relocation, and hands-on release, few if any of these nests and hatchlings would survive. This is true of the rare green and loggerhead nests, as well as the more numerous but critically endangered kemp's ridleys. Between traffic and human activities on the beach, natural and invasive predators, and high tide and storm events, I have observed the destruction and failure of nests left in place on the beach. I appreciate the need for budget management and consideration, but we must consider the years of research and recovery from this program and its value to the humans and turtles in Texas before making dramatic changes to protocols and the sea turtle program. Thank you for your consideration of this comment, and please listen to the scientists, the data, and the community.

Correspondence ID: 302 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,03 2023 21:05:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like to preface this by saying I have not lived in Corpus Christi for very long, I do however greatly care about coastal ecosystems everywhere. Many parts go into a beach management plan, I wanted to focus mainly on sand management and erosion. In Montrose, Scotland sand was "dredged from

the Montrose tidal inlet to nourish a beach 80 km away at Aberdeen." This idea stemmed from a need to dispose of sediment. Instead of disposing of it offshore, it was decided it should be reused to benefit Aberdeen beach to help combat the erosion there. Taking from this example, if Corpus Christi needs more sand it should come from somewhere that has an excess of sand and vice versa. Nothing should be disposed of or go to waste; things like sand and sediment can always be reused or repurposed. In addition to the previous comments, the Piping Plover needs more protection to make sure it does not go extinct. This goes for all areas that this bird inhabits; no development of any kind should take place near their habitats. Texas parks and wildlife states, "Major threats to the species in Texas are disturbance and development along the beaches as well as chemical spills from the petroleum industry within the bay/laguna systems and the Gulf of Mexico." Stopping chemical spills is a bit more involved than a beach management plan so starting with setting aside areas for the Piping Plover would allow it to live undisturbed and hopefully not be endangered anymore. Those are just a few thoughts I had about beach management; I hope the community can come together to create a beach management plan that has everyone's ideas contained in it to better the environment.

Ariza, E., Jiménez, J. A., & Sardá, R. (2008). A critical assessment of beach management on the Catalan coast. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 51(2), 141-160.

Texas Parks & Wildlife. (n.d.). South Texas Wildlife Management: Endangered Species. Endangered species. Retrieved March 3, 2023, from https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/habitats/southtx_plain/endangered_species/

Correspondence ID: 303 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 06:35:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The current turtle program has been successful for years and is ran by experienced trained professionals who are experts in what they do. These people are against what you are choosing to do because it's not in the best interest of the turtles or the citizens enjoying beach access and the turtle program they get to watch and experience, such as the turtle releases. The turtles are under constant threat of predation which is made more intense because there is no predator management program because it's a national park (no hunting, etc). Also we don't have hotels and resorts, meaning no human traffic to scare off predators, etc. The turtle breeding period is from March to September and to limit beach access to vehicles would be devastating to the local economy (i.e lodging, restaurants, retail stores, etc) which depend on local usage and tourism. Hundreds and thousands of dollars would be lost annually. I'm all for the environment but in a risk vs gain analysis, limiting vehicular traffic for the program NPS proposes would be more risk than gain. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 304 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 06:45:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We have been going to PINS for for 26 years on average 8 to 10 times a year we have identified kempes and relayed it, which I can't imagine with the few people that work patrol that we would have so many successful saves without the Responsible Public that visit we also take 4 55 gallon trash bags and fill them with litter and washed up trash on every trip, We typically camp 3 nights passed the 20 and have identified and relayed everything from turtles to bad seeds on the beach to patrol and rangers again raises the point of needing the Responsible Public to help out when it applies. I understand you can't have eyes everywhere and we feel it's our job as much as yours to preserve this Amazing Beach. I can go on and on about experiences and memories made here but I would think whomever is reading this is local and understands its majestic worth. I hope somehow this helps and I appreciate you taking the time to read this. Thank You and Have A Blessed Day

Correspondence ID: 305 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 07:00:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Driving the national sea shore is a huge attraction to four wheel drive camping enthusiasts! If the beach closes to vehicle traffic it will cost the community greatly in terms of business and tourist revenue. Padre Island National Seashore brings tourists to the area year round strictly because of the length of the island's drivable beach.

Correspondence ID: 306 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 07:01:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The current turtle program has been successful for years and is ran by experienced trained professionals who are experts in what they do. These people are against what you are choosing to do because it's not in the best interest of the turtles or the citizens enjoying beach access and the turtle program they get to watch and experience, such as the turtle releases. The turtles are under constant threat of predation which is made more intense because there is no predator management program because it's a national park (no hunting, etc). Also we don't have hotels and resorts, meaning no human traffic to scare off predators, etc. The turtle breeding period is from March to September and to limit beach access to vehicles would be devastating to the local economy (I.e lodging, restaurants, retail stores, etc) which depend on local usage and tourism. Hundreds and thousands of dollars would be lost annually. I'm all for the environment but is you look at a risk vs gain analysis, limiting vehicular traffic for the program NPS proposes would be more risk than gain. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 307 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 07:29:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please keep this national resource available for public use.

Correspondence ID: 308 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 12:09:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Pre-NEPA Beach Management Request for Comments for Padre Island National Seashore (Scoping Request)

Gentlemen:

The comments discussed below are intended to assist the National Park Service (NPS) in addressing its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pre-NEPA scoping request on various beach management matters set forth in its Scoping Request.

Commencing in 2009 the NPS undertook significant changes to its management of PINS which resulted in a significant public outcry and ultimately the formation of Citizens for Access and Conservation (CAC) to interact with the NPS on behalf of the users of PINS. As a result of these past and subsequent actions by the NPS, considerable public distrust exists over concern that the NPS desires to use its turtle program and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to close public access to the beach at PINS (Beach) and to ultimately convert a portion of PINS from its use as a park and recreation area [as mandated by the State of Texas in its deed (the Deed - and discussed in more detail below) to the United States of America] for a few months during turtle nesting season solely into a turtle preserve.

It is well established and known that the Texas Open Beaches Act (TOBA) guarantees that the public has the free and unrestricted right to access Texas beaches, including [according to letter dated July 25, 2011 from the Texas General Land Office (TGLO) to Superintendent Joe Escoto (the TGLO letter)] a Texas beach located within a national park. (See also Section 61.0211 of the Texas Natural Resources Code providing that the TOBA is applicable to the Beach.)

It should also be noted that the Congressional Act of September 28, 1962 (PL 87-712, 76 Stat. 650) providing for

the establishment of PINS states that the acquisition is “in order to save and preserve, for purposes of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped”. No mention is made in the congressional language of creating a wildlife preserve or limiting public beach access contrary to Texas law.

The NPS should administer PINS first as a park and recreation area, and second as a wildlife preserve.

The NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) need to recognize that Texans are different from citizens of other states. The Texas slogan “Don't Mess With Texas” says it all. Any attempt to limit beach access at PINS for any period of time (except in the case of an emergency), no matter how logical the reason from the NPS and FWS position, will be met with universal and unabated resistance by Texans. No legislator, whether in the Texas legislature or Congress, in Kleberg County, Nueces County or any other adjoining County, nor any other public official or business leader in the Coastal Bend area, nor the Texas Governor, Texas Attorney General nor Commissioner of the TGLO, nor any other governmental official who desires to be re-elected, will approve any such closure, but instead will vigorously oppose it.

Texans believe that if you let the NPS close any portion of the Beach for any period (e.g., from April to July 15th), that later the NPS will attempt to extend the closure to include a larger portion of the Beach or for a longer period of time (such as, until all of the eggs in situ incubation on the Beach would have hatched), or will try to implement a different closure for a different species.

The NPS and the FWS need to reach a solution for management of its turtle program and the Beach which does not involve limiting beach access or entry to any portion of the Beach for any period of time. The remainder of these comments will attempt to find solutions which do not involve any beach closure.

These comments are offered in hopes of enlightening the NPS so that by its actions it does not once again generate organized adverse publicity and legal advocacy in opposition to its policies with the resulting unnecessary expenditure of funds and effort by all.

Prior Beach Management Plans for PINS

The NPS has stated that it needs to perform the Scoping Request because no beach management plan currently exists for PINS. An examination of the NPS listing of “Management Plans” found at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/ManagementPlans.cfm> for PINS lists two studies: (1) Beach Vehicle Environmental Assessment - June 2011 (Environmental Assessment) (To download a pdf of the Environmental Assessment go to - <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=86&projectID=32158&documentID=41741>), and (2) Beach Vehicle Environmental Assessment FONSI - March 2012 (FONSI) (To download a pdf of the FONSI go to - <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=86&projectID=32158&documentID=46093>).

The Environmental Assessment and FONSI completed in 2012 constitute a comprehensive and extensive analysis of beach management issues for PINS, and establish a beach management plan for PINS, particularly with respect to its turtle recovery program and vehicles on the Beach. No material changes have occurred on PINS which justify a change to its current beach management plan with respect to its turtle program and vehicles on the beach. Internal politics and strife within the NPS do not constitute justification for a new beach management plan or NEPA study. Having a new NEPA study within approximately ten years when no material changes have occurred at PINS to justify such study is an abuse of NEPA. The current Scoping Request with respect to the PINS turtle program and vehicles on the Beach is not needed and should not be included.

Discussion of Beach and Turtle Management Issues

Based upon examination of the Review of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program Padre Island National

Seashore, amended 5/7/2021 (2021 Review) (See https://www.nps.gov/pais/learn/management/upload/pais-stsr-review-report_20210507_finalamended_508.pdf), and review of other material, we are aware that management of the Beach creates problems which are unique to the NPS. Except on PINS, Kemp's ridley sea turtle (Turtle(s)) nests on coastal national parks are left in situ incubation (or placed in corrals) on the beach, and driving on the beach is prohibited to protect Turtles and their eggs.

Because the Turtles were so endangered in the late 1970s, the 1978 interagency Kemp's action plan included a goal for establishment of a secondary Turtle nesting colony at PINS. Since the 1980's the PINS Science and Recovery Turtle Recovery Program (STSR Program) has been actively contributing to global recovery of the species. Although the creation of a secondary nesting colony at PINS was a key component of the 1978 interagency action plan, it has not been mentioned to be important in subsequent plans, including the most recent 2011 Kemp's Bi-National Recovery Plan. In addition, the FWS performs studies every five years on the Turtles (since they are endangered) determining measures needed to protect the species. The next five-year study (5-Year Study) should be released soon and offer guidance to the NPS on the future actions the NPS needs to implement on PINS to protect the Turtles. Hopefully, the 2020 Kemp's Bi-National Recovery Plan (2020 Plan), and 5-Year Study, when released, will address the issue of the importance of PINS to the recovery effort. Until the 2020 Plan and 5-Year Study are issued, the NPS should make no major changes to the management of the STSR Program at PINS.

The NPS has already starting implementing the "Near-term" recommendations discussed on pages 15-17 of the 2021 Review (and may have started implementing some of the "Mid-term" recommendations), some of which may have required a NEPA study, without waiting for the results of the 2020 Plan or 5-Year Study.

The STSR Program's operating budget has increased substantially over the years. The 2021 Review states that a budget shortfall is anticipated within the next few years. The NPS has used this potential budget shortfall to justify some of its actions cutting the STSR Program. If the rumors circulating within the NPS and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are true that the NPS used its influence within the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to convince its leaders to not distribute any grants (even if won in a grant competition) to any Turtle recovery program in Texas because of the existence of the TOBA, then it is somewhat disingenuous for the NPS to assert that the STSR Program needs to be downsized due to lack of funding.

Much pressure is applied within the NPS on management personnel at PINS because other Turtle recovery programs managed by the NPS outside of Texas (such as, in Florida) leave a Turtle's eggs in situ at the beach and can close their beaches to public access. Such non-Texas beaches are visited by much fewer Turtles than the Texas beaches so any contribution they make to the species or error made in its management is inconsequential to survival of the species. In addition, as discussed below, the Beach has several unique problems that non-Texas beaches do not have. Also, the NPS cannot close access to the Beach because the TOBA is applicable to national parks and because the reversionary language in the Deed might result in the NPS losing PINS if it closes the Beach.

Significant problems exist on the Beach, which are uncommon on non-Texas beaches, which are discussed in considerable detail in the research paper entitled "Threats to Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii* Garman, 1810) nests incubation in situ on the Texas coast" (the in situ Research Paper) (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346428950_Threats_to_Kemp's_ridley_sea_turtle_Lepidochelys_kempii_Garman_1880_nests_incubating_in_situ_on_the_Texas_coast). In the interest of brevity, we will only discuss a few of the major points supported by the objective and independent data presented in the in situ Research Paper, and make recommendations based upon such data.

Because of the confluence of currents effecting Texas beaches, they experience significantly higher loads of marine debris (estimated to be ten times higher) than on beaches of other states. As a result, marine debris and sargassum accumulates on Texas beaches which can interfere with nesting Turtles and trap or impede hatchlings. This can result in a high percentage of hatchlings perishing because of predators and heat and/or desiccation. Plant

root penetration and growth can decrease moisture for developing eggs and trap hatchlings

PINS has a very long undeveloped beach with a substantial number of predators of turtles, their eggs and hatchlings [such as, ghost crabs, coyotes, hogs, skunks, raccoons, badgers, gray foxes, snakes, fire ants and birds (collectively, predators)]. A study of 155 marked nest sites on the Beach from 2005-2007 is set forth in detail in the in situ Research Paper and is summarized on Table 4 of the Research Paper. Of the 155 nests, 96.8 % were damaged or impacted by ghost crabs, 56.8% by coyotes, 40% by tidal inundations, 30.3% by human tampering, 12.3 % by plant roots, 10.3% by vehicle drive-overs and 3.9% by racoons. The study suggests that the actual emergence success of in situ incubation in the study were likely greatly inflated as additional undocumented mortality from predators and human interaction likely occurred before the nests were found or that the evidence of tracks of predators was washed away by rain or tides. The study also noted that increased food resources available from discarded food scraps increase high densities of ghost crabs and coyotes in that area. It is unlikely that the prevention of humans from visiting such area for a few months a year would substantially diminish the presence of such predators during such period of human absence in such areas.

Another major problem is that high tides flood portions of the Beach all the way to the dune line multiple times a year, which could wash away or uncover in situ incubating eggs thereby exposing them to predators or risk of desiccation from the sun. A study by Sweet et al., 2019 (referenced in the in situ Research Paper) states that coastal flooding is an increasing threat at PINS. Warming environmental conditions caused by climate change are expected to result in more heat related deaths of hatchlings and possibly 100% female hatchlings by 2070 (see Fuentes et al., 2011 referenced in the in situ Research Paper).

Although marking nests may mitigate against vehicles driving over the nests, the in situ Research Paper suggests that it invites human tampering.

Since 2004, a portion of the egg clutches at Rancho Nuevo in Mexico have been left to incubate in situ and usually tightly clustered to increase the likelihood of predator swamping upon hatchling emergence. The beach at Rancho Nuevo is less than 19 miles long and the main predators of hatchlings are birds and coyotes. Without the high tides, debris and numerous predators that the Beach has, and the greater likelihood of predator swamping upon emergence because Rancho Nuevo has a small beach and more tight clusters of a substantial number of eggs (which is not possible at the Beach because of its length and fewer nests), the in situ incubation of eggs at Rancho Nuevo has a substantially greater likelihood of success than does the in situ incubation of eggs on the Beach.

The following observations and recommendations are offered after examination of the data and discussions in the in situ Research Paper:

- As a result of the debris on the Beach, the large number of predators on the Beach, an increasing number of high tides on the Beach, the warming of the environment because of climate change and the length of the Beach resulting in a lesser likelihood of predator swamping compared to the beaches in Mexico, the in situ incubation of Turtle eggs on the Beach will result in a much higher mortality than will result from eggs incubated at the Facility or in corrals.
- Because of the greater prospect of human tampering of nests marked by stakes or otherwise (or of being walked over if unmarked) in high use areas (such as, Malaquite Beach and MM 0-5, or further down the Beach if then highly utilized), leaving nests in situ incubation in those areas will result in a high likelihood of substantial nest damage.
- Because of food droppings in high use areas resulting in more predators, leaving nests in situ incubation in those areas will result in a high likelihood of substantial nest damage. (This will likely occur, even if beach visitors are not then present in such areas.)
- To maximize hatchling survival in high use areas, the eggs should be moved to the Facility or a corral.

- Eggs in nests on the remainder of the Beach may be left in situ incubation, subject to being moved if deposited in a dangerous location.
- The substantial number of turtle volunteers who assist the NPS can be utilized to mark eggs in situ incubation on the remainder of the Beach past the high use areas which have a significant drive-over risk, and to notify the NPS of any eggs which should be moved.
- Since, as the in situ Research Paper clearly indicates, any eggs left on the Beach are at a very high mortality risk from the factors above discussed, the likelihood of a vehicle drive-over is a lesser risk than the predator and environmental risks to the eggs and should be deemed acceptable if it occurs.
- If sampling studies indicate an unacceptable mortality to in situ incubated nests, then more nests need to be marked or eggs gathered and placed in the Facility or a corral.
- If as a result of global warming the species are in danger because of the lack of male hatchlings, then the NPS needs to be prepared to increase use of the incubation equipment at the Facility, which can create primarily males, if desired, and use of corrals which can create more males if needed by using a cover over the enclosure and watering the eggs.
- The Scoping Request mentions that the Facility may not survive a direct hit from a hurricane. The fact that the Facility might not survive a hurricane is a very distressing fact. Since as discussed above the Facility will be needed to incubate eggs, the NPS should consider moving all of the equipment in the facility to higher ground and into a more protected and secure building.

It is legal chicanery to argue that hatchling losses resulting from human caused mortality factors (such as, human beach debris or high tides, global warming, ocean current changes and damage to food sources resulting from climate change caused by humans) are materially different from vehicle caused mortality, especially since the latter is an insignificant factor when all causes of hatchling deaths are considered.

The incidental taking of eggs by vehicles on the Beach should not be a problem in view of the remarks of Dawn Whitehead of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at a meeting held on September 16, 2009 attended by representatives of the NPS, FSW, CAC and others stating “that it would be possible to lose all of the Turtles on PINS and the species would still not be in jeopardy” [PEPC Comment ID# 219645 (pp 33-34) of the FONSI]

Although the 2021 Report treats the existence of beach visitors driving on the Beach as a negative, the NPS should not lose sight of the many benefits that having volunteer turtle patrollers, beach comers, fisherpersons, surfers, bird watchers and other observers on the beach offer. Turtle patrollers offer considerable assistance to the STSR Program. Beach visitors assist in cleaning up the Beach. Not only are turtle and other wildlife problems routinely reported by beach visitors, illegal activities (such as, drugs and illegal immigrants) and other problems are often reported. Beach visitors often find turtle nests or injured or dead turtles and other dead wildlife and report them to the NPS or other appropriate organization. Recently on February 20, 2023, a beach visitor found two turtles dead on the Beach, one of whom was apparently killed by a coyote. Such deaths were reported to the NPS along with their location and pictures. Bird watchers routinely do wildlife counts and advise the NPS or others of wildlife issues on the Beach. Shark fishermen assist government agencies and others with DNA sampling, tagging, measurement and other data on sharks that they catch and release, which efforts benefit worldwide shark study and management. Beach visitors routinely assist other visitors needing assistance and occasionally are requested by a Ranger for assistance. Beach visitors also provide other useful information to wildlife management and rehabilitation organizations. For example, the beach visitor who found the dead turtles also found five dead pelicans on the Beach the same day, which was reported. Since Park Rangers often do not drive past the MM 5, it is often up to beach visitors to provide information and assistance on beach problems

occurring down the Beach.

Having less beach visitors (or alienating such visitors so they cease visiting the Beach) is not a positive move for the NPS, and negatively impacts the Coastal Bend economy.

Economic Benefit of PINS to the Coastal Bend Community

It is important that PINS have an amicable and mutually beneficial working relationship with cities and communities in the Coastal Bend and its business leaders. The NPS should consult with such leaders before making management decisions with respect to PINS which might economically impact such cities, communities and businesses (such as, curtailing the number of viewing events of hatchling releases or any attempt to close the Beach).

On April 24, 2017, the Corpus Christi Business News stated that the 643,013 visitors to Padre Island National Seashore last year spent \$27 million in the cities and communities in the Coastal Bend. According to a National Park Service report, that spending supported 406 local jobs and boosted the economy by \$31 million. It contained the following quote from then Superintendent Mark Spier, "Padre Island National Seashore welcomes visitors from across the country and around the world. National Park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning more than \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it's a big factor in our local economy as well."

The NPS has substantially reduced the number of public hatchling release viewing events at the Beach. For many years pre-Covid, the NPS held between 20 and 27 hatchling release viewing events annually. No events were held in 2020, and the release events in 2021 were substantially reduced from before. Only 7 release events were held in 2022. The Scoping Request states that the NPS intends to "Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education". The public hatchling release events are a significant attraction for Texas families and a major reason that they visit PINS and the Coastal Bend. The NPS should reconsider, and instead hold more public release viewing events (such as, between 20 to 27 a year), instead of reducing the events further below 7 a year. It is in the interest of the NPS to instill at a young age a desire in children to protect endangered species. No better method of doing so exists than letting a child actually see an endangered species crawl to the ocean.

A study by George R. Parsons and Ami Kang, entitled "Valuing Beach Closures on the Padre Island Seashore" concluded based upon a study performed in 2001 that the cost of closing PINS for a weekday in July was \$53,000 (assuming 1,802 visitors) and \$86,000 for a weekend day (assuming 5,755 visitors). The daily loss in 2023 would, of course, be considerably greater. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46535587_Valuing_Beach_Closures_on_the_Padre_Island_National_Seashore, pp17). Obviously, the city, community and business leaders in the Coastal Bend affected by any such proposed closure would vigorously oppose any such action.

Comments to Pilot Studies

The proposed Pilot Studies are too statistically insignificant, controlled and biased to deliver objective or reliable data and should not be conducted. The in situ Research Paper has already fully presented objective and independent data on the in situ incubation of Turtle eggs on the Beach. It would be easy to implement and manipulate these proposed Pilot Studies to deliver the desired result.

We are strongly opposed to Pilot Study 3. The compatibility of vehicles on the Beach with the STSR Program has been thoroughly and favorably addressed in the FONSI. Not only will the data secured by such Study be totally unreliable and unscientific, it will be viewed by the public and others as a scheme to develop manufactured and sham data to ultimately limit driving on the Beach. Because of the distrust which already exists, as discussed above and below, implementation of such Study (or a study on beach driving permits) will be viewed by the

public and others as a signal that the NPS is intent on finding some pretense to justify closing off beach access to the public during Turtle nesting season, and that they should commence defensive actions.

Comments to Sand Management

We appreciate that as a result of the reoccurring storms, high tides and strong winds in the area that beach erosion and shifting sands is a continuing problem.

To facilitate use of PINS as a park and recreation area, the entrance to the Beach should be better maintained, especially around holidays. The NPS previously maintain the first 5-miles of the Beach so that it was accessible by 2-wheel drive vehicles. It should do so again. If the first 5-miles becomes too crowded, then maintenance of an additional portion of the Beach should be performed. The City of Corpus Christi maintains its beaches so that they are 2-wheel drive accessible most of the time and especially around holidays. The NPS should also do so for the first 5-miles (or more miles, if needed). If a road behind the dunes is constructed, its entrance to the Beach should be similarly maintained. In addition, the entrance to Yarboro Pass should be maintained and kept open.

Comments to Beach Driving Permits or Limits on Capacity

We are opposed to beach driving permits or the utilization of any other method to limit beach access or beach utilization. PINS has 61 miles of Beach so ample beach exists for everyone.

The 2021 Review on page 26 discussed essentially closing the Beach between April 1-July 15. The NPS proposed to do so by using the technique of requiring vehicle driving permits for each vehicle with the fees charged for such permits to be commensurate with the cost of the NPS operating the Turtle mitigation program. Since the STSR Program has nearly a \$2M annual operating budget, such fee could be enormous. It is indisputable that the imposing of a permit and/or charging a fee to access the Beach between April and July 15th is clearly designed to limit beach access during such period. Any such permits or charges would be in violation the TOBA and the Deed.

Any limitation on beach access (other than based upon an emergency) should be considered a violation of the TOBA and the Deed.

Comments to Creation of New Road to Bypass the First Five Miles

A paved road behind the dunes to bypass the first 5-miles of the Beach is a good idea if the construction and maintenance costs are not too high. If such road is constructed, the end should contain a turn-around so that vehicles can easily turn around if the entrance to the Beach appears to be too dangerous to access. The TGLO letter suggested that a road behind the dunes be considered.

While doing an NEPA study on the road, we suggest that the NPS also consider the addition of a walking/biking trail beside such road together with an adjacent parking area and vehicle-free walking paths from such parking area through the wetlands to bird and wildlife viewing areas.

Comments to Creation of Additional Vehicle-Free Areas

In addition to the above discussed parking area, vehicle-free walking paths and viewing areas, the NPS should consider constructing a parking area off of the Yarboro Pass Road with vehicle-free trails to wetland and wildlife viewing areas.

The Beach does not need additional vehicle-free areas. The walk-area at Malaquite Beach is not fully utilized and needs additional improvements to increase its utilization. Additional parking areas and dune walkovers that are handicap accessible need to be constructed towards the ends of Malaquite Beach to enhance the full utilization of

the walk-area.

Comments on Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related Closures

During the most recent hurricane beach closure, the NPS response and reopening of the Beach was much too slow. Hurricanes and violent storms have occurred frequently over the years. In the past the Beach was not closed for weeks to search for possible newly unearthed artifacts, as occurred recently. This beach closing to search for artifacts was totally unwarranted. Has the NPS conducted a cost analysis to determine if the cost of searching for artifacts and loss in revenue from the beach closure was offset by the value of the artifacts found? The value of such artifacts certainly did not exceed the economic loss that the Coastal Bend area suffered as a result of such closure.

In the future, the Beach should be opened to access as soon as possible. Buildings should be opened on an individual basis so long as such building is safe for occupancy.

Concluding Comments

In 2012, the NPS completed the Environmental Assessment and FONSI (discussed above) and established a beach management plan for PINS, particularly with respect to its turtle recovery program and vehicles on the Beach. No material changes have occurred on PINS in the last ten years which necessitate a change to its current beach management plan with respect to its turtle program and vehicles on the Beach. Internal politics and strife within the NPS are not justification for another NEPA study. Having another study now is an abuse of NEPA. The current Scoping Request with respect to the PINS turtle program and vehicles on the Beach is not needed and should not be included.

A widespread belief exists that the NPS desires to use the STSR Program [or utilize some other method (such as, a permit and/or fee for beach access from April through July 15th)] to justify partially or totally closing public access to the Beach during Turtle nesting season. As discussed above, the Beach is unique from any other beach managed by the NPS. The TOBA [and the reversionary rights that the State of Texas has retained through the reverter clause found in Senate Bill 6 (Acts 1963, 58th Leg., ch.38, eff. April 4, 1963) authorizing the transfer resulting in the creation of PINS and incorporated into the Deed] prevents the NPS from closing beach access (except in the case of emergencies). The NPS has been warned by the TGLO that any closure of the Beach to vehicular access or any prevention of the public's use and enjoyment of the Beach will be in violation of the TOBA and may subject the property to the reversion.

The personnel within the NPS responsible for dictating policy on PINS are generally non-Texans and may not appreciate our culture and are disturbed by the existence of the TOBA, which hinders their actions. Texans are different, as discussed above (as is its political culture), and will not willingly accept the closing of a Texas beach, especially by a federal agency. The visitors to the Beach regularly assist the NPS with its management of PINS (including, its STSR Program, its beach clean-up, the reporting of wildlife problems and in other areas) and should not be alienated. The NPS and the FWS need to reach a solution for management of the STSR Program which does not involve limiting beach access to any portion of the Beach.

The in situ Research Study sets forth ample data negating any necessity for the proposed Pilot Studies. The above discussions set forth a reasonable course of action for the NPS to follow in its management of the STSR Program.

The NPS should endeavor to be a better community partner. Instead of having 7 turtle hatchling viewing events (as occurred in 2022) or less (as is proposed in the Scoping Request), the NPS should have 20 to 27 viewing events annually, as it did pre-Covid. Visitors to PINS (and particularly visitors wanting to view the turtle hatchling release events) spend many millions of dollars in the Coastal Bend. Limiting the number of viewing events or closing the Beach negatively impacts the Coastal Bend and its businesses economically.

It is not believed that issuance of a NEPA study orchestrated and requested by the NPS permitting closure of the Beach will prevent the State of Texas from filing a suit under the TOBA or from exercising its right of reversion, if the NPS closes the Beach based upon the NEPA study. The State of Texas can take the property back, subject to the NEPA study, and then legally challenge its validity and underlying data.

It is a shame that the NPS by its previous and recent actions has generated so much public distrust. We recognize that some of this distrust has arisen because of misunderstandings or misinformation, but, unfortunately, some is justified. Hopefully, this Scoping Request will be handled in a manner which partially alleviates this distrust. Proposing closing of any portion of the Beach for any reason, no matter how short (except in the case of an emergency), will not help alleviate this distrust. The findings issued in connection with the Scoping Request should acknowledge that the Beach is subject to the TOBA, and that the NPS will not close the Beach in connection with its management of the STSR Program. The NPS doesn't want the next State slogan to be "Don't Mess With Texans' Beach Access"!

Yours truly,

Correspondence ID: 309 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 13:10:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The NPS at PINS already have a plan for park management. So just stop, really, just stop saying you don't have a plan. It is deceiving and unprofessional.

1. The current plan works, and has been working.
2. The turtle program you are trying to dismantle is extremely successful. Actually, it's a world recognized program with the support of marine scie tist all over the world.
3. We already have a walking beach why do we need another one?
4. .Turtles don't get run over by vehicles.
5. The eyes and ears on the beach of visitors are much needed. And these same people support and care for the park.

The park has initiated a one way conversation. Yeah, you listened to the community. But it is apparent you have other motives, therefore, the park has created much distrust with the public. This certainly needs to be addressed and corrected.

Clean it up! Engage in open and honest communication with the public. We are here to support the park and care for the park. We are not going away.

Correspondence ID: 310 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 14:33:45

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am not in favor of stopping driving on the beach. It is the Texas way. It has always been & should not be changed! I am in support of continuing to save the turtles & the turtle releases involving the public & also other endangered animals along the Texas coasts. Getting people involved with the ocean through animals is a very important way to keep our oceans clean & healthy for people & animals. Having beach cleanups involving the public is important & we need to be able to drive to pick up all the stuff that washes up & is left behind on our beaches. Protecting the dunes & the wildlife living in them should also be continued. I'm not in favor of forming a management committee to manage our beaches. That gives too much power into the hands of just a few! The Texas beaches should be managed & maintained by the counties along the coast of Texas.

Texas beaches need to stay as they are! All the people living close to the beaches & those who visit our Texas beaches do so because we love the Texas beaches just as they are!

Correspondence ID: 311 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 15:58:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Pins is the only real piece of public property that people in this area have to use to camp, fish, and get away for a couple of days. It may not mean a lot to people that are not living in this area but it does to us locals who enjoy the outdoors

Correspondence ID: 312 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 16:06:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: (1) Hurricane Response Plan: I would support the first suggested option (Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only before re-opening).

(2) Beach Driving: I do not think beach driving permits would solve any problems; We already have limited access by either paid entry or lifetime park passes.

(3) Creating a bypass of the first 5 miles sounds good if it is an optional route.

Not sure if this is a good financial investment, however.

I would oppose mandatory limiting of vehicle access; similarly,

I would oppose creating vehicle-free pedestrian areas.

Correspondence ID: 313 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,04 2023 16:35:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Park has a pedestrian beach that is under utilized, the Park has a campground that is under utilized (I'm referring to the Malaquite Beach Pavilion area). Why not combine the two for campers with children and eliminate the congestion in the first 5 miles of South Beach. You already require 4 wheel drive to drive on North Beach and South Beach so why are the bus type RV's on the sand? Also I believe our park entrance fees should cover driving down beach, after all it is considered a Texas State highway. With all due respect,

Correspondence ID: 314 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,05 2023 06:25:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As far as I am aware, an Annual Report covering the U.S.-Mexico Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Restoration and Enhancement Program on beaches of Tamaulipas, Mexico during 2022 has not been released by Gladys Porter Zoo, Brownsville, Texas, as such annual reports have been released for prior years since the program began in 1978. If the 2022 report has not been released, this is extraordinary.

Kemp's ridley reproductive and nesting efforts along the coast of Tamaulipas produce the most Kemp's ridley hatchlings anywhere in the world. Secondary levels of reproductive and nesting efforts along the coast of Veracruz, Mexico, and tertiary levels of reproductive and nesting efforts along the coast Padre Island National Seashore, are very low in comparison to those along the coast of Tamaulipas.

Nevertheless, as climate warms and sea level rises, reproductive and nesting efforts on U.S. beaches will become essential to Kemp's ridley population recovery.

The Kemp's Ridley Working Group, in which Mexico's CONANP, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department participate, has characteristically met in autumn following each annual reproductive and nesting season, and the Gladys Porter Zoo annual report has characteristically been released during the same calendar year.

The apparent lack of information about the 2022 annual report and the bi-national program raises questions as to

whether the Kemp's Ridley Working Group met in autumn of 2022, and whether a 2022 annual report was produced and released. The PAIS Pre-NEPA should have covered these topics, as part of the very important historical background regarding Kemp's ridley. If the bi-national program has been interrupted, this would increase the importance of reproductive and nesting efforts along the coast of Padre Island National Seashore, toward Kemp's ridley population recovery, resiliency, diversity and sustainability.

Correspondence ID: 315 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,05 2023 06:30:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Access to the beach and parks is one of the main areas we live here. Corpus does not have a lot to offer but our beaches our one thing we have that sets us apart. The turtle program here has been successful for years and I have been taking my kids to watch stunned and rescued turtles be rereleased back into there natural environment for years. The park offers a place for people to go and fish, adventure and enjoy the scenery of our area and brings tourists from other areas too that may not normally come this far.

Without the the traffic flow on the beaches you will have an increase in predators to the area that may put wildlife that is already endangered like the turtles at higher risk.

I truly believe losing beach access with vehicles would be a tremendous loss to businesses and the people of the area and should be avoided.

Correspondence ID: 316 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,05 2023 12:39:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As an avid visitor at PINS I see first hand just how much this beach means to people, it is a place to escape the world and reconnect with family, friends, and nature. Large events such as Sharkathon, Billy Sandifer Beach Cleanup, as well as turtle releases, all show just how many people want to preserve and be able to enjoy the beach. If you close the beach not only are you preventing families from having fun and enjoying the outdoors, you are also losing opportunities for the next generation to experience such an amazing environment. You will prevent people from cleaning up trash on their own, organized cleanups, and open up many opportunities for illegal activities to flourish on an uninhabited stretch of beach. For the sake of the future generations and for the health of our beach, keep Padre Island National Seashore accessible to all.

Correspondence ID: 317 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,05 2023 20:52:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Very concerned over possible changes to PINS. Four miles of beach that are non-driving, and it's the least-used stretch of PINS. Why add more? Have spent considerable time at PINS; very concerned over excess coyote presence; to leave turtle eggs on the beach would decimate the populations that Ms. Shaver and so many others have worked so hard to rebuild. Eggs provide absolute feast for coyotes. Proposed changes have led me to learn more and opened my eyes regarding current park superintendent. What I've realized is, many disturbing and questionable things have happened! He closed the beach for WEEKS after hurricane Harvey, to allow his own team to comb the beach and find pieces of history that may have been exposed during the storm, and then kept whatever was found for his own collection. This should be illegal. It is a total abuse of his position. What I've realized is, the only thing needing a change at PINS is the management! Concerned citizen, seriously worried for our National seashore and the integrity of those in charge. Entirely opposed to changes being proposed. It's not broken; don't "fix" it.

Correspondence ID: 318 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,06 2023 06:49:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I believe it is important for the public to maintain year around access to the national seashore.

Correspondence ID: 319 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,06 2023 08:24:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against any changes to the park that would restrict vehicular access. A back road would cause enormous damage to the resource, be cost prohibitive, and difficult/expensive to maintain. The road at Yarborough was recently redone and immediately became undrivable and was closed. How would the park, on its limited budget, plan, build, mitigate, and maintain this new road?

There is already a 4-mile pedestrian beach at Malaquite that is severely underutilized. This is because beach users do not want to walk for miles to access a place to enjoy the beach. Beach users are not requesting larger areas of non-driving beach. In fact, the vehicular access is what allows visitors to enjoy the entire beach and not just the areas that are accessible via walking.

A beach management plan would be a useful document to guide park management, but that plan should not serve to restrict access for beach users. The national park system was designed to allow humans to enjoy wild places. That human element must be kept at the forefront of any decisions regarding park visitation and access by visitors.

Correspondence ID: 320 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,06 2023 08:26:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would understand this a lot more if the turtle program has been failing, short on volunteers, and ineffective but it's none of those things. It is highly effective and organized. A large part of why people move here and live here is the beach. We pay taxes - very very high taxes to live here because of the beaches. I highly doubt taxes will go down if you restrict our right to access the beach. I would also like to request an impact survey on local business as this is one of the biggest tourist destinations in Texas. Lastly, all of the people you are trying to restrict would be forced to go to other areas to fish - can Port Aransas handle the influx of people? Do they have the infrastructure, man o power, accommodations, and services ? If it's not broke, don't fix it. Bottom line. The turtle program is thriving so your argument has no actual merit.

Correspondence ID: 321 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,06 2023 09:46:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The current turtle program has been successful for years and is ran by experienced trained professionals who are experts in what they do. These people are against what you are choosing to do because it's not in the best interest of the turtles or the citizens enjoying beach access and the turtle program they get to watch and experience, such as the turtle releases. The turtles are under constant threat of predation which is made more intense because there is no predator management program because it's a national park (no hunting, etc). Also we don't have hotels and resorts, meaning no human traffic to scare off predators, etc. The turtle breeding period is from March to September and to limit beach access to vehicles would be devastating to the local economy (I.e lodging, restaurants, retail stores, etc) which depend on local usage and tourism. Hundreds and thousands of dollars would be lost annually. I'm all for the environment but is you look at a risk vs gain analysis, limiting vehicular traffic for the program NPS proposes would be more risk than gain. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 322 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,06 2023 15:26:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This is a comment concerning patrols for nesting sea turtles on PINS. Our Kemps ridley turtles nest in arribadas...on windy days. So in a 2-3 days stretch of windy days as many patrolers as possible need to be on the beach. Nesting turtles can emerge close together in time and space. The turtles can nest from pre dawn to after dusk on these days. Then there will be a lull....a number of days with low wind and few if any nesting turtles. Reducing patrols on these lull days seem like a good idea. Of course, these ultra windy days

followed by the lull days cannot be anticipated very far in advance. Figure out a way to still have the paid patrollers have a flexible enough schedule so that they can work long hours on the arribada days then have the other days off or do work with other divisions.

The use of drones to survey for nesting turtles could be used on these lull days, although I am not sure how effective they would be. Drones on our windy days would be a disaster.

Correspondence ID: 323 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,06 2023 21:18:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not prohibit vehicular traffic on the beach at PINS. Part of the reason families with young children go to PINS specifically is to have a more enjoyable experience, away from the party scene common to the other beaches in the Corpus Christi area. Also, over the years it has become apparent that the clientele that visit PINS seem to be more caring of the environment and utilities provided at the park. For this reason, the beaches and utilities seem to stay cleaner which keeps families like mine returning year after year. Thank You

Correspondence ID: 324 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,07 2023 08:19:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Re: Pre-NEPA Beach Management Request for Comments for Padre Island National Seashore (Comment Request)

To whom it may concern:

This letter includes information and comments intended to assist the National Park Service (NPS or the Park) in responding to its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pre-NEPA comment request on various beach management matters at the Padre Island National Seashore (PINS).

Commencing in 2009 the NPS undertook significant changes to its management of PINS which resulted in a significant public outcry and ultimately the formation of Citizens for Access and Conservation (CAC) to interact with the NPS on behalf of the users of PINS. As a result of these past and subsequent actions by the NPS, considerable public distrust exists over concern that the NPS desires close public access to some or all of the beach at PINS (Beach) and dismantle the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program (STSR Program).

It is well established and known that the Texas Open Beaches Act (TOBA) guarantees that the public has the free and unrestricted right to access Texas beaches, including [according to letter dated July 25, 2011, from the Texas General Land Office (TGLO) to Superintendent Joe Escoto (the TGLO letter)] a Texas beach located within a national park. (See also Section 61.0211 of the Texas Natural Resources Code providing that the TOBA is applicable to the Beach.)

It should also be noted that the Congressional Act of September 28, 1962 (PL 87-712, 76 Stat. 650) providing for the establishment of PINS states that the acquisition is “in order to save and preserve, for purposes of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped”. Any attempt to limit beach access at PINS for any period (except in the case of an emergency), no matter how logical the reason from the NPS and USFWS position, will be met with universal and unabated resistance by Texans and all other users of PINS. No legislator, whether in the Texas legislature or Congress, in Kleberg County, Nueces County or any other adjoining County, nor any other public official or business leader in the Coastal Bend area, nor the Texas Governor, Texas Attorney General nor Commissioner of the TGLO, nor any other governmental official who desires to be re-elected, will approve any such closure, but instead will vigorously oppose it.

Texans believe that if you let the NPS close any portion of the Beach for any period (e.g., from April 1st to July 15th), that later the NPS will attempt to extend the closure to include a larger portion of the Beach or for a longer period of time (such as, until all of the eggs in situ incubation on the Beach would have hatched), or will try to implement a different closure for a different species. NPS and the USFWS need to reach a solution for management of its turtle program and the Beach which does not involve limiting beach access or entry to any portion of the Beach for any period.

These comments are offered in hopes of enlightening the NPS so that by its actions it does not once again

generate organized adverse publicity and legal advocacy in opposition to its policies with the resulting unnecessary expenditure of public funds and time.

Prior Beach Management Plans for PINS

The NPS has requested comments on this proposed plan because they state that no beach management plan currently exists for PINS. An examination of the NPS listing of "Management Plans" found at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/ManagementPlans.cfm> for PINS lists two studies: (1) Beach Vehicle Environmental Assessment - June 2011 (EA) (download a pdf of the EA here <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=86&projectID=32158&documentID=41741>), and (2) Beach Vehicle EA FONSI - March 2012 (FONSI) (download a pdf of the FONSI here <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=86&projectID=32158&documentID=46093>).

The EA and FONSI completed in 2012 constitute a comprehensive and extensive analysis of beach management issues for PINS, with substantial public input, and establish a beach management plan for PINS, particularly with respect to its turtle recovery program and vehicles on the Beach. No material changes have occurred on PINS which justify a change to its current beach management plan with respect to its turtle program and vehicles on the beach. Internal politics and strife within the NPS do not constitute justification for a new beach management plan or NEPA study. Having a new NEPA study within approximately ten years when no material changes have occurred at PINS to justify such study is unwarranted and is an inappropriate use of public funding.

Discussion of Beach and Turtle Management Issues

Based upon examination of the Review of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program Padre Island National Seashore, amended 5/7/2021 (2021 Review) (See https://www.nps.gov/pais/learn/management/upload/pais-stsr-review-report_20210507_finalamended_508.pdf), and review of other material, we are aware that management of the Beach creates problems which are unique to NPS. Except on PINS, Kemp's ridley sea turtle (Turtle(s)) nests on coastal national parks are left in situ incubation (or placed in corrals) on the beach, and driving on the beach is prohibited to protect Turtles and their eggs.

When the Turtles were listed as endangered in the late 1970s, the 1978 interagency Kemp's action plan included a goal for establishment of a secondary Turtle nesting colony at PINS. Since the 1980's the PINS STSR Program has been actively contributing to global recovery of the species. The USFWS performs studies every five years on the Turtles (since they are endangered) determining measures needed to protect the species. The next five-year study (5-Year Study) should be released soon and offer guidance to the NPS on the future actions the NPS needs to implement on PINS to protect the Turtles. Hopefully, the 2020 Kemp's Bi-National Recovery Plan (2020 Plan), and 5-Year Study, when released, will address the issue of the importance of PINS to the recovery effort. Until the 2020 Plan and 5-Year Study are issued, the NPS should make no major changes to the management of the STSR Program at PINS.

The NPS has already started implementing the "Near-term" recommendations discussed on pages 15-17 of the 2021 Review (and may have started implementing some of the "Mid-term" recommendations), some of which may have required a NEPA study, without waiting for the results of the 2020 Plan or 5-Year Study. It is inappropriate to make significant changes to sea turtle management that was vetted through an extensive NEPA process and articulated in the 2012 FONSI, as the agency has done. These changes constitute a violation of NEPA.

The STSR Program's operating budget has increased substantially over the years, which should be seen as a commitment by the NPS and cooperators to the program and a testament of the success of the program. The 2021 Review states that a budget shortfall is anticipated within the next few years. The NPS has used this potential budget shortfall to justify some of its actions cutting the STSR Program. If the rumors circulating within the NPS and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are true that the NPS used its influence within the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to convince its leaders to not distribute any grants (even if won in a grant competition) to any Turtle recovery program in Texas because of the existence of the Texas Open Beach Act, then it is deceiving for the NPS to assert that the STSR Program needs to be downsized due to lack of funding.

Much pressure is applied within the NPS on management personnel at PINS because other Turtle recovery programs managed by the NPS outside of Texas (such as in Florida) leave a Turtle's eggs in situ at the beach and can close their beaches to public access. The conditions at PINS, research, and economic benefits of collecting eggs and releasing hatchlings are not comparable to those areas outside Texas. NPS cannot close access to the Beach because the Texas Open Beach Act is applicable to PINS and because the reversionary language in the

Deed might result in PINS reverting to State of Texas administration if it closes the Beach.

Further, we believe the Review conducted on the PINS STSR Program was a result of complaints by these programs outside of Texas. It was a biased process that resulted in a prejudiced document with pre-determined recommendations. Evidence of this is that the leader of STSR was not included in the review and was apparently not even asked for input. We know of no Texas partners of STSR that were involved. According to a professor at a Texas University who has been involved with the PINS program, he was asked to be involved but his involvement was limited to one phone call with one individual, and as he told the County Commissioners, that person did not seem particularly interested in what he had to say. Basing changes to the STSR Program on recommendations from this biased review is inappropriate. Once again, we must state that these issues were thoroughly examined in the 2012 NEPA review, an alternative was chosen and implemented, and there is no justification for making changes. Program managers are confronted with budget challenges almost daily, and the STSR Program should not be knee-capped based on the beliefs of outside individuals. The budget should be addressed by the program manager, who has successfully built the program over 40 years. It is her challenge to continue to secure "soft" funds (short-term project funds). It is the superintendent's responsibility to ensure that the "base" funds (permanent annual funding to PIN's base budget) provided to the park from the NPS Washington Office in 2000 specifically to support the program continue to be allocated to the program.

Significant conditions exist on the Beach, which are uncommon on non-Texas beaches, which are discussed in considerable detail in the research paper entitled "Threats to Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii* Garman, 1810) nests incubation in situ on the Texas coast" (the in situ Research Paper)

(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346428950_Threats_to_Kemp's_ridley_sea_turtle_Lepidochelys_kempii_Garman_1880_nests_incubating_in_situ_on_the_Texas_coast). In the interest of brevity, we will only discuss a few of the major points supported by the objective and independent data presented in the in situ Research Paper, and make recommendations based upon such data.

Because of the confluence of currents affecting Texas beaches, they experience significantly higher loads of marine debris (estimated to be ten times higher) than on beaches of other states. As a result, marine debris and sargassum accumulates on Texas beaches which can interfere with nesting Turtles and trap or impede hatchlings. This can result in a high percentage of hatchlings perishing because of predators and heat and/or desiccation. Plant root penetration and growth can decrease moisture for developing eggs and trap hatchlings.

PINS has 61 miles of beach with a substantial number of predators of all life stages of turtles, such as, ghost crabs, coyotes, hogs, skunks, raccoons, badgers, gray foxes, snakes, fire ants and birds (collectively, predators). The study of 155 marked nest sites on the Beach from 2005-2007 is summarized on Table 4 in the in situ Research Paper. Of the 155 nests, 96.8% were damaged or impacted by ghost crabs, 56.8% by coyotes, 40% by tidal inundations, 30.3% by human tampering, 12.3% by plant roots, 10.3% by vehicle drive-overs and 3.9% by racoons. The study suggests that the actual emergence success of in situ incubation in the study were likely greatly inflated as additional undocumented mortality from predators and human interaction likely occurred before the nests were found or that the evidence of tracks of predators was washed away by rain or tides. The study also noted that increased food resources available from discarded food scraps increase high densities of ghost crabs and coyotes in that area. It is unlikely that the prevention of humans from visiting such areas for a few months a year would substantially diminish the presence of such predators during such period of human absence in such areas. And more eyes on the beach means more nests are likely to be found and eggs collected for incubation.

Another major problem is that high tides flood portions of the Beach all the way to the dune line multiple times a year, which could wash away or uncover in situ incubating eggs thereby exposing them to predators or risk of desiccation from the sun. A study by Sweet et al., 2019 (referenced in the in situ Research Paper) states that coastal flooding is an increasing threat at PINS. Warming environmental conditions caused by climate change are expected to result in more heat related deaths of hatchlings and possibly 100% female hatchlings by 2070 (see Fuentes et al., 2011 referenced in the in situ Research Paper).

The following observations and recommendations are offered after examination of the data and discussions in the in situ Research Paper:

- As a result of the debris on the Beach, the large number of predators on the Beach, an increasing number of high tides on the Beach, the warming of the environment because of climate change and the length of the Beach, the in

situ incubation of Turtle eggs on the Beach will result in a much higher mortality than will result from eggs incubated at the facility or in corrals.

- Because of the greater prospect of human tampering of nests marked by stakes or otherwise (or of being walked over if unmarked) in high use areas, leaving nests in situ incubation in those areas will result in a high likelihood of substantial nest damage.
- Because of the high number of predators on the Beach, leaving nests in situ incubation will result in a high likelihood of substantial nest damage.
- Since, as the in situ Research Paper clearly indicates, any eggs left on the Beach are at a very high mortality risk from the factors above discussed, the likelihood of a vehicle drive-over is a lesser risk than the predator and environmental risks to the eggs and should be deemed acceptable if it occurs.
- If, as a result of climate change, the species are in danger because of the lack of male hatchlings, then the NPS needs to be prepared to increase use of the incubation equipment at the facility, which can create primarily males, if desired, and use of corrals which can create more males if needed by using a cover over the enclosure and watering the eggs.
- The Comment Request mentions that the facility may not survive a direct hit from a hurricane. The fact that the facility might not survive a hurricane is a very distressing fact. As discussed above, the facility will be needed to incubate eggs, the NPS should consider moving all the equipment in the facility to higher ground and into a more protected and secure building, not getting rid of it all together.

Although the 2021 Report treats the existence of beach visitors driving on the Beach as a negative, the NPS should not lose sight of the many benefits that having volunteer turtle patrollers, beach comers, fisherpersons, surfers, bird watchers and other observers on the beach offer. Turtle patrollers offer considerable assistance to the STSR Program. Beach visitors assist in cleaning up the Beach. Not only are turtle and other wildlife problems routinely reported by beach visitors, but illegal activities also (such as drugs and illegal immigrants) and other problems are often reported. Beach visitors often find turtle nests or injured or dead turtles and other dead wildlife and report them to the NPS or other appropriate organization. Recently on February 20, 2023, a beach visitor found two turtles dead on the Beach, one of whom was apparently killed by a coyote. Such deaths were reported to the NPS along with their location and pictures. Bird watchers routinely do wildlife counts and advise the NPS or others of wildlife issues on the Beach. Shark fishermen assist government agencies and others with DNA sampling, tagging, measurement and other data on sharks that they catch and release, which efforts benefit worldwide shark study and management. Beach visitors routinely assist other visitors needing assistance and occasionally are requested by a Ranger for assistance. Beach visitors also provide other useful information to wildlife management and rehabilitation organizations. For example, the beach visitor who found the dead turtles also found five dead pelicans on the Beach the same day, which was reported. Since Park Rangers often do not drive past the MM 5, it is often up to beach visitors to provide information and assistance on beach problems occurring down the Beach. Having fewer beach visitors (or alienating such visitors so they cease visiting the Beach) is not a positive move for the NPS, and negatively impacts the Coastal Bend economy.

Economic Benefit of PINS to the Coastal Bend Community

It is important that PINS have an amicable and mutually beneficial working relationship with cities and communities in the Coastal Bend and its business leaders. The NPS should consult with such leaders before making management decisions with respect to PINS which might economically impact such cities, communities, and businesses (such as, curtailing the number of viewing events of hatchling releases or any attempt to close the Beach).

On April 24, 2017, the Corpus Christi Business News stated that the 643,013 visitors to PINS last year spent \$27 million in the cities and communities in the Coastal Bend. According to an NPS report, that spending supported 406 local jobs and boosted the economy by \$31 million. It contained the following quote from then Superintendent Mark Spier, “Padre Island National Seashore welcomes visitors from across the country and around the world. National Park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning more than \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it's a big factor in our local economy as well.” The NPS has substantially reduced the number of public hatchling release viewing events at the Beach. For many years pre-Covid, the NPS held between 20 and 27 hatchling release viewing events annually. No events were held in 2020, and the release events in 2021 were substantially reduced from before. Only seven release events were held in 2022. The Comment Request states that the NPS intends to “Hold fewer public hatchling releases

and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education". An obvious question to be answered is "What were the public releases over the years if not opportunities for educating the public about endangered turtles and the effort it takes to recovery their populations?" The public hatchling release events are a significant attraction for Texas families and a major reason that they visit PINS and the Coastal Bend. The NPS should hold more public release viewing events instead of reducing the events further. It is in the interest of the NPS to instill at a young age a desire in children to protect endangered species. No better method of doing so exists than letting a child see an endangered species crawl to the ocean.

A study by George R. Parsons and Ami Kang, entitled "Valuing Beach Closures on the Padre Island Seashore" concluded based upon a study performed in 2001 that the cost of closing PINS for a weekday in July was \$53,000 (assuming 1,802 visitors) and \$86,000 for a weekend day (assuming 5,755 visitors). The daily loss in 2023 would, of course, be considerably greater.

(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46535587_Valuing_Beach_Closures_on_the_Padre_Island_National_Seashore, pp17). Obviously, the city, community and business leaders in the Coastal Bend affected by any such proposed closure would vigorously oppose any such action.

Comments to Pilot Studies

The proposed Pilot Studies are too statistically insignificant, controlled and biased to deliver objective or reliable data and should not be conducted. The in situ Research Paper has already fully presented objective and independent data on the in situ incubation of Turtle eggs on the Beach. It would be easy to implement and manipulate these proposed Pilot Studies to deliver the desired result.

We are strongly opposed to Pilot Study 3. The compatibility of vehicles on the Beach with the STSR Program has been thoroughly and favorably addressed in the FONSI. Not only will the data secured by such study be totally unreliable and unscientific, but it will also be viewed by the public and others as a scheme to develop manufactured and sham data to ultimately limit driving on the Beach. Because of the distrust which already exists, as discussed above and below, implementation of such Study (or a study on beach driving permits) will be viewed by the public and others as a signal that the NPS is intent on finding some pretense to justify closing off beach access to the public during Turtle nesting season or hurricane season, and that they should commence defensive actions.

Furthermore, in 40 years of involvement in the PINS sea turtle program Dr. Shaver has published several papers in peer-reviewed publications and completed several reports summarizing activities and findings in the program. Others have also conducted research and published papers. We find it difficult to believe that PINS management does not have sufficient information to provide a continued basis for the program. It seems far more likely that, like the Review, these pilot studies are intended to support changes in turtle management already being instigated. Such corruption of science is antithetical to sound scientific management.

Comments to Sand Management

We appreciate that because of the reoccurring storms, high tides and strong winds in the area beach erosion and shifting sands is a continuing problem. To facilitate use of PINS as a park and recreation area, the entrance to the Beach should be better maintained, especially around holidays. The NPS previously maintained the first 5-miles of the Beach so that it was accessible by 2-wheel drive vehicles. It should do so again, and if needed apply for a Section 10/404 permit for the maintenance. If the first 5-miles becomes too crowded, then maintenance of an additional portion of the Beach should be performed, not reduce the amount of visitors allowed in PINs.

If a road behind the dunes is constructed, its entrance to the Beach should be similarly maintained. In addition, the entrance to Yarboro Pass should be maintained and kept open.

Comments to Beach Driving Permits or Limits on Capacity

PINS has 61 miles of Beach so ample beach exists for everyone. The 2021 Review on page 26 discussed essentially closing the Beach between April 1-July 15. The NPS proposed to do so by using the technique of requiring vehicle driving permits for each vehicle with the fees charged for such permits to be commensurate with the cost of the NPS operating the STSR Program. Since the STSR Program has nearly a \$2M annual operating budget, such fee could be enormous. It is indisputable that the imposing of a permit and/or charging a fee to access the Beach between April 1 and July 15th is designed to limit beach access during such period.

Comments to Creation of New Road to Bypass the First Five Miles

A paved road behind the dunes to bypass the first 5-miles of the Beach is a good idea if the construction and

maintenance costs are not too high and the project is reviewed under a separate NEPA analysis. If such road is constructed, the end should contain a turn-around so that vehicles can easily turn around if the entrance to the Beach appears to be too dangerous to access. The TGLO letter suggested that a road behind the dunes be considered.

While doing an NEPA study on the road, we suggest that the NPS also consider the addition of a walking/biking trail beside such road together with an adjacent parking area and vehicle-free walking paths from such parking area through the wetlands to bird and wildlife viewing areas.

Comments to Creation of Additional Vehicle-Free Areas

In addition to the above discussed parking area, vehicle-free walking paths and viewing areas, the NPS should consider constructing a parking area off the Yarboro Pass Road with vehicle-free trails to wetland and wildlife viewing areas. The walk-area at Malaquite Beach is not fully utilized and needs additional improvements to increase its utilization. Additional parking areas and dune walkovers that are handicap accessible need to be constructed towards the ends of Malaquite Beach to enhance the full utilization of the walk-area.

Comments on Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related Closures

During the most recent hurricane beach closure, the NPS response and reopening of the Beach was much too slow. Hurricanes and violent storms have occurred frequently over the years. In the past the Beach was not closed for weeks to search for possible newly unearthed artifacts, as occurred recently. This beach closing to search for artifacts was totally unwarranted. Has the NPS conducted a cost analysis to determine if the cost of searching for artifacts and loss in revenue from the beach closure was offset by the value of the artifacts found? The value of such artifacts certainly did not exceed the economic loss that the Coastal Bend area suffered because of such closure. In the future, the Beach should be opened for access as soon as possible. Buildings should be opened on an individual basis so long as such building is safe for occupancy.

Concluding Comments

In 2012, the NPS completed the EA and FONSI and established a beach management plan for PINS. No material changes have occurred on PINS in the last ten years which necessitates a change to its current beach management plan. Internal politics and strife within the NPS are not justification for a another NEPA study. Having another study now is an abuse of NEPA.

The TOBA [and the reversionary rights that the State of Texas has retained through the reverter clause found in Senate Bill 6 (Acts 1963, 58th Leg., ch.38, eff. April 4, 1963) authorizing the transfer resulting in the creation of PINS and incorporated into the Deed] prevents the NPS from closing beach access (except for emergencies). The NPS has been warned by the TGLO that any closure of the Beach to vehicular access or any prevention of the public's use and enjoyment of the Beach will be in violation of the TOBA and may subject the property to the reversion.

The personnel within the NPS responsible for dictating policy on PINS are generally non-Texans and may not appreciate our culture and are disturbed by the existence of the TOBA. Texans will not willingly accept the closing of a Texas beach, especially by a federal agency. The visitors to the Beach regularly assist the NPS with its management of PINS (including, its STSR Program, its beach clean-up, the reporting of wildlife problems and in other areas) and should not be alienated. The NPS and the USFWS need to reach a solution for management of the STSR Program which does not involve limiting beach access to any portion of the Beach.

The NPS should endeavor to be a better community partner. Instead of reducing turtle hatchling viewing events (as occurred in 2022) or less (as is proposed in the Comment Request), the NPS should have more viewing events annually, as it did pre-Covid. Visitors to PINS (and particularly visitors wanting to view the turtle hatchling release events) spend many millions of dollars in the Coastal Bend. Limiting the number of viewing events or closing the Beach negatively impacts the Coastal Bend and its businesses economically.

It is a shame that the NPS with its previous and recent actions has generated so much public distrust. We recognize that some of this distrust has arisen because of misunderstandings or misinformation, but, unfortunately, some is justified. Hopefully, this Comment Request will be handled in a manner which partially alleviates this distrust. The findings issued in connection with the Comment Request should acknowledge that the Beach is subject to the TOBA, and that the NPS will not close the Beach in connection with its management of the STSR Program. The NPS doesn't want the next State slogan to be "Don't Mess With Texans' Beach Access Rights"!

Correspondence ID: 325 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,07 2023 08:46:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

I am a property owner in Corpus Christi and I am opposed to closing the beaches in Texas to vehicular traffic. We drive the beaches frequently and enjoy the freedom we have in Texas. I would request Texas beaches remain open to vehicles. Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 326 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,07 2023 12:37:45

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: PINS is the only natural beach where everyone can enjoy freedom away from mass crowds at say the packery, port aransas. How many times have any violence been reported from Padre Island National Seashore, None vs the other beaches. But not just because my family and friends have been going there for years, we as many others help keep the beach clean by always cleaning up after we leave, we pick up trash that wash ashore from beyond. Also helping the wildlife, I myself have rescued a pelican that was all entangled in fishing line, a turtle that didn't seem healthy so I drove back down the beach to notify park rangers while my wife stayed with the turtle to make sure it was safe until rescue came to its aid. My son does the shark a thon every year and capturing vital information for marine institute by measuring, tagging and recording the type of shark they and size of the catch. To limit access would affect thousands of people, so where would they go? Now the Packery and port aransas would even be more congested with large crowds, Maybe this is what they want for more revenue. What next, start building condos along the beaches of the national seashore? And why were they interviewing people that are not even from TEXAS! much less the surrounding area. Keep our beaches Beautiful and Free where we can still enjoy camping in the wild.

Correspondence ID: 327 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,07 2023 12:46:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In 2012, the NPS completed the EA and FONSI and established a beach management plan for PINS. No material changes have occurred on PINS in the last ten years which necessitates a change to its current beach management plan. Internal politics and strife within the NPS are not justification for a another NEPA study. Having another study now is an abuse of NEPA.

The TOBA [and the reversionary rights that the State of Texas has retained through the reverter clause found in Senate Bill 6 (Acts 1963, 58th Leg., ch.38, eff. April 4, 1963) authorizing the transfer resulting in the creation of PINS and incorporated into the Deed] prevents the NPS from closing beach access (except for emergencies). The NPS has been warned by the TGLO that any closure of the Beach to vehicular access or any prevention of the public's use and enjoyment of the Beach will be in violation of the TOBA and may subject the property to the reversion.

The personnel within the NPS responsible for dictating policy on PINS are generally non-Texans and may not appreciate our culture and are disturbed by the existence of the TOBA. Texans will not willingly accept the closing of a Texas beach, especially by a federal agency. The visitors to the Beach regularly assist the NPS with its management of PINS (including, its STSR Program, its beach clean-up, the reporting of wildlife problems and in other areas) and should not be alienated. The NPS and the USFWS need to reach a solution for management of the STSR Program which does not involve limiting beach access to any portion of the Beach.

The NPS should endeavor to be a better community partner. Instead of reducing turtle hatchling viewing events (as occurred in 2022) or less (as is proposed in the Comment Request), the NPS should have more viewing events annually, as it did pre-Covid. Visitors to PINS (and particularly visitors wanting to view the turtle hatchling release events) spend many millions of dollars in the Coastal Bend. Limiting the number of viewing events or closing the Beach negatively impacts the Coastal Bend and its businesses economically.

It is a shame that the NPS with its previous and recent actions has generated so much public distrust. We recognize that some of this distrust has arisen because of misunderstandings or misinformation, but, unfortunately, some is justified. Hopefully, this Comment Request will be handled in a manner which partially

alleviates this distrust. The findings issued in connection with the Comment Request should acknowledge that the Beach is subject to the TOBA, and that the NPS will not close the Beach in connection with its management of the STSR Program. The NPS doesn't want the next State slogan to be "Don't Mess With Texans' Beach Access Rights"!

Correspondence ID: 328 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,07 2023 12:53:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been driving down Padre Island to the Port Mansfield jetties for decades and love it down there. It would be a travesty if access to our beautiful island was endangered. I have lived on Padre Island since 1996, Flour Bluff before that and in town since 1973.

Correspondence ID: 329 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 09:30:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would not like to lose access to the seashore. My family and I enjoy fishing and camping along the coast line wherever we decide to pull over at.

Correspondence ID: 330 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 09:34:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Your proposed actions are of no benefit to the turtles, the beach users, or the city of Corpus Christi. These NEPA suggested changes are destructive and should not be implemented!

Correspondence ID: 331 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 09:44:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for allowing us an opportunity to make our suggestions, cares, and concerns known. Padre Island National Seashore (PINS) is a very special place. There is no other place quite like it here in the United States or the world (Worlds longest barrier island). Sectioned off by 2 manmade channels, Packery Channel to the North, Mansfield Channel to the south, gives the public roughly 113 miles of mostly natural beach access. This island paradise provides homes for countless creatures Marine, avian, terrestrial including me as I live upon the island. From my driveway to the beginning to the park is 13 miles away, so yes I utilize this great treasure almost daily. Last year alone, my wife and I logged just over 200 days fishing past Malaquite beach. We utilized the 61 miles of open beach from the end of the pavement to Mansfield Channel. Along the way we encountered many sights, encountered untold wildlife, met many dear friends. We maintain to all, that visitors and regulars alike are the true stewards of PINS. From picking up trash that washes up upon on beach, to animal rescues (calling in injured critters to the appropriate Authorities) Human assistance yes sadly the Human trafficking occurs even in paradise and working with the wonderful volunteers assisting in the turtle program. We know our beach (PINS) very well. We can see immediately if there is something wrong, out of place, or needs attention by calling park authorities. This rather lengthy opening sets my credentials for my comments set for and by

NEPA PINS Beach Management Plans:

The Park's four Sea Turtle Science and Recover Program ideas for pilot studies:

1. Potential Pilot Study 1: In-situ nesting - can predation be reduced without moving eggs?

(Absolutely NOT!) #1 Coyotes - Coyotes are abundant on Padre Island! From my own home to swimming across Mansfield Channel they are the primary apex predators of the island including the park. Their hunger is never satisfied, and as diverse as the critters that live here. Their sense of smell is uncanny, and they can travel untold miles in search of food. The buried egg clutches stand little chance against these predators. (February 2023 My wife and located a mature sea turtle on the beach that had just been killed by 3 coyotes.) These egg clutches are very much dependent upon a safety net system aka a corral that is able to withstand the digging by predators.

2. Potential Pilot Study 2: Does moving nests protect them from inundation, or flooding?

Beginning in November 2022 we noticed an ever increasing tide level on the beach. Though our tide charts remained consistent with normal fluctuations for the time of the year, we began seeing water levels much higher on the beach. In past years excluding storms, weather events, etc. , high tide levels below 2' would remain below the dune line in most places along PINS. Currently we are seeing an incredibly higher tide levels even at low tide periods. There have been many days this winter when tide levels have reached the dune line and stayed at these levels for an extended period of time. On March 5th 2023 we had a high tide level of 1.38' which is actually just a bit low for this time of year. Approximately 3 hours before high tide we observed tides reaching the low dunes. (there are no storms either in the Gulf of Mexico or inland as high pressure dominated the region) If our current tide levels persist and I fear they will increase as warmer months return making our gulf weather active and lower pressure gradients will only increase the amount of inundation. Without moving these egg clutches, we certainly will lose egg nests. Again, having a dedicated clutch corral will prove to be effective.

3. Potential Pilot Study 3: Remove or reduce NPS vehicles from Malaquite Beach, except for emergency use

I can see absolutely no reason for this to be considered. You must have park service access for ALL areas of the beach. This option is so absurd no further comments or time need to be given.

4. Potential Pilot Study 4: Would unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology be effective monitoring for nesting sea turtles?

I can see how in conjunction with a hands on approach and removing known egg clutches to a dedicated corral system could be useful. But! These drones would never ever replace human senses...technology is amazing but it can never replace human experience in this matter. Again, a tool to be utilized by the current program at best...NOT A REPLACEMENT!

Do you favor the Park holding fewer viewing events, or do you feel it should be holding more events and increasing outreach? Absolutely, the park has a very unique attraction unlike all but a few others to generate interest in younger visitors and that is the public turtle releases. PINS should take EVERY advantage of this unique experience. Not to mention it would assist the hatchlings against the high predation at the time of hatching (when they are most vulnerable).

Do you desire that the Park cut back on its turtle program or continue it at current levels?

There no reason why the park should even consider cutting back funding on this issue!

Sand management option plans:

I can only see a sand management plan needed for the 1st few miles of beach south of the Malaquite beach area. The 1st few miles past the paved road south of Malaquite beach is the haven for families, campers, fishermen not able or interested in traveling further south on the beach. These people still have the opportunity of camping on the beach in either tents, camper trailers or motor homes. Sand management in these 1st 3 miles of beach access would be a major improvement for beach goers, and a major improvement of safety as well. The sand management would allow visitors to encamp further from the flow of traffic, and get further away from the higher tides.

The Park's three beach driving potential options:

1. Potential option: Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to

protect Seashore resources and visitor experience

Other than at most 3 THREE days a year (Memorial day, 4th of July, and Labor day) the park can handle all vehicular traffic on the beach. Yes, I have seen the park very busy, with high congested traffic within the 1st 3 miles south of Malaquite Beach. However, these are high volume days, and the entire existing plans should not be altered around a extremely low number of high volume days. For over 6 decades PINS has been able to manage traffic and I can't see any reason for this to change.

2. Potential option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island.

Yes this would be a fantastic option... on paper and in my dreams. However, this is not cost effective. Our island road system even here in MY own neighborhood is lacking. I fear the cost of maintaining an additional 5 miles of highway would be to great of a burden for the park. In addition to the burden of maintenance, how would this benefit anyone? Yes, for me personally I would love to bypass the campers and congestion...! But this would create 2 areas of congestion instead of 1. Folks would just comfortably drive another 5 miles to set up their motor homes and campsites. This option is great in thought, but I can see no applicable way of making it work the way the park intends.

3. Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience

There is already 4 miles of vehicle free pedestrian areas! From the North beach to the south end of Malaquite beach presents 4 miles of pedestrian beach for families to utilize. But! Only 4 access points. Everyday when I drive on or off the beach at the south end of Malaquite Beach I can look north. At best I see only a few visitors utilizing the pedestrian areas. (Exception...the PINS visitor center). Perhaps making a higher number of pedestrian access points off Park road 22 would help guests utilize these areas more frequently but I doubt it. (NO ONE WANTS TO DRAG KIDS, TOYS, ICE CHESTS, CHAIRS, ETC)...up and down dunes, and 100s of yards from their cars. This is what makes TEXAS beaches different from other states...accessibility !!! this is the PINS experience.

Simply put, vehicular access is the lifeblood of PINS. Other than in cases of severe weather events such as tropical storm systems should vehicular access ever be restricted. I'm talking from the south end of Park 22 where the pavement meets the sand ALL the way to the Mansfield Channel should be accessible, all hours, all days, at ALL TIMES. We have an economic interest here on the Island of course, as well as businesses that thrive due to PINS in Corpus Christi as well. Numerous fishing bait, fishing tackle, and even off road vehicle rentals all rely on PINS vehicle access.

True you can fish anywhere, but lets allow the facts to reveal ...People come to PINS to get away from the congestion of modern life. That's what makes PINS so special and like no other place I'm aware of. At the start of my letter, I mentioned that we are the true stewards of the beach. We are the eyes, ears, and watchmen who sound the alarm when something is awry. To remove that free service that we provide out of our love for this park, is a travesty. I am impassionate on this subject as PINS is our life. PINS is our reason for being here on this island in my forever home.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 332 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 09:50:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have concerns with the turtle program changing and it negativity impacting my beach acces rights.

Correspondence ID: 333 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 09:52:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The pre-NEPA was contracted by Michael Reynolds almost immediately after Brunnemann officially became PAIS superintendent, April 26, 2020. The Review was released to the CC Caller Times on June 11, 2020. Dr. Donna J. Shaver, Chief of the Division of sea Turtle Science and Recovery was not given an opportunity to comment, even though she is an expert Kemp's ridley scientist. All Preparer's of the Review were from the east coast of the United States and the NPS Denver Office. No sea turtle experts to Texans were involved.

The Review was predetermined from the beginning. Our South Texas community has been diseased by Mr. Brunnemann and the NPS.

This is a shameful act on behalf of a United States government agency.

The public should be given a chance to voice our opinions at the Washington D.C. level.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 334 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 09:57:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I never thought in my lifetime I would have to stand up and voice my opinion for the right to use the beach of North Padre Island, where are our representatives! This seems like a huge land grab in the making! Please do not change the National Seashore our children need this as much or more than we do! It is a true blessing to be able to access this beach, it needs to be allowed for generations. There is enough property elsewhere that should be commercially used without destroying one of natures finest ecosystems. Please do not turn this into another Mustang Island!

Correspondence ID: 335 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 09:58:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have used PINS for more than forty years and am concerned that access will be limited or eliminated. To fully utilize the park and it's resources all the way down to the Mansfield jetties, motorized vehicle access is imperative due to the distance.

Additionally, many park goers need motorized vehicle access due to physical disabilities and other mobility related issues. Many with mobility limitations would not be able to enjoy the beach, wildlife observation, or other activities if driving on the beach is eliminated permanently or seasonally.

Please do not further restrict or eliminate motorized vehicle access to any part of the park where vehicles are currently allowed to navigate.

Correspondence ID: 336 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 10:10:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I think a plan is essential but not really sure asking the public for a plan is really effective. As a visitor of the beach for the last 30 years here are things that I think need attention.

*Trash While providing dumpsters at the entrance is essential, I do not think it's enough. There should be regularly maintained roll-offs at regular intervals down the beach. I think not only would this encourage picking up what you brought. It would also encourage others to pick up other beach trash.

*Turtle While some people do not think this is a valuable program, I think it is as essential as anything else. People need to be connected and this is a way of connecting people to the beach. However, beach traffic and

turtles can co-exist.

*Sand management and Trash. I sometimes wonder if the beaches are not combed for trash mechanically not because of the cost but because the trash actually helps to build the dunes which protects the island. If this is not the case then it should at least be considered. The entrance to the sand really must be maintained.

*First 5 miles I think there should be a something done to manage traffic and camping during the first 5 miles. Not that is should not be allowed but there needs to be through travel lane. I do not know how you would enforce this or set it up, just there needs to be something that helps those who stay in the first 5 miles and those who do not.

Correspondence ID: 337 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 10:12:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This is ridiculous there is no proof that driving on the beach causes an permanent damage to the beach. People have been driving the beach for decades and now someone believes they can take that away so they can give the beach to the elite land owners that live on the water. Just one more way the elite and the government can try and take more away from the tax paying public. Plus the amount of revenue that is generated for the city as a tourist destination so people can drive on the beach with there families and set up and have a day of fun in the water and fishing.

Correspondence ID: 338 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 10:40:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please keep Padre Island National Seashore open to everyone to enjoy its beauty and solitude. I feel very blessed to be able to enjoy this natural habitat as our forefathers did. I feel if this seashore is closed to the public it will become a breeding ground for unintended activity, such as smuggling and drugs. It's the people who enjoy this resource that maintain it for others to enjoy, such as cleaning and reporting injured animals, watching for turtles. Don't take this resource away from the people who support it!

Correspondence ID: 339 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 10:47:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thave concerns with the turtle program changing, and it negativity impacting my beach acces rights. As a father of 5 and have limited time to take my kids to the beach and experience natural seashore unlike any where else. Closing the beach down for breesing season for any amount of time limits not only my time with my family but others as well.

And being able to drive down the beach gives family access to be away from others and vice versa for others

Correspondence ID: 340 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 11:07:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The turtle program has been running well since its inception. Closing access or even restricting beach access to the PINS area will be a detriment to all the local business in the Corpus Area and Padre island area. Visitors bring in millions in revenue to=due to the c=visiting and beach access to the PINS area. Please do not restrict beach access.

Correspondence ID: 341 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 11:25:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am here on behalf of my self, the locals, the fisherman, and all tourists and local businesses, who will be devastated or affected negatively by the ridiculousness being proposed by the National Park systems talking about closing PINS and destroying our turtle program... i for one am sick and tired of seeing all our natural areas being closed and stolen away from we the people, the absolute absurdity that this is even being thought of let alone acted upon is beyond staggering... it will destroy local businesses and tourism, as well as it adversely affecting locals such as myself in terms of fishing and recreation.... my family has blood lineage back to the mid 1800's in this island area and we have seen generations of destruction to our beaches and recreational access in that time... i strongly urge you all to reconsidered any decision to go through with these actions and remind you that it would be selfish and totally un american to take such communist like actions against your fellow country men... i stand strongly beside all who oppose your idiotic concepts and drastic ideas of taking more away from us and destroying one of the best things this entire city has to offer.... remember you will be known for the actions you take on this and will be remembered either as great people, or soulless cowards depending on which way you turn this page.... sincerely a long-term and generational citizen of this city and avid fisherman and outdoorsman 🐢

Correspondence ID: 342 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 11:39:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The continued right of public access for fisherman, campers, and beach goers should remain unchanged. I will oppose any plan that limits access to any group of beachgoers or recreational enthusiasts.

Correspondence ID: 343 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 11:47:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: One of the most beautiful places in Texas should be enjoyed by Texans, not corporations. What a disgrace it is, that this is even a conversation.

Correspondence ID: 344 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 11:53:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 1. Entrance of PINS should be manned 24 hours a day to collect fees from EVERYONE that enters. Currently only manned during some daylight hours and visitors can enter before 7am or after dark and not pay anything.

2. Increase fees to enter park and charge an additional fee for driving on PINS beach.

3. Enlarge parking at Bird Island Boat Ramp so that more boats and kayak trailers can park there and launch.

4. Keep driving on the beach all the way to Mansfield Jetties open.

5. There should be more Rangers seen on the beach to prevent illegal activities such as drone launching, ghost shrimp harvesting with pumps, incorrect parking and camping that block roads, illegal immigrants, illegal drug drop offs/pickups. Game wardens should make visits also.

6. Develop/enlarge hiking trails where the Bird Island Boat Ramp and Windsurfing areas are, these trails would be along shoreline to enable bird watchers, wade fisherman, folks exercising to go. No everyone wants to drive their car on the beach but want to walk and enjoy.

7. Improve landscaping on entrance to park, the raised flower beds have never been planted nor maintained, looks terrible. Many native flowers would do well there.

8. Terminate those park employees that harass coworkers, visitors. The visitors are the customers. A park ranger when asked a question should not be answering "I don't know" and walk away but should seek it out.

9. PINS needs a new Superintendent that has an educational background in oceanography, marine science, coastal habitat .

The current Super is archeology, not qualified, this is why he had employees with metal detectors looking for ship wreck treasures for himself, keeping park closed after a storm for over 2 weeks. This alone should be reason for termination.

10. Terminate Mike Reynolds who sent current superintendent to PINS, for poor management, conflict of interest and poor employee selection/advancement.

Correspondence ID: 345 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 11:56:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do not try to fix what isn't broke. The turtle program has been a huge success over the decades. Work to get more funding to it instead of cutting funding to it. The biggest issue that the turtles and turtle eggs face on the island is probably coyotes. They are everywhere and they are starving. They watch you from the dune line. If you throw a stick toward them they think it's food and run toward it to check it out instead of running away. I'm sure they destroy plenty of turtle nest and turtles. Something needs to be done for population control of them.

Do not build a back road to the 5 mile marker. If you want to protect habitat then cutting a 5 mile swath out of the dunes is the worst thing you can do. There is absolutely no reason for it. People who do not want to camp near vehicles driving down island can go to Malaquite where there is no traffic or north beach where there is minimal traffic. Possibly invest in more signage to direct more people toward those beaches who don't plan to travel down island.

Do not explore the option of driving permits. There are over 60 miles of drivable beach. There is plenty of room. This would be nothing more than another money grab. If Sharkathon can happen every year with over 600 teams plus normal visitors then there is no reason that regular traffic would be an issue during any other time.

Do not limit driving down beach. A majority of people who are willing to drive that far down the beach do so because they love the island not because they are trying to harm it. Turtles, birds, and other wildlife that are in danger down island get reported by people driving down island. Limiting driving will do far more to hurt the turtles than help them. I don't think there is one single documented instance of a turtle being ran over by a vehicle but there are countless turtles that need help that have been reported by people driving down island.

Correspondence ID: 346 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 12:07:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity for me to be able to provide my comment on the proposed Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program. I would like to advocate against holding fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size. There are a couple of reasons why I hold this opinion.

Firstly, I have over 2 decades of direct experience in resource management here in my home province of Manitoba, Canada, while working at different times for provincial and federal governments. Through a variety of management initiatives, it has been repeatedly apparent that one of the best tools available to assist in promoting, advocating, and sustaining conservation and protection of an ecosystem, species or resource, is gaining public support and involvement through direct engagement and collaboration. By limiting peoples' exposure to the full scope of work being done by both Park Rangers and volunteers, under the proposed options, it will hamper people's perception of the real value the program. It will also limit people's appreciation of how the program is critical to the restoration, conservation and protection of the Kemp Ridley sea turtle that can't be experienced simply through traditional public education measures.

Secondly, this opinion is based directly on personal experience. Back in July 2019 my wife and I decided to take our summer vacation by visiting your beautiful State of Texas. Our plans focused on visiting several locations ranging from Austin, San Antonio and Corpus Christi. Central to our itinerary was making a visit to North Padre Island to attend one of the public sea turtle hatchling releases at Padre Island National Seashore. We were fortunate and got a front row view to witness the event. And we were absolutely blown away by the passion and commitment of the park staff and volunteers; as well as, the impact it had on the crowd of visitors (young and old

alike).

We returned home to Canada with many wonderful memories of the Gulf Coast, Hill Country, and South Texas Plains. But the highlight of our trip was, without a doubt, that early morning spent watching the Kemp Ridley sea turtle hatchlings released and racing down the beach into the waters of the Gulf, both as the sun rose over the horizon and the assembled volunteers worked hard to keep the seagulls at bay. In fact, the experience has left such a profound impact on the both of us that we were planning to apply to become volunteers ourselves and, if so lucky, intended to spend a couple of weeks vacationing in the area while we assisted in the sea turtle hatchling release program at Padre Island National Seashore. Unfortunately, like so many of us, we have postponed our dreams because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are however still committed to someday be able to revisit our plans to become volunteers.

Also, it is important to mention that while we are waiting for the release of the hatchlings that July 2019 morning, we had the pleasure of speaking with a mother from San Antonio. The lady told us that her and her two daughters got up in the middle of the night and drove in the dark from San Antonio just so that they could be in attendance for the release that morning. It is that type of interest and commitment that is going to be a source of invaluable public support to your conservation efforts and programs that must not be dampened or limited.

Thank you for sharing this wonderful gift of nature with us that was only gained through the public sea turtle hatchling releases at Padre Island National Seashore. Please let people continue to have this truly wonderful opportunity that will not only serve to benefit everyone involved, but also Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program, Padre Island National Seashore, and most importantly, the Kemp Ridley sea turtle.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 347 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 12:24:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been fishing PINS for 30 years and want to continue doing so. I also want my kids and grandchildren to be able to do the same. Restricting beach driving denies access to the best parts of the seashore which can only be reached only by driving. There are many beaches in Texas but there's only one (PINS) that has the capacity for the beach camper and fisherman. DON'T TAKE IT AWAY!

We camp on the beach several times a year, driving 30 miles or more to be 'alone'. My wife is from Switzerland and has no beach IN HER HOME COUNTRY- she loves PINS and she wants to continue camping there at this special place.

The turtle program is worth spending the dollars and time to keep turtles laying eggs on OUR BEACH! It would be a crime to shut it down after so many years of success.

Withhold my personally identifiable information from public review, Please

Correspondence ID: 348 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 12:41:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Beach Driving Permits or Limits on Capacity

PINS has 61 miles of Beach so ample beach exists for everyone. The 2021 Review on page 26 discussed essentially closing the Beach between April 1-July 15. The NPS proposed to do so by using the technique of requiring vehicle driving permits for each vehicle with the fees charged for such permits to be commensurate with the cost of the NPS operating the STSR Program.

Since the STSR Program has nearly a \$2M annual operating budget, such fee could be enormous. It is indisputable that the imposing of a permit and/or charging a fee to access the Beach between April 1 and July 15th is designed to limit beach access during such period.

Creation of New Road to Bypass the First Five Miles

A paved road behind the dunes to bypass the first 5-miles of the Beach is a good idea if the construction and maintenance costs are not too high and the project is reviewed under a separate NEPA analysis. If such road is constructed, the end should contain a turn-around so that vehicles can easily turn around if the entrance to the Beach appears to be too dangerous to access. The TGLO letter suggested that a road behind the dunes be considered.

While doing an NEPA study on the road, we suggest that the NPS also consider the addition of a walking/biking trail beside such road together with an adjacent parking area and vehicle-free walking paths from such parking area through the wetlands to bird and wildlife viewing areas.

Creation of Additional Vehicle-Free Areas

In addition to the above discussed parking area, vehicle-free walking paths and viewing areas, the NPS should consider constructing a parking area off the Yarbboro Pass Road with vehicle-free trails to wetland and wildlife viewing areas. The walk-area at Malaquite Beach is not fully utilized and needs additional improvements to increase its utilization. Additional parking areas and dune walkovers that are handicap accessible need to be constructed towards the ends of Malaquite Beach to enhance the full utilization of the walk-area.

In 2012, the NPS completed the EA and FONSI and established a beach management plan for PINS. No material changes have occurred on PINS in the last ten years which necessitates a change to its current beach management plan. Internal politics and strife within the NPS are not justification for a another NEPA study. Having another study now is an abuse of NEPA.

The TOBA [and the reversionary rights that the State of Texas has retained through the reverter clause found in Senate Bill 6 (Acts 1963, 58th Leg., ch.38, eff. April 4, 1963) authorizing the transfer resulting in the creation of PINS and incorporated into the Deed] prevents the NPS from closing beach access (except for emergencies). The NPS has been warned by the TGLO that any closure of the Beach to vehicular access or any prevention of the public's use and enjoyment of the Beach will be in violation of the TOBA and may subject the property to the reversion.

The personnel within the NPS responsible for dictating policy on PINS are generally non-Texans and may not appreciate our culture and are disturbed by the existence of the TOBA. Texans will not willingly accept the closing of a Texas beach, especially by a federal agency. The visitors to the Beach regularly assist the NPS with its management of PINS (including, its STSR Program, its beach clean-up, the reporting of wildlife problems and in other areas) and should not be alienated. The NPS and the USFWS need to reach a solution for management of the STSR Program which does not involve limiting beach access to any portion of the Beach.

The NPS should endeavor to be a better community partner. Instead of reducing turtle hatchling viewing events (as occurred in 2022) or less (as is proposed in the Comment Request), the NPS should have more viewing events annually, as it did pre-Covid. Visitors to PINS (and particularly visitors wanting to view the turtle hatchling release events) spend many millions of dollars in the Coastal Bend. Limiting the number of viewing events or closing the Beach negatively impacts the Coastal Bend and its businesses economically.

It is a shame that the NPS with its previous and recent actions has generated so much public distrust. We recognize that some of this distrust has arisen because of misunderstandings or misinformation, but, unfortunately, some is justified. Hopefully, this Comment Request will be handled in a manner which partially alleviates this distrust. The findings issued in connection with the Comment Request should acknowledge that the Beach is subject to the TOBA, and that the NPS will not close the Beach in connection with its management of the STSR Program. The NPS doesn't want the next State slogan to be "Don't Mess With Texans' Beach Access Rights"!

Correspondence ID: 349 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 12:46:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am here on behalf of my self, the locals, the fisherman, and all tourists and local businesses, who will be devastated or affected negatively by the ridiculousness being proposed my the National Park systems talking about closing PINS and destroying our turtle program... i for one am sick and tired of seeing all our natural areas being closed and stolen away from we the people, the absolute absurdity that this is even being thought of let alone acted upon is beyond staggering... it will destroy local businesses and tourism, as well as it adversely affecting locals such as myself in terms of fishing and recreation.... my family has blood lineage back to the mid 1800's in this island area and we have seen generations of destruction to our beaches and recreational acces in that time... i strongly urge you all to reconsidered any decision to go through with these actions and remind you that it would be selfish and totally un american to take such communist like actions against your fellow country men... i stand strongly beside all who oppose your idiotic concepts and drastic ideas of taking more away from us and destroying one of the best things this entire city has to offer.... remember you will be known for the actions you take on this and will be remembered either as great people, or souless cowards depending on which way you turn this page.... sincerely a long-term and generational citizen of this city and avid fisherman and outdoorsman 🐢

Correspondence ID: 350 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 12:46:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The PINS is a great asset to have full access to. As a American I believe we should have access to all beaches . I know for a fact that people do make PINS a better place by picking up lots of trash and reporting animals that need attention. Also the ones I talk to help with reporting illegal activities.i have seen no harm to wildlife or the dunes while being there. I would like to see time limits extended for stays on the beach by possibly letting people do public service for extra time there. Also they could be the eyes and ears for park service to make it a safe place as well as reporting on wildlife . I would think volunteers spaced every few miles or even every 5 miles could help park Rangers with maintaining a safe beach as well as helping to maintain a clean beach. Please do not take this great beach away from us!

Correspondence ID: 351 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 13:24:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Camping and fishing PINS is special. This is literally the only reason we live in Corpus Christi. We don't have a boat, we don't fish the bays, we live there for the sole purpose of camping and fishing Padre Island National Seashore. We are against any law that reduces or limits our access.

Correspondence ID: 352 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 13:35:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Access to Padre Island National Seashore should stay as it is. My family and I have drove the beach for over 20+ years fishing off the sand/beach. We've taught our children and grandchildren how to fish, drive the beach 2 wheel drive and 4 wheel drive. We've also taught them how to take care of the environment, picking up more trash than what we arrived with. The enjoyment is being passed down from generation to generation. The stories we have heard from fisherman that have traveled the beach in previous years before we started enjoying the beach are amazing.

It would be great to leave the beach as it is. Please don't build an access road behind the dunes 5 miles from the end of the pavement south. There is already a large parking lot at the visitor center where people can walk over the dune line to access the beach where there isn't any vehicle traffic. I rarely see this area at capacity. People don't want to carry their leisure equipment over the dune line to enjoy the beach.

Correspondence ID: 353 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 14:05:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Re the parks pre NEPA's proposals. Having reviewed them I believe this will be detrimental to the turtles, the beach users, and Corpus Christi. Nothing has changed since your 2012 management plans.

Correspondence ID: 354 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 14:06:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have lived in this area for 8 years and would be very saddened to see driving on the beach prohibited, even if only temporarily during the turtle nesting season. Many visitors driving along the beach are the same ones who discover the turtle nests and I believe that whatever negative effect that vehicles have on the Kemp's Ridley population is negated itself through the assistance that visitors give to the Turtle Patrol team.

If driving on the beach is prohibited, that means that even for the demographic of visitors that have 4x4 vehicles available to them, much if not most of the park would be practically inaccessible. If turtle releases are cut, it would be a huge blow to park promotion and the visitor experience as many come to visit specifically to see those releases. If these changes happen, one could make a compelling argument as to why PINS is no longer a "park" for visitors to enjoy recreational activities(as they cannot access the areas necessary to perform those activities), but rather a protected natural area or wildlife refuge that is focused on resource protection, conservation, research, and education.

I am in favor of PINS effectively changing into a refuge or protected area so long as the NPS is clear with the community and potential/returning visitors that the area is no longer meant to be enjoyed in the same way that it once was. I understand that times change and we must re-evaluate the situation surrounding visitors/vehicles effect on the environment as well as manage costs and productivity of the Turtle Hatchling operation, but I do not believe the NPS should promote the area as a recreational park at the point when driving is prohibited due to the inherent inaccessibility of that policy. I would absolutely be in favor of a back road the first 5 miles, maximum capacity limits, or even driving permits that the park can sell to offset costs associated with this activity as viable alternatives to driving prohibition.

To conclude, the prohibition of driving on the beach, the cessation or cutting back of public turtle releases and other related potential changes will have negative effects on the very turtle population we are attempting to protect due to their isolation from visitor attention and their defenselessness against predators on the beach, as well as on visitor experiences as access to most of the park will be extremely limited for many activities. Other alternatives are crucial to the continuation of the mission of PINS, the continued protection of the endangered Kemp's Ridley turtle, and for the enjoyment of the Seashore for future generations.

Correspondence ID: 355 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 14:10:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: PAIS is refusing to allow Dr. Donna Shaver to use her over 40 years of experience to supervise the sea turtle program to benefit the Kemps Ridley sea turtle. The Kemps Ridley, the most endangered sea turtle in the world, is a daytime nester. She favors windy days but like all sea turtles, once she lays her eggs she returns to the Gulf. It's up to us to protect her eggs and make sure the nestlings get the best chance for survival. We cannot leave their survival to chance. We do not need people from Florida telling us how to run the turtle program. The turtles who nest there are night nesters and we respect their methods to protect those turtles. In addition, the federal government has no right to try and limit our right to drive on the beach. Fishermen, birders, families are all happy to share the beaches with turtle patrollers. And people love the hatchling releases and in addition, they spend money on the island, which helps the economy. Don't try to change something that is a win for everyone.

Correspondence ID: 356 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 14:24:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sand Management: Keep the same Management as we have now to have continuous access to the beach throughout the whole year.

Beach Driving: NO CURRENT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE! DO NOT INFRINGE ON OUR RIGHTS TO DRIVE ON THE BEACH! No new roads need to be built. We just need to maintain the access we have now.

Hurricane Recovery Related Closures:

The first option I thought was good. Not sure

Potential option: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only

- Re-open the Seashore after an initial safety and resource check and basic visitor safety is provided.

- Limited facilities would be available as repairs and clean up continue.

Marine Debris: coordinate volunteers is a good way to go. People will come and donate their time to keep this place I'm good shape. People of P.I.N.S will always come through.

Correspondence ID: 357 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 14:45:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Regarding Padre Island National Seashore (PINS). I have been fishing the Seashore for 25+ years and I say with the utmost confidence that the serious fisher and outdoor people are not the issue related to the natural resources of the island. I taught my sons and am teaching my grandsons the importance of preserving our natural resources, especially, our fisheries. PINS, in some ways, is one of the last frontiers our great nation has left and it would be shameful if our children were not allowed to learn about it and enjoy it's beauty. Because of this and several other reasons, I am not in favor of a plan that prohibits or limits access to PINS.

Correspondence ID: 358 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 14:53:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: So, my husband and I have been volunteers at PAIS for about 15 years. During that time we have assisted with projects in Resource, VC, Maintenance and Purchasing departments. Although not actually paid staff members, I think this experience gives us a unique perspective.

I have very little to add to the discussion about the Turtle Recovery program except to say that

1. It is an extremely popular program, not only with the park visitors, but to the community and out-of-staters. And visitors from other countries! In my opinion it would be a mistake to mess too much with such a successful and loved program. That being said...
2. I think the idea of limiting the egg collection to the park boundaries has some merit since very few nests are found north of the North Beach boundary. The savings in personal hours and gasoline come to mind.
3. I am **STRONGLY AGAINST** removing NPS staff from driving on Closed Beach except for emergencies. When I first started my beach cleaning operation Closed Beach was absolutely a trash heap! After years of addressing the situation one can now see that beach looking better that it ever has. Keep in mind that is following

two hurricanes. To deny us the ability to get down there and maintain that stretch of beach means that the trash will re-accumulate. And this means that trash that washes up will not be able to be removed, and can also wash back into the Gulf - thereby further endangering the animals this idea was supposed to protect. Just this week we removed three 55 gallon drums that Kleberg beach uses. They were washed out to sea and then washed back into our park. This happens with tons of smaller debris all the time.

Marine Debris has almost become a fancy word for man made trash. Plastic accounts for about 90+% .

Most of the visitors to PAIS are very good at cleaning up after themselves, with the exception of the metal shade structures left behind in the summertime. The biggest trash problem is what I call "wash up." If we don't get our elected federal officials to start paying attention to all the trash that enters the Gulf from out in international waters we will always have this problem. I propose inviting Rep. Cloud and Sen. Cornyn to walk the beach with us and see first hand what we see every day. It will take International cooperation to make a dent in the problem.

Happily, there has been an uptick in the number of volunteers that are picking up trash lately. I think Kelly's idea of putting trash bags outside the door of the VC has helped. If we could have a bag dispenser at the kiosks for North and South Beach the visitors might pitch in even more. Make it easy for them.

As regards the Beach Driving segment,

I like the idea of a bypass road for the down-islanders. Maybe it doesn't have to go as far as the 5 mile marker, but, instead, tie into the gas well road that comes out around the 2 mile marker. That could cut the cost of the project. On the down side, one has to consider how it is going to be maintained. Will there be a budget for more employees?

Anyway, thank you for this opportunity to comment. We feel fortunate to have the opportunity to work here.

Correspondence ID: 359 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 15:16:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a season pass holder and regular user of PINS, I support the following options for beach management at Padre Island National Seashore as presented by the NPS in the recent Civic Engagement Newsletter:

- 1.) I support all four nesting sea turtle pilot studies
- 2.) I support the North Beach Access Improvements
- 3.) I support creation of a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles of South Beach to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island.
- 4.) I support maintaining Malaquite Beach as a vehicle-free pedestrian area, but do not support creation of additional vehicle-free areas.
- 5.) I support the third option for hurricane-related closures-
 - a. Record damage in front country, then open.
 - b. Document damage at other areas, then open other facilities as work continues.
- 6.) I support all options for marine debris cleanup.

Correspondence ID: 360 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 16:31:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We should be very careful about closing off access, especially of the responsible park service does not have the resources to conduct consistent monitoring. Just as hunters play a role in wildlife conservation, so does fishing, and even tourism. Perhaps something more could be done to train the general public? Perhaps

more staff could be hired or more technology employed to monitor things, rather than cutting off access? Perhaps a permitting system to allow only certified visitors beyond a certain point?

Correspondence ID: 361 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 16:47:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My family and I visit PINS often, to fish, explore and enjoy the National Park. I would not like any "Management" that would restrict our current access. I would like to see more patrols to make sure people are following the current rules.

Correspondence ID: 362 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 16:55:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been a Texas PINS fisherman since 1998. Fishing on PINS is one of my favorite activities of all time.

I enjoy the full driving access in the park except the malaquite beach and of course the dunes.

I would be dismayed if any areas were restricted without absolutely good intentions. The park is probably one of the last places in the US and Texas that we have full access and I would hate to lose that privilege.

I have started bringing my family down to show them the wonderful ecosystem that PINS encompasses. It is truly unique and such a gem with such open access.

I think PINS fisher people are some of the most conservation friendly people around. We love the park and strive to keep it natural and undisturbed. The abundance of wildlife in the ocean and the island are amazing. Please don't take it away.

Correspondence ID: 363 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 16:57:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I for one would not like any changes to allowing driving on the beach.

As one of the few places that allows for driving on the beach it should remain so.

The turtle program is a boon to the economy of Corpus Christi as is fishing.

Many people go to the beach from Bexar county and as such contribute Considerably to the beach area local community.

Correspondence ID: 364 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 17:04:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a fisherman and lover of Padre Island National Seashore. I have been visiting the park for over 50 years. It is essential that the public access is maintained. Granted, the public may need more education regarding the park ecosystem(s); however, the public deserves to have complete access to drive the entire beach. Excluding traffic is not a viable option in my opinion.

Thank you for allowing my comments

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 365 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 17:21:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a former turtle patroller at the national seashore and wildlife conservationist, I have much to say about the Kemp's Ridley Recovery project in the park. The Kemp's Ridley is an endemic nester on the beaches of Tamaulipas, Mexico. Historically only a few here and there came as far up as Texas, meaning Texas was not necessarily a important nesting area for them. Back when the project was started and Mexico reached out to start a conservation program, I agree yes a stringent protection plan in Texas as an auxiliary population was an excellent idea. Time was needed to let both the endemic Mexican nesters and the new auxiliary population to grow and for new laws in both countries to be made to prohibit human caused turtle take. The goal of the program is to bring back the historical numbers of turtles. The reality is, that is not how endangered species management actually works. As much as we would like to think we can get back to the days when tens of thousands of Kemp's nested in a day in Mexico, sadly this will not be achieved. Full recovery never is. The idea behind endangered species conservation is to get the species population to a genetically and sustainably viable amount. Being that the park nesting population is only an auxiliary population, these kinds of historical numbers are absolutely never going to be reached. Mexico is back to having thousands of turtles nesting in Tamaulipas. This is a fantastic recovery for the endemic nesting population. Laws have been made regarding the turtles in both countries attempting to eliminate past human take, which has allowed the species to recoup. There has been set backs such as Deepwater Horizon where the affects from the spill should continue to be studied, but overall the species has made a great rebound. Being that thousands of Kemp's are nesting in a day on their endemic beaches, my question becomes does the Texas auxiliary population need to be conserved as stringently as it currently is by the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery? Does there need to be a separate department for this species in the park? My answer to both these questions is no. I do think there should be a person in the Resources Management Division who does turtle conservation overall for all species of sea turtle, but there is no need for a whole division dedicated to the Kemp's Ridley. That is unheard of in the National Park Service, to have a separate division for a species of wildlife. As for the conservation of the Kemp's in the park, there is no need for the massive effort that hasn't changed since the program started in the 80s. There does not need to be the number of patrollers that there is now. Only about 3 to 4 days out of the summer are big nesting days. The UTVs are not great for the beach, I understand that it is not necessarily any more impact than the regular vehicle traffic, and employees are forced into unsafe situations, at least they were during my tenure. I definitely agree that patrols and egg collection should be limited to the park boundary and not all the way to Bob Hall Pier. I absolutely think we need fewer public hatching releases if any public releases at all. The releases do not serve a purely educational purpose as Dr. Shaver says. The first hatchling release I worked as a biological technician, I remember being horrified by the event. It is not great for the hatchlings at all. First off, you have over a thousand people talking at once which must sound horribly confusing to someone so small and distracting as well. I know I get distracted by many people talking at once around me if I am trying to do something. Also, sensory wise, the hatchlings are very sensitive to everything around them and the vibrations through the ground from all the movement has to mess them up. The releases I helped with I noticed some hatchlings are sluggish and stop going towards the water. Some would even start walking in circles. Sound and movement vibrations have been scientifically documented as negatively affecting species in different situations. A former volunteer with the division was talking with me and brought up a very interesting and philosophical question regarding the specific Kemp's Ridley conservation at the park. He said word for word "When does turtle conservation become turtle farming?" As someone who grew up around agriculture and majored in agricultural science in college, I have been thinking hard about his question. When the turtles come up to nest patrollers have to take painful biopsy punches from them, measure them, and tag them with metal tags on two flippers. If the turtle is done nesting before the patroller gets to this workup they are required to restrain the turtle from going to the water till the workup is complete. If you ask me, this goes totally against the language of the Endangered Species Act, yet somehow they are allowed to do it. I can't even begin to imagine how traumatic this must seem to the turtle. Are the metal tags still necessary? Patrollers are already PIT tagging them which is fairly painless. If the metal tags don't crimp right the patroller needs to pry it off with pliers and reapply it, or sometimes the not properly applied tag gets left and affects the movement of the flipper. When the metal tags rust and fall off over time, they leave large chunks out of the flipper and patrollers are required to just replace them in another scale. I don't feel like the division needs to be using this method anymore, especially when the patrollers also utilize PIT tags for identification. The eggs are collected due to the vehicle traffic, but also to prevent natural predation and other environmental issues that naturally occur from affecting the eggs. I agree, in the beginning when the population was established this was advisable. Now

however, especially with the better numbers nesting in Mexico, we can collect some nests in high risk areas of the beach but should be looking into letting most of the nests incubate naturally. I think it would still be a good idea to put the put one of the special mesh cages over the nests that predators can't easily get into but the hatchlings can crawl out of when the time comes. The incubation room is where the when does conservation become farming question really peaks. Yes the eggs are in sand from the beach, but it is still very unnatural. In the cooler box they are placed in neat rows within the rectangular area. This is not how their mother laid them and causes unnatural temperature distribution in the nest. A temperature probe is put into each nest box so the bio techs can manipulate the temperature of the nests to produce the specific gender of hatchlings they want. Is this not agriculture? Sounds like manipulating a livestock species to achieve a desired result to me. These turtles are not livestock, they are wild animals. We should be conserving them as such. When does conservation go to far? I think we have easily reached that point with the Kemp's Ridley Recovery Program at Padre Island National Seashore. Thank you for you time and consideration of my comment.

Correspondence ID: 366 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 17:52:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please reconsider the proposal to discontinue vehicle access to Padre Island National Seashore. There are generations of Texans who have enjoyed family time on PINS. There are many Texans looking forward to introducing their children and grandchildren to the beauty of PINS. If the proposal is enacted, many peoples dreams will die

Correspondence ID: 367 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 18:30:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: IF the potential for restricting vehicle access to the full length of Padre Island National Seashore is truly to protect nesting turtles then the turtles are destined for complete collapse. Our Island is loaded with coyotes and feral hogs that will assuredly decimate naturally incubating eggs, ravage the turtles once they come on land and kill whatever hatchlings that luckily make it to hatch.

People going up and down the entire 60miles and reporting sightings are the only protection these turtles really have. There is not enough paid manpower to accomplish this feat even with the park fees being doubled recently. Restrict our full access and you will easily lose 80% or more regular visitors. I buy passes every single year but will have no reason to return if access is restricted. I am one of thousands of Texans who will do the same. Let's come up with a better plan to protect and improve the park.

Correspondence ID: 368 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 20:09:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello all,

I am from San Antonio but my family and I love coming to PINS for fishing and overnight camping - we typically drive well past the 5-mile marker as we enjoy getting away from the crowds to fish and camp in relative solitude. As an avid fisherman/angler, I am concerned that our ability to drive to the more remote sections of the beach to enjoy our wonderful seashore may be in jeopardy - I would like to state that I am in support of the proposed back-road option that would circumvent the first five miles of the beach, for those of us who normally go further and are well-equipped with the proper vehicles to do so. I would also be willing to pay a reasonable fee for a special permit to travel further than the 5 miles, if it would help to pay for this access road.

Please keep those of us who consider ourselves as responsible sportsmen/women in mind as you consider any changes to management of PINS, thank you.

Correspondence ID: 369 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,08 2023 21:09:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a person who enjoys spending time on Padre Island National Seashore and other beaches in the area I'm concerned about any proposed changes that may restrict the access of peoples enjoyment thereof. I have heard one of the reasons for possible changes was concern for the Kemp Ridley Sea Turtles and other turtles. It is well known that the recent programs on Padre Island have been very successful in reestablishing the turtle numbers. It stands to reason to keep a successful program going and not to cut funds for this, which has already been done. The turtle program is also of great benefit for the community at large and specifically for thousands of children as a learning experience and to witness the baby turtles going into the gulf. In general I'm against federal control of so many things. If there is a problem in any way its best to leave that to the local community. Those people are the ones most affected and in position to fix things if they need to be fixed. The whole purpose of setting aside land for public use like Padre Island National Seashore is for the enjoyment of generation after generation. I don't want to see any changes concerning beach access.

Correspondence ID: 370 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,08 2023 21:39:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Dear Sir or Madam:

Please don't add anymore restrictions or regulations regarding beach access. I believe with the current turtle program the turtles are thriving, as a fisherman I'm around the beach and jetty quite often and have seen so many turtles here then any other states. Thank you for taking my comment.

Correspondence ID: 371 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,09 2023 06:31:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The current turtle program has been successful for years and is ran by experienced trained professionals who are experts in what they do. These people are against what you are choosing to do because it's not in the best interest of the turtles or the citizens enjoying beach access and the turtle program they get to watch and experience, such as the turtle releases. The turtles are under constant threat of predation which is made more intense because there is no predator management program because it's a national park (no hunting, etc). Also we don't have hotels and resorts, meaning no human traffic to scare off predators, etc. The turtle breeding period is from March to September and to limit beach access to vehicles would be devastating to the local economy (I.e lodging, restaurants, retail stores, etc) which depend on local usage and tourism. Hundreds and thousands of dollars would be lost annually. I'm all for the environment but as you look at a risk vs gain analysis, limiting vehicular traffic for the program NPS proposes would be more risk than gain. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 372 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,09 2023 07:08:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The current turtle program has been successful for years and is ran by experienced trained professionals who are experts in what they do. These people are against what you are choosing to do because it's not in the best interest of the turtles or the citizens enjoying beach access and the turtle program they get to watch and experience, such as the turtle releases. The turtles are under constant threat of predation which is made more intense because there is no predator management program because it's a national park (no hunting, etc). Also we don't have hotels and resorts, meaning no human traffic to scare off predators, etc. The turtle breeding period is from March to September and to limit beach access to vehicles would be devastating to the local economy (I.e lodging, restaurants, retail stores, etc) which depend on local usage and tourism. Hundreds and thousands of dollars would be lost annually. I'm all for the environment but as you look at a risk vs gain analysis, limiting vehicular traffic for the program NPS proposes would be more risk than gain. Thank you. The current turtle program has been successful for years and is ran by experienced trained professionals who are experts in what they do. These people are against what you are choosing to do because it's not in the best interest of the turtles or the citizens enjoying beach access and the turtle program they get to watch and experience, such as the turtle releases. The turtles are under constant threat of predation which is made more intense because there is no

predator management program because it's a national park (no hunting, etc). Also we don't have hotels and resorts, meaning no human traffic to scare off predators, etc. The turtle breeding period is from March to September and to limit beach access to vehicles would be devastating to the local economy (I.e lodging, restaurants, retail stores, etc) which depend on local usage and tourism. Hundreds and thousands of dollars would be lost annually. I'm all for the environment but as you look at a risk vs gain analysis, limiting vehicular traffic for the program NPS proposes would be more risk than gain. Thank you. The current turtle program has been successful for years and is ran by experienced trained professionals who are experts in what they do. These people are against what you are choosing to do because it's not in the best interest of the turtles or the citizens enjoying beach access and the turtle program they get to watch and experience, such as the turtle releases. The turtles are under constant threat of predation which is made more intense because there is no predator management program because it's a national park (no hunting, etc). Also we don't have hotels and resorts, meaning no human traffic to scare off predators, etc. The turtle breeding period is from March to September and to limit beach access to vehicles would be devastating to the local economy (I.e lodging, restaurants, retail stores, etc) which depend on local usage and tourism. Hundreds and thousands of dollars would be lost annually. I'm all for the environment but as you look at a risk vs gain analysis, limiting vehicular traffic for the program NPS proposes would be more risk than gain. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 373 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 07:30:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The limiting of access on Padre Island National Seashore is a bad idea. There are thousands of people who visit and enjoy the park. These people also serve other purposes, they are the eyes and ears of the park and many perform unsolicited clean up of the areas they occupy. Most people respect the park and do what they can to have an enjoyable experience. Limiting access will only hurt the area as it is so large there is no way the park staff would be able to know if something needed to be addressed such as where turtles were seen by visitors or to help wildlife.

Don't forget the mission statement from your website, "The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world." Key points are enjoyment, education and inspiration. By closing or limiting access you fail this mission.

Correspondence ID: 374 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 07:35:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leave the beach as it is

Correspondence ID: 375 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 07:57:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please keep all our beaches accessible for all, not just the rich, we all enjoy the water.

Correspondence ID: 376 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 09:17:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leave our Beach alone...

Don't take it away....

Correspondence ID: 377 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 09:33:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have lived in Corpus for 74 years. One of the main reasons that keeps me here is the freedom to go down the beach and fish. I always leave with more than I brought as I pick up trash and debris around every stop I make. I have reported turtle sightings (dead and alive). I have helped tourist who were stuck in the sand as well as giving them some advice on how to catch our local fish in the surf. Most fishermen I have met on PINS or helpful and friendly. We watch out for each other and take care of our awesome resource which is our beach. That beach belongs to the people, not the government. It was there long before any government agency got involved and will be there long after we are all gone. Don't restrict the beach to fishermen, use them to help you patrol it and watch over it. A program involving fishermen would be acceptable to all. I would even sign up for a training program for you to teach us how to help preserve our greatest asset. Keep the beach open, my grandchildren need to experience the PINS I know.

Correspondence ID: 378 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 09:33:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: PINS is for the people, and the people should have the rights to fully access the 60 miles of beach by vehicle. A majority of the beach traffic seems to be within the first 10 mile stretch of PINS. A secondary roadway that would drop in 5 to 10 miles down the beach, with a parking area would be a great investment. It would help reduce some of the beach traffic in the first few miles and would allow visitors with 2 wheel drive vehicles to access more of the beach. Year around driving, the full 60 mile PINS stretch, is an absolute must and needs to continue.

Correspondence ID: 379 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 10:53:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I love camping and fishing at PINS and make several trips down there every year. I usually drive 10-30 miles down and stay for a week or more at a time. I love being on the remote, uncrowded beach. I also stay at Malaquite and Bird Island campgrounds when I feel like it. Please don't change anything that would affect this for me and my family.

I definitely notice more traffic these days, but I don't think there is an easy, inexpensive or acceptable solution. Adding bypass roads would be expensive to build and maintain and would negatively impact wildlife and dune structure. It would also encourage more traffic to remote areas. Currently only rangers/Border Patrol, turtle patrol, hardcore fishermen and what looks like oilfield workers seem to make the hard drive way down the beach. Closing that beach to driving is unacceptable.

I think there is already more than enough pedestrian beach and that should stay as is until it gets too crowded. I don't think you need to add more. From what I see, most of that beach is unused.

There are 2 basic types of people who use PINS beaches:

- 1) Weekend tourist types that use North Beach, Malaquite Beach and the first 5 miles or so of South Beach. They usually have kids and don't really care about being in remote areas.
- 2) Hardcore fishermen and campers who make the sometimes difficult drive 5-60 miles down South Beach.

Correspondence ID: 380 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Feb,22 2023

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern:

It has been brought to my attention that the National Park Service is considering dismantling the Padre Island National Seashore Sea Turtle Restoration program. The dismantling of this legacy program would be detrimental to the community as the significant amount of eco-tourism dollars would be halted as well as a beloved tourist

attraction would vanish. Not only would this affect small businesses, but it would affect the number of tourists that come to the Padre Island National Seashore Beaches. It would also be detrimental to one of the most endangered species of sea turtles, the Kemp's Ridley. The Padre Island National Seashore is home to this turtle species and tourists from across the nation come to the seashore to witness the releasing of these incredibly, and some may consider, rare sea turtles.

I too am concerned about any potential new restrictions to beach accessibility. Not only our community, but tourists from Texas and throughout the nation, come to our National Seashore to have this unique beach experience. Any additional restrictions that would minimize or restrict access would not only be negatively received by beachgoers but would result in a devastating decline in tourists enjoying our Coastal Bend area.

I urge you to continue with the Sea Turtle Restoration Program and to not eliminate or hinder the beach accessibility in any way as the Sea Turtle program and the seashores/beaches are the heart of this community.

I look forward in visiting with you more if you so choose or if you have any questions.

Sincerely

Dan Suckley
Corpus Christi City Council Member
District 4

Correspondence ID: 381 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Feb,21 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern:

It has been brought to my attention that the National Park Service is considering dismantling the Padre Island National Seashore Sea Turtle Restoration program. The dismantling of this legacy program would be detrimental to the community as the significant amount of eco-tourism dollars would be halted as well as a beloved tourist attraction would vanish.

Not only would this affect small businesses, but it would affect the number of tourists that come to the Padre Island National Seashore Beaches. It would also be detrimental to one of the most endangered species of Sea Turtles, the Kemp Ridley. The Padre Island National Seashore is home to the species and tourist from across the nation come to the Seashore to witness the releasing of these incredibly, and some may consider, rare, Sea Turtles.

The closure of the Sea Turtle Restoration Program and the elimination of beach accessibility by motor vehicle will be devastating to this community, the Kemp Ridley Sea Turtles, and all the Sea Turtles who nest at Padre Island National Seashore.

I urge you to continue with the Sea Turtle Restoration Program and to not eliminate or hinder the beach accessibility, in any way, as the Sea Turtle program and the Seashores are the heart of this community. Attached is the resolution passed unanimously by the Nueces County Commissioners Court expressing our overwhelming support for the Sea Turtle Program.

Brent Chesney
Nueces County Commission, Precinct 4

Correspondence ID: 382 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,09 2023 11:23:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been fishing the Padre Island National Seashore for years now and there is no place like it! All of the wildlife is thriving as the park is now. The turtle populations are not threatened by any of the beach goers, fisherman, or any other group. We as a community of people using that beach monitor, and report sightings of the turtles, and make sure we avoid the areas that there has been turtle activity. The ability to use that ENTIRE stretch of beach, as well as all other stretches of Texas beach are our right. I plan to continue to enjoy the beach, take care of it, and teach my growing son to love and care for it and it's wildlife the same way I do! Closing the beach, or any sections of that beach will help nothing, and will be infringing on the right that we have to be there. The people of Texas are the ones that keep that entire beach clean and maintained, leaving it a better place than we found it because it is ours!

Correspondence ID: 383 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 12:08:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have followed the discussions about Beach closure to vehicles and about the dismantling of the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Recovery Program by the NPS with dismay and incredulity. First, it is clearly established under Texas law that Texas beaches are to remain open to the public, including the ability to drive on them if deemed safe at the time. Second, the Sea Turtle Recovery Program has been very successful in bringing our iconic Kemp's Ridley turtle back from the brink of extinction, but it's success depends on maintaining the program's objectives, (removing the eggs from the nests on the beach and placing them under controlled conditions to maximize hatching percentages and ensure the continuation of the species by controlling female:male ratios, then releasing them under protected conditions so that predators (so many prevalent predator species present on Texas beaches capable of decimating a newly hatched nest) do not have a chance to kill the hatchlings. What happens to the hatchlings once they reach the water is out of our control, but logic says that the more hatchlings that are protected and released, the more that will survive and return to nest on our beaches. It makes much more sense to do whatever is necessary to maintain and improve these programs, both for survival of the species as well as for the local Texas economy, which has adopted the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle as a symbol of our dedication to preserving life and habitat in our area. The STRP draws tens of thousands of people from across the US and the world to witness the release of the tiny hatchlings on our beach with the hope and promise that many will survive and return, thus ensuring the survival of the species and acting as a model program for other such recovery efforts when needed. The leader of the Program has dedicated her life and considerable talents to studying the Kemp's Ridley Turtle and has become a world-renowned researcher in the field, with many peer-reviewed articles contributing to the knowledge-base that can be applied to other species. Therefore, I would strongly propose 1) keeping our Beaches open to the public, and 2) promoting , financially increasing and supporting the Kemp's Ridley Recovery Program, and 3) considering the value of our beaches and the fact that they are the major nesting site of these highly endangered turtles in the US (the other nesting site in Tamaulipas, Mexico could have major changes to its recovery program based on local politics, as well as natural disasters, and it seems logical to have our Texas beaches serve as a second survival area should the Mexican area suffer devastation), and also considering the successful economic impact the turtle program in drawing people here, who wind up staying at our hotels, eating at our restaurants, shopping in our stores, and spending lots of money that benefits our Texas economy, as well as ensuring that the next generation of people have learned about and are aware of the advantages of saving a species, which after all , is part of the entire world-wide circle of life, to which we all belong.

Correspondence ID: 384 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 13:26:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not agree with restricting all driving on the beach during turtle nesting season. The natural resource is ours- as Americans, we should have access to national parks, grasslands or seashores within reason and rules set forth. We understand that there are restrictions--15mph as an example...that we can live with. But to completely block the resource from driving for half the year--the BEST months-- to enjoy the resource is ludicrous. Largely, there will be almost no visitors. Most of the visitors are fishermen and campers visit during

those months-not only because of the best weather, but because its "summertime" and kids are off of school. I've camped there many times during these months, and it is a wonderful time to do so. If you institute this, I will not be able to take my son there to understand and appreciate the beauty and serenity of PINS. Certainly, cannot appreciate it by going through the Malaquite center... just walking through an interpretive center has virtually NO impact on young kids today who are inundated with beautiful images and landscapes on the internet constantly. Nothing excites kids anymore. The only way to get them excited is for them to experience it. I live in the Houston area- and I won't drive 4 hours in the middle of the winter to go to PINS while its cold and rainy-- chances are that many people will feel the same. The only people you will have visit are the locals from Corpus, and maybe a few snowbirds during the winter. Few people will plan trips and a generation of kids-who already are starved of real experiences-will not know how amazing, serene, challenging and fulfilling it is to just BE in nature. Not look at it on YouTube and say, "Gee Johnny, imagine how awesome it would be if you could camp out there". I want my young son to experience PINS at all times of the year so he can appreciate nature and develop reverence for it.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 385 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 15:45:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a sea turtle biologist with the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery at Padre Island National Seashore, the proposed pilot study #1: "In-situ nesting - can predation be reduced without moving eggs" and study #2: "Does moving nests protect them from inundation or flooding" are very concerning for the future of the Kemp's ridley, green, and loggerhead sea turtle populations at PAIS and in Texas. These two pilot studies will jeopardize more than 40 years of conservation efforts in Texas to form a secondary nesting colony at PAIS and recover the critically endangered Kemp's ridley in the Gulf of Mexico. The park does not need to conduct these pilot programs and willingly sacrifice sea turtle nests, eggs, and hatchlings to confirm that leaving nests in situ at PAIS will lead to their predation and inundation. PAIS biologists already published a study documenting multiple threats to in situ nest sites and hatchlings (see Shaver et al. 2020, Threats to Kemp's ridley nests incubating in situ on the Texas coast). From 2005-2007, a total of 155 nest sites at PAIS were monitored for impacts from five threats (tidal inundation, predator interaction, human tampering, vehicle drive-over, and plant root penetration). Ninety-nine percent of marked sites were impacted by at least one of these threats during the study period. Pilot study #1 seeks to test the efficacy of predation mitigation measures for nests left in situ, similar to other USA beaches. Predation mitigation measures are not 100% effective in preventing predation of sea turtle nests anywhere in the world. With a critically endangered species such as the Kemp's ridley turtle, relocation to a protected facility or corral is the best method to completely eliminate threat of predation. Pilot study #2 seeks to test whether relocating the nests higher on the beach would improve chances for survival. In comparison to relocation of nests to protected facilities and corrals, relocating nests higher on the beach would not improve their chances for survival. During coastal flooding events, the tide consistently reaches the dunes and often there is no dry beach left. All nests left on the beach would be lost. Additionally, since Texas allows beach driving, leaving nests in situ does not mitigate for vehicle run over, or accidental damage due to visitors camping on the nest sites. By implementing these pilot programs, the park is choosing to jeopardize the eggs, hatchlings, and our ongoing work to recover a critically endangered species; only to arrive at an answer that has already been studied and documented in scientific literature. A topic highlighted in the civic engagement newsletter mentioned varying sea turtle patrols by timing, frequency, and methods. The Sea Turtle Division already maximizes patrol effort and staffing to target the peak sea turtle nesting season in Texas, and then scales back efforts during the off-season to conserve time, money, and resources. Another topic in the newsletter highlighted out-of-park patrol efforts. Currently, the Sea Turtle Division patrols the beach north of the park boundary. Sea turtles do not recognize man-made borders and will spread their nests along the coast. The females that nest north of the park are just as important to protect. Beaches north of the park experience a high volume of vehicle traffic during the nesting season, making it even more important for trained biologists to be there to respond and protect turtles and their nests from run-over, harassment, and injury. A third topic in the newsletter highlighted adaptively managing the corral location to provide for hurricane resiliency. Currently, the Sea Turtle Division demobilizes the down

island corral in August to avoid impact by Gulf hurricane activity. This protects both the natural resources and park property. Keeping the corral up for longer than the current time period (March to early August) would increase the likelihood of needing to emergency excavate sea turtle nests, staff, and park property from the cabin area. Sea turtle management at PAIS abides by USFWS and TPWD permitted practices. Any proposed alternatives to current management at PAIS require further scrutiny and consideration of negative impacts to endangered species and park resources.

Correspondence ID: 386 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 16:44:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Point 1: Nothing has changed since the Environmental Assessment of 2011 and FONSI report of 2012, so why are we revisiting these same issues and spending more taxpayer money to complete a new EA? I am opposed.

Point 2- Beach Permits: There are 61 miles of beach, and only the first 5 miles get congested. How does it make sense to require permits to go South when that is not the problem? I am opposed.

Point 3- Park Funding: Superintendent Brunnemann returned approximately \$300,000 in grant money for the turtle program. How can you complain about a shortfall of funds when giving away money? I would like for you to reinstate the turtle program as it was.

Point 4- PINS Kemp Ridley nesting population is only about 1% of all Kemp nesting sites. However, a lot of funds are created for the Park and for the surrounding community during hatchling releases. Prior, there would be around 25 public releases. Last year there were only 7, and you want to decrease that number according to your plan. Releases also provide the opportunity to educate the public, which is a goal of the park. Why would you want to remove an asset that provides so much positive interaction with the public?

Point 5- In-Situ research has already been completed showing a negative effect on hatchling survival at PINS. Completing another study in a sheltered environment at Malaquite Beach makes no sense and is totally unreliable.

Point 7- The park already has 4 miles of underused no-traffic beach. Why are you suggesting that you create additional no-traffic beaches? I propose that the 4 mile no-traffic beach be reduced to 2-3 miles. No attempt to restrict or deny access to drive on any part of the beach is acceptable.

Point 8- A first aid station should be created and offered 7 days per week for the public.

Point 9- A ranger should be assigned to drive down to Port Mansfield each and every day to be able to monitor wildlife and other aspects of the beach that are not being monitored now. Each ranger should also be knowledgeable in local wildlife so they are better prepared to identify problems.

Lastly, Point 10- No new 5 mile road behind the dunes should be installed. This is unnecessary, and will only lead to visitors trampling over dunes from behind to get to the beach.

If you would like to discuss it would be my pleasure.

Correspondence ID: 387 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,09 2023 19:48:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please stop taking away our fishing.

Correspondence ID: 388 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 02:16:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not restrict driving on the beach. Allowing people to drive down the beach allows for more eyes working to protect the resource. The beach users are an integral part to protecting the park and it's wildlife. I have been going down the beach since 1979..

Correspondence ID: 389 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 07:17:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: 1. The sea turtle program as presently constituted provides wonderful environmental benefits by providing outreach to hundreds of people each time there is a turtle release. It also provides benefit to the species as well by ensuring many more hatchlings make it to the Gulf of Mexico. Please do not cut back this program.

2. Another road is not needed. There is plenty of car-free space at Malaquite Beach as it is. The benefits of a new paved road are not outweighed by the initial and ongoing costs of constructing 5 miles of new asphalt.

Correspondence ID: 390 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 09:05:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: First thank you for allowing access to this site so that we can give comments. It is my hope this is done out of sincerity and not just a formality.

My wife and I have been in public education for over 30 years and let's face it formalities are part of what we do. We have been coming to PINS for quite sometime. I am proud that our government is active in the preservation of wetlands and the surrounding coastal areas. To me a National Park is about preservation not only for the species within that ecological system but also for its citizens to enjoy all that it has to offer. In order for people to love and create a desire to preserve and conserve they must be allowed to access that area to develop that relationship. My wife and I are not only observers of nature but active participants that reap from its resources.

Texas state owned and nationally held beaches as you know are a real oddity. Driving on and the use of of these lands is not something seen very often. Sadly I've seen these state and National lands in my state become less accessible. It's just easier sometimes to put up a gate that deal with patrolling those lands.

I'm not sure how this agency and the users of these lands ended up in two different camps. We should be working in tandem with one single purpose. I believe that protection and usage can happen simultaneously. Having as many eyes as possible on those beaches at various times of the day and night creates more protection not less. I'm not sure what is currently in place that would allow users of these beaches the ability to inform the park of turtle sightings. But having signs posted at every 5 mile mark with information both cautionary and educational would greatly help the public help the park.

To limit access to these beaches during nesting season seems a little simplistic in its design and to me will create more problems. Now if cars were running over turtles like the terrapins you see scattered across the roads in Oklahoma then I would understand. However that doesn't seem to be the case.

My message was lengthy but it's overall concept is simple. Trust us to work with you and for you. We are not a heartless people seeking to make your job more difficult. We don't look for turtles to run over and we don't seek nest to destroy. We are at the park because we are just like you. We choose to be out in nature. We too are conservationist who have spent our life's time and resources in this nature. Let us help you. Educate and work with us. Full access is possible but work will be required from both sides to become one team. Thanks for your time.

Correspondence ID: 391 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 09:15:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am an avid Kiteboarder in the Corpus Christi area. We are currently having access issues as the city has not provided us with a wind sports launch area and most of the sites we go to are privately owned. We would like you to consider opening the bird island area to kiteboarding. We would be willing to go to a separate

area from the windsurfing site if that would be ok. When the sport began it was extremely dangerous which led to the current ban. Improvements in the equipment used and the quality of instruction over the years has made it as safe if not safer than windsurfing (most windsurfers teach themselves). Please consider this proposal. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email or call me. Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 392 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 10:53:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I hope this comment finds you well. I routinely come in from out of town to fish on the shores of the national seashore along with a group of other fisherman from my area. Everytime we make a trip to PINS, we are always on the lookout for wildlife along the beach and report things as needed. We also do trash cleanups in our immediate area wherever we decide to set up camp. I always see the garage bins along the exit road from the beach access road full of debri and trash as most visitors to the park are hauling out trash that is washing up from offshore. Not having visitors routinely down the island will easily let this trash pile up which will make matters worse for wildlife safety and conservation. All that aside, there would be a huge economic fallout from this if the park service decides to no longer allow vehicle traffic on the beach. Anyone who comes down to PINS is putting dollars directly into the local economy by way of fuel, food (groceries and restaurants) along with lodging and numerous other businesses that would lose those patrons.

Correspondence ID: 393 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 11:51:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While i think some of the ideas are good, no Vehicle access will kill the park and have a bigger effect.

Correspondence ID: 394 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 12:37:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In response to the request for public comments on the Beach Management Plan at Padre Island National Seashore, the Texas General Land Office (GLO) would like to comment on the potential management options presented as related to beach driving. Specifically, these include assessing visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits, creating a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5MM), and the consideration of vehicle-free pedestrian areas.

One of the GLO's responsibilities is to protect the public's right to access and enjoy Gulf-facing beaches in Texas. The GLO encourages the National Park Service to only consider options that do not discourage or prevent the public's use and enjoyment of the Seashore or that would be in conflict with the 1963 enabling legislation authorizing its creation (Acts 1963, 58th Leg., Ch. 38, eff. April 4, 1963). The Act states that all state-owned lands conveyed to the federal government pursuant to the Act will automatically revert to the State of Texas and the permanent school fund should the U.S. cease to use the land for a public recreational area, consistent with the Act. The 1963 deed conveying the land to the federal government as well as the Seashore's federal enabling legislation (16 U.S.C. § 459d, et seq.) reiterate this requirement.

The GLO is ready and available to coordinate with the National Park Service on the assessment of any management options related to beach access and driving.

Correspondence ID: 395 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,10 2023 12:59:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have used the PINS for bay and surf fishing for many years. My wife and I enjoy driving on the beach. Everything is fine the way it is now. Out of state residents don't know what they are talking about.

Correspondence ID: 396 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 13:07:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please do not take our right from driving on our beaches.

Correspondence ID: 397 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 13:12:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please don't stop us from driving on our beaches. Thank you

Correspondence ID: 398 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 13:30:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: My family and I visit PINS every year to go fishing. We absolutely love PINS and the fact that it is so secluded from the outside world. You can drive down far enough to not have any neighbors and truly appreciate the beauty of nature and the beach. We always do what we can to help by picking up many bags of trash and taking them to the dumpsters when we leave and always are on the look out for turtles or nests near by so that we can inform park officials. I feel allowing access down this beach is what helps with Trash control, as there is a lot of debris that washes up on the shores there, but also visitors are actually helping out to spot the turtles and nests to be able to inform park officials so they can collect the eggs before Coyotes and other wild animals find them and feed on them. We absolutely love PINS and everything it has to offer. What an amazing place to get to take your family to get away from the hustle and bustle of our every changing crazy world. My one suggestion would be to hand out trash bags at the front to help encourage more trash pickup or for those day visitors that get to the beach and realize they left their trash bags on the counter at home. 95% of the visitors at PINS go there because they truly love that beach and do what they can to help preserve and keep the beach clean. I hope that I am able to drive all the way down to big shell island when I am retired and able to show my grandchildren the complete beauty and amazement of this beach. Please do not take away the publics access to be able to drive as far down PINS as they want. The visitors of PINS are a family and we all help each other out if needed and we love this beach just as much as the people that work there and the wild life that lives there.
Thank you

Correspondence ID: 399 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 14:23:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please say/vote no on restricting access to the beaches. My husband, retired military, and I are both disabled. We just purchased a home here, because of beach access, as it is. We can easily fish, go birding, etc. due to access by car. Beach access restrictions for us would restrict us horribly.

Correspondence ID: 400 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 14:39:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: STOP trying to change our very prosperous, beautiful, and unique beaches in TX!!! Our turtle program is awesome! Don't mess with it!!! SOMEONE NEEDS TO LET THE POTUS what's going on! This is wrong.... DONT MESS WITH TEXAS!!!

Correspondence ID: 401 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 15:18:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Since the Kemp's Ridley is an endangered species, I feel you are sacrificing eggs by trying the pilot studys There is no way they can have better hatching success by leaving nests in situ than they now get in the incubation room and corrals. The studys have already been done and published in 2020. I am not even sure you will save money by leaving nests in situ because there will have to be staff members (not volunteers)

monitoring the nests for days when they get close to hatching. It is a big beach and it gets hot. If they do not monitor the nests they will not know what the success rate truly is. I understand the ultimate goal is to leave the nests in situ. We are a long way from that.

I was appalled when I found out that a \$300,000 grant for green turtle work was returned by PAIS administrative personnel. Why would that happen. It is obvious that there are those within the NPS who want to discourage and dishearten staff at the STSR. Why is Dr Shaver prohibited from raising funds through grants? Again, the NPS wants to discourage the STSR staff and cut the program way back. Dr Shaver, if allowed, has proved that she can raise a heck of a lot of money through grants. Let her.

I am against building a road behind the dunes for the first five miles. This would destroy a lot of habitat and just be moving the crowding five miles farther down the beach. Plus it would cost millions of dollars to build and then the maintenance would be very costly. I foresee the sand removal to be a constant task and expense. Better add that to the Sand Management Plan.

Correspondence ID: 402 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 15:43:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: we do not want this to pass, we want to be able to drive on our beach, and we want the turtles and their nests protected.

Correspondence ID: 403 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 15:43:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: It's our beach we should be able to drive on it and we want our turtles protected

Correspondence ID: 404 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 19:32:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Looking through the current proposal I see little value to the changes for visitors. The turtles are not being killed by fisherman or anyone driving the beach. There is 60 miles or so of beach to drive so while the first few miles get a fair amount of traffic going down further results in miles of beach with no one on it. Changing how the access is provided does not benefits visitors and the visitors are not causing damage.

Correspondence ID: 405 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 20:07:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please, please, please continue doing sea turtle hatches. If you abolish this program there will be a significant decrease of sea turtles on Padre Island.

Correspondence ID: 406 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,10 2023 22:19:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We believe that the sea turtle program should remain under the control of the National Park Service under the program led by Dr. Donna Shaver. We also believe that driving should continue to be allowed in the national seashore and on all beaches in Texas. We were disturbed to learn of the proposed changes. If the changes proposed are enacted, we will no longer be able to support the National Park Service and any politician that has supported these changes.

Correspondence ID: 407 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,11 2023 06:26:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do not restrict access to our beach. Where is the data showing vehicular traffic is dangerous to the public. If you sincerely want to protect the public, install cell phone towers in this remote area. Closing our National Seashore is not the answer for a Park Plan.

Correspondence ID: 408 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 06:51:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: For 30 years my family and several others have camped on the pins. We pick up a lot of trash while we are there and have a wonderful time fishing and meeting with each other. We find that most of the trash comes from storms and blown down from other areas, not From the campers. Why change such a beautiful tradition and area. Please let's not think changing things is always important. Let things stand as they are and many more people will be happy in the future

Correspondence ID: 409 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 07:06:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not limit our access to Texas beaches to please greedy developers. Vote NO to Bill 434. Please do not destroy our access to beaches, fishing and enjoyment of what we have known for years. Vote NO to Bill 434. This is the type of issue that voters will remember when it's time for someone to get reelected. Our votes have power too. Vote NO to Bill 434. Please do the right thing for Texas beaches and your citizens. Many thanks.

Correspondence ID: 410 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 11:45:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been hearing rumors that the driving access to our beaches may end. I am a retired teacher/principal and will be very disappointed if this happens. As a retired teacher/public servant, my retirement does not provide me with a lot of money to buy boats or other means to get out to fish so I take my son's and daughter out for a drive to the beach 4 or 5 times each summer. This access allows us to fish for miles along the beach. My family and I enjoy this access. Each year I purchase an access card for Malaquite Beach down park road 22. I enjoy camping and fishing here and driving in makes it easy to transport our camping gear. It also helps to have a truck when we pick up the trash in our vicinity brought in by the gulf waters where ships are allowed to dump this trash. So if you ask me if the beaches should be closed down to drivers or POV's is say:

NO!

Signed, very disappointed that this should even come up,

Correspondence ID: 411 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 14:36:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program - The current form of turtle egg protection is best until a large enough population exists to not need protection. There is no way turtle nests could be protected from coyotes on the island. Unmanned aerial vehicles for monitoring nesting could be studied. Volunteers who patrol as part of NPS patrol group are given a unique opportunity to participate in helping the return of an endangered species while experiencing the natural wonder of the island. This is an irreplaceable function of NPS. Continuation of the maximum number of public sea turtle releases is a positive and important part of experiential education for people of all ages and backgrounds. If the project scientists determine there are too many attendees at one time, then the maximum number could be determined, and people could sign up to attend.

Sand Management - What specific improvements to the South Beach Access improved what issues? I am not aware of anything the NPS is doing on the island that needs to be fixed or improved. As a local for over 5 decades

who has visited and explored the National Seashore many times throughout the different decades of my life, it is a wonderful, natural area that doesn't need much "management". Nature takes care of that. The more we try to do to make the park more "visitor friendly", the more the natural character is destroyed.

Beach Driving - This section of your information and potential proposals did not mention the nonmotorized experience at Malaquite, which I have used often. It is adequate, and more is not needed. More nonmotorized areas would require more roads, which are destructive to the barrier island, including opening channels from the Gulf to the Laguna Madre, thereby preventing access to parts of the island. People would not be able to walk with their supplies for fishing, camping, child care, etc down long stretches of beach. In a previous section NPS vehicles on Malaquite beach were mentioned. They have never bothered me while walking there, are able to watch for nesting turtles in that area, and help make me feel safe as I age. Regarding building a 5-mile road: it is unnecessary, a waste of funds, and would damage the barrier island. And it would be a continuing repair and upkeep expense.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery - I don't see the need for new regulations, interference, etc. For decades the NPS local staff has assessed and addressed each situation individually.

Marine Debris - For decades, the NPS local staff has assessed and addressed need regarding this. I am sure each national park is unique in its culture and needs, and local staff do a good job of management. The debris that is dumped in the Gulf is a different matter and should be address at the international level. NPS could participate nationally in that process as an advocate for eliminating trash in the ocean.

Correspondence ID: 412 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 16:02:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Me and my wife love to fish Padre Island National Seashore. We love the peace and solitude provided by PINS.

We are older, me a disabled veteran, and the ability to drive down the beach several miles to find solitude is remarkable this day and age in the United States.

Please do no restrict our access or allow any development.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 413 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 18:52:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like to begin by thanking each one of you for your passion and commitment towards the Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS). As the only organized, trained team of stewards who is continually within the perimeter of the seashore on a daily basis, you are entrusted with a challenging job carrying serious responsibilities. Not many folks are up to the task of balancing so many duties while additionally dealing with the public. I am grateful for your sacrifice and am excited to share some comments about beach management at PAIS.

The Pre-NEPA civic engagement documents include a PDF of a 6-page Civic Engagement Newsletter with details about the different kinds of activities carried out at PAIS, concerns regarding these activities, and potential options for new policies moving forward. I noticed that page 2 of this document, which includes information about current management of sea turtles at PAIS, failed to mention the important role that members of the public play, especially people who drive on the beach, in discovering turtles who are nesting, sick, injured, stunned, or otherwise in need of trained assistance. In many cases it is members of the public, while driving on the beach, who first notify the appropriate volunteer groups or agencies who are then able to aid the turtle(s) or other wildlife.

Adaptively managing corral location to provide hurricane resiliency seems like a good idea, but without more information, it is difficult to understand what that would entail. An alternative incubation facility is a great idea,

but not if it means closing the one at the park. Having more than one facility is the most resilient thing to do as it provides flexibility and options. The other potential options on this page, unfortunately, are causes for concern. The first bullet, "Vary sea turtle patrols, including the timing, frequency, and methods" is concerning because it is unclear what it proposes. On the one hand, if the timing of sea turtle patrols is changed to moments where they are not active, it would result in a reduced number of turtles identified. Similarly, if the frequency is reduced, or more inefficient methods are used, the result would be fewer nests protected and the potential for increased nest, neonatal, and sick/injured turtle mortality. Here's how to improve this option: "Increase sea turtle patrols, including optimizing timing, frequency, and methods, using a transparent, peer-reviewed process that makes use of the most recent advancements in sea turtle science and recovery";

Limiting egg collection to within the park boundaries is another concerning potential option, because it condemns turtles for being blown off course, tired, disoriented, or any other number of reasons. The turtles are doing their best to work their way through water, sound, light, and air pollution, and it is our job not to let them down when they make landfall.

In our case, leaving nesting sites without intervention fails to protect them from the two greatest threats to their survival: predators and the tides.

"This study examined records for 78 Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests discovered in situ (i.e., not relocated for incubation in a fenced corral or a laboratory incubation facility) in Texas between 1980-2018. Of the 78 in situ nests, 15 (19.2%) were completely predated and thus no hatchlings emerged, 29 (37.2%) emerged observed, 33 (42.3%) emerged unobserved, and one (1.3%) was excavated after incomplete predation.

...

Ninety-nine percent of sites (154 of 155) were impacted by at least one threat during the study period. Generalized linear models were used to describe the prevalence of the three most common threats (presences or absences of ghost crab burrows, coyote tracks, and tidal inundation) and the cumulative number of threats at sites grouped along four beachfront sections, describing variation in threats by section and year. Results of these two studies illustrate that, since in situ nests on the Texas coast face significant threats and yield fewer hatchlings than relocated nests, relocation of Kemp's ridley clutches for protected incubation must be continued for this critically endangered species.

...

...it is well established that protected incubation, combined with new state and federal fisheries regulations such as the requirement of turtle excluder devices (TEDs) in shrimp trawling, led to the observed exponential increase in Kemp's ridley nesting from the mid-1980s to 2009 (Caillouet, 2014). Translocated Kemp's ridley clutches in hatcheries at Padre Island NS have a 12.5-32.5% increased success rate over in situ clutches laid at Rancho Nuevo and a 13% higher survival rate of hatchlings on the beach during release (Bevan et al., 2014; Shaver et al., 2016). "Threats to Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys Kempii* Garman, 1880) Nests Incubating in Situ on the Texas Coast." Herpetology Notes 13 (November 16, 2020): 907-923.)

The proposed pilot studies do not seem to be optimized for the conditions that exist at most of the park or treat the turtles with the care and dignity we owe them. Human activity at Malaquite and/or near the research cabin is not representative of the kind of activity that occurs at the rest of North and South beach, therefore frequency and intensity of incidences (or lack thereof) of predation may not be representative of the frequency and intensity of incidences elsewhere at PAIS. The second pilot study idea mentions that relocating nests higher on the beach has been successful elsewhere for other turtle species but does not mention where this "elsewhere" may be. Do they also have the number of coyotes, badgers, rattlesnakes, bobcats, and raccoons, we have at PAIS, in addition to the seabirds that can predate neonatal turtles upon emergence? Remember, the data shows that predation is the number one cause of nest mortality. Unless there is data collected in areas with similar predatory populations as PAIS that informing this pilot study, that show improved outcomes over current policy, this potential pilot study option does not make sense. Reminder: "since in situ nests on the Texas coast face significant threats and yield fewer hatchlings than relocated nests, relocation of Kemp's ridley clutches for

protected incubation must be continued for this critically endangered species”;

The sea turtles that now nest on Padre Island include critically endangered species that are not expendable. To see officials from the NPS suggest potential options that treats them as such is heartbreaking and something I never could have imagined I would be witness to. Perhaps this was not the intention behind these potential options, but the data show that increased intervention reduces mortality. Several potential options clearly state a reduction of operations and interventions, and the wording of other options remains unclear as to whether they mean reducing intervention or increasing intervention. If these are implemented, the results will be predation of nests, increased turtle mortality, and an eventual decline in numbers. Reducing the number or frequency of turtle releases would also do a disservice to the program in that many members of the public not only look forward to witnessing this miracle of life, but they also look forward to playing an integral role in the turtle's send off into the Gulf of Mexico as they spook potential predators away from the neonatal turtles. Remember, predation is the number one cause of turtle nest and neonatal turtle mortality, and only relocation of nests for protected incubation can eliminate incidences of predation.

Are there other potential pilot studies or sea turtle management options the Seashore should explore? Absolutely. The person responsible for the success of the turtles and the program, Dr. Donna J. Shaver, should be appointed to a position with more support and autonomy than what she had before the recent changes to her position and the turtle program. After all, it was with her expertise, guidance, and commitment to collaboration with philanthropists, volunteers, and the community that the turtles and the program were able to do so well in the first place. In addition, since members of the public play such an indispensable role in identifying nests and sick or stunned turtles and other wildlife in need of aid, there should be pilot study planned to examine ways to strengthen the relationship between PAIS and the public who cares so deeply about it and engage with them in a meaningful way.

Sand Management

Adjust current sand management to be more protective of sensitive habitats. This potential option is ambiguous and needs clarification for support. What parts or processes of current sand management will be adjusted? In what way? Whatever is being proposed here, it must not reduce access to the beach for folks who would like to access it with their vehicles. It must also ensure that the area near the Mansfield Jetty is also periodically, perhaps more frequently, nourished.

Are there other potential options regarding sand management that the Seashore should explore? Absolutely. This is another opportunity to engage with the public to find collaborative ways to contribute to dune health and perhaps build more dunes to better protect sensitive habitats on the leeward side.

Beach Driving:

Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience.

The argument that park visitation is increasing is misleading. Although the number of annual visitors to PAIS may have increased from 576,299 in 2019 to 615,826 in 2021, that's considering barely 3 year's worth of data. It also includes the years 2020 and 2021, which should be considered outliers as the conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic certainly impacted numbers making them poor data points to base long-term (or even mid-term) projections on. NPS data show that between 1991 and 2000, 8 out of 10 years saw visitation numbers between 700,000 and 972,122 annual visitors. In the most recent 10 year period, it's been between 515,000 and 650,197 annual visitors. Park attendance data on the number of annual visitors show a declining trend beginning in the mid-1970's. As a professional data analyst I am obligated to call out statistical insincerity when I identify it,

and this is an egregious case. (Annual PAIS visitor number data source:

[https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park Specific Reports/Annual Park Recreation Visitation Graph \(1904 - Last Calendar Year\)?Park=PAIS \)](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20Graph%20(1904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=PAIS)

Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island. Although I am the kind of visitor who prefers the places beyond the 5 mile marker line, I understand that the impact of such a road, especially if paved with asphalt, may outweigh the benefits to me personally. Therefore, I must pass on this. It would also be additional infrastructure to maintain, and it seems like it might take resources away from existing infrastructure that may need it more.

Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience. This I cannot support because there are already plenty of (underutilized) vehicle-free pedestrian areas. If anything, reduced vehicle-free areas, and improved infrastructure in what vehicle-free areas remain, would be the ideal option. That way, more nests can be identified and sick, stunned, or injured turtles, and other wildlife, will have a better chance of survival when a person driving on the beach passes them and is able to get them the aid they need.

Are there other potential options regarding beach driving that the Seashore should explore? Absolutely. A transparent process where any and all previous review(s), plan(s) or planning, memorandum or memoranda, or any other kind of work, message, or document related to beach driving and visitor numbers should be shared with the public. The NPS data show that PAIS is actually at a historical low in terms of park attendance, which peaked in the 1990's, the proposed options seem at odds with the reality currently experienced by PAIS beaches open to driving.

Furthermore, anglers, birdwatchers, beachcombers, litter removers, and all sorts of folks who enjoy driving on the beach are indispensable in identifying and reporting nesting sites and stranded/injured turtles, in addition to myriad of other seabirds, mammals and wildlife. With current annual visitor numbers currently in a decades-long declining trend, the park's most endangered species need increased numbers of people driving on the beach to help protect them. The way that park attendance volume was presented in the Civic Engagement Newsletter reveals ignorance (at best) or ulterior motives (at worst) from the person or people responsible for drafting & approving this document and developing this initiative and puts into question the motives and interests that are bringing this process forward. Why can't the document be more honest and state that park visitation has declined over the previous 4 decades, and is nowhere near the volumes of the 1970's and 1990's? New data show that 2022 park visitation (531,624) is lower than any other year since 2013 (515,830). The dishonesty just doesn't make sense. Instead, it is alarming.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures:

Potential option: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only. Since it seems that the budget is tight, this is another opportunity to collaborate with local organizations and volunteers to support PAIS leadership with the tasks that must be completed to recover from meteorological events.

Are there other potential options regarding storm recovery that the Seashore should explore?

People involved with local or regional Archaeological Societies would be eager to support PAIS leadership in documenting and securing any cultural resources that may be uncovered or impacted. Wildlife groups could assist in wildlife surveying and assistance of impacted wildlife. Volunteers can help with debris clean up.

Marine Debris:

The option to increase beach clean-up activities with local organizations. Is one that has my full support. Consider ways to market trash cleanup and reduce trash left by visitors. It is clear that most of the debris that washes up on PAIS originates from international jurisdictions, so the option to consider bi- or multi-lateral agreements at both the state level and the international level to address the source of marine debris, as most of the marine debris that washes onto the Seashore comes from offshore also has my full support.

Correspondence ID: 414 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 18:53:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

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Beach Driving:

Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience.

The argument that park visitation is increasing is misleading. Although the number of annual visitors to PAIS may have increased from 576,299 in 2019 to 615,826 in 2021, that's considering barely 3 year's worth of data. It also includes the years 2020 and 2021, which should be considered outliers as the conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic certainly impacted numbers making them poor data points to base long-term (or even mid-term) projections on. NPS data show that between 1991 and 2000, 8 out of 10 years saw visitation numbers between 700,000 and 972,122 annual visitors. In the most recent 10 year period, it's been between 515,000 and 650,197 annual visitors. Park attendance data on the number of annual visitors show a declining trend beginning in the mid-1970's. As a professional data analyst I am obligated to call out statistical insincerity when I identify it, and this is an egregious case. (Annual PAIS visitor number data source: [https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park Specific Reports/Annual Park Recreation Visitation Graph \(1904 - Last Calendar Year\)?Park=PAIS](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20Graph%20(1904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=PAIS))

Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island. Although I am the kind of visitor who prefers the places beyond the 5 mile marker line, I understand that the impact of such a road, especially if paved with asphalt, may outweigh the benefits to me personally. Therefore, I must pass on this. It would also be additional infrastructure to maintain, and it seems like it might take resources away from existing infrastructure that may need it more.

Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience. This I cannot support because there are already plenty of (underutilized) vehicle-free pedestrian areas. If anything, reduced vehicle-free areas, and improved infrastructure in what vehicle-free areas remain, would be the ideal option. That way, more nests can be identified and sick, stunned, or injured turtles, and other wildlife, will have a better chance of survival when a person driving on the beach passes them and is able to get them the aid they need.

Are there other potential options regarding beach driving that the Seashore should explore? Absolutely. A transparent process where any and all previous review(s), plan(s) or planning, memorandum or memoranda, or any other kind of work, message, or document related to beach driving and visitor numbers should be shared with the public. The NPS data show that PAIS is actually at a historical low in terms of park attendance, which peaked in the 1990's, the proposed options seem at odds with the reality currently experienced by PAIS beaches open to driving.

Furthermore, anglers, birdwatchers, beachcombers, litter removers, and all sorts of folks who enjoy driving on the

beach are indispensable in identifying and reporting nesting sites and stranded/injured turtles, in addition to myriad of other seabirds, mammals and wildlife. With current annual visitor numbers currently in a decades-long declining trend, the park's most endangered species need increased numbers of people driving on the beach to help protect them. The way that park attendance volume was presented in the Civic Engagement Newsletter reveals ignorance (at best) or ulterior motives (at worst) from the person or people responsible for drafting & approving this document and developing this initiative and puts into question the motives and interests that are bringing this process forward. Why can't the document be more honest and state that park visitation has declined over the previous 4 decades, and is nowhere near the volumes of the 1970's and 1990's? New data show that 2022 park visitation (531,624) is lower than any other year since 2013 (515,830). The dishonesty just doesn't make sense. Instead, it is alarming.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures:

Potential option: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only. Since it seems that the budget is tight, this is another opportunity to collaborate with local organizations and volunteers to support PAIS leadership with the tasks that must be completed to recover from meteorological events.

Are there other potential options regarding storm recovery that the Seashore should explore?

People involved with local or regional Archaeological Societies would be eager to support PAIS leadership in documenting and securing any cultural resources that may be uncovered or impacted. Wildlife groups could assist in wildlife surveying and assistance of impacted wildlife. Volunteers can help with debris clean up.

Marine Debris:

The option to increase beach clean-up activities with local organizations. Is one that has my full support. Consider ways to market trash cleanup and reduce trash left by visitors. It is clear that most of the debris that washes up on PAIS originates from international jurisdictions, so the option to consider bi- or multi-lateral agreements at both the state level and the international level to address the source of marine debris, as most of the marine debris that washes onto the Seashore comes from offshore also has my full support.

Correspondence ID: 415 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 20:27:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Adjust the entrance to North Beach. Too many people are using the park without paying their entrance fee. A road along the northern park boundary should be constructed so people can get from the Kleberg beach to the main road without driving in the park. Close the bollards on North Beach at the park boundary and adjust the north beach road in the park to be behind the entrance booth.

Correspondence ID: 416 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,11 2023 20:37:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Is there a use limit on the beach for camping or driving? Often the first mile or two of south beach is very crowded with RVs, trailers, 2 wheel drive cars, even old school busses. These cars shouldn't be on the beach. Make it 4 wheel drive ONLY!!! Limit the amount of people that can camp in the first few miles of south beach. People stay in the same spot for a whole month without paying to camp. Why should tax payers give them a free place to live all winter long. Make them pay just like if they were in a campground. Maybe make

designated spots on the beach in the first mile to two. If those spots are full then they have to find a different area down the beach.

Correspondence ID: 417 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 06:01:26

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My initial comment is more of a surprise when researching PINS and finding out there has not been a formal Beach Management Plan in place since the Parks inception back in 1968. 55 years, wow!!.

Moving forward there is no question it is needed and needs to be accomplished sooner than later with a possibility to implement certain aspects/elements of the approved Plan sooner than other parts. Establish a 2 yr time frame for approval and implementation.

Citizen Advisory Members

Include 3-5 citizens representing the long-time Islanders and the many more that have many years of vesting in the Padre Island and PINS park.

- primary group pool for representation should come from the already established Board members and general membership candidates Of Friends for Padre.
- continue support for Capt. Billy Sandifer beach clean up with consideration to doing 2 times per year. Great public participation and excitement. Keep the positive momentum going.

Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program

- maintain program(s) with agreed and approved budgets. Additional revenue available through turtle release events.
- include funding/budget for preliminary pilot studies on migratory nesting and egg retrieval.

Sand Management

- Maintain and expand north the Malaquite Beach protected area. Study adding additional surface parking with walk-in areas for non-driving beach areas.
- Work to maintain opening portions of beach mile marker 1 - 3 similar to J Luby park and maintenance grading. Or at minimum, provide some maintenance and management,

Beach Driving

- possibly expand additional non driving beach area north of Malaquite Beach with access road parking/walk-in areas.
- continue study for extended parallel road to new entrance at mile marker 5 (Primarily 4 wheel drive 6 mile marker and beyond), Would relieve some camping and fishing traffic from the opening 5 mile area.
- Retired Sheriff attended meetings and provided a positive perspective to the extended beach driving, fishing and camping traffic that assists law enforcement with reports of suspicious activity. Law enforcement needs the public's participation in protecting our resources.
- Need a recent traffic count for beach driving, camping, traffic and driving patterns.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures

Clearly stated with detailed current process and guidelines. Fine tune further the process and communication to all entities. Maintain protocol for always opening in a safe manner when needed.

Marine Debris

Continue the relationship with the Capt Billy Sandifer and Friends of Padre, Recent successful trash day event speaks highly with what the community and businesses can do together, phenomenal success. Possibly divide the beach up further with 2 clean up times per year. (Example 1-25 Mile, 26-50 Mile)

Dont overthink the operation, it has not been broken in all these years, keep it simple.
Thanks

Correspondence ID: 418 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 07:25:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against these proposals to turn Turtle Program to a non-profit. We have a very successful program now. The non-profit is all about money.

I am also VERY AGAINST any changes that stop people from driving on the beach at the National Sea Shore. You have to have 4 wheel drive to go fishing, bird watching or just to enjoy the quiet.

You are now messing with a very good program and trying to make changes that are not needed nor wanted.

Correspondence ID: 419 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 08:37:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Should Padre Island National Seashore be split, with the more accessible area left as a national park and the other half turned into a USFW area? I ask because in order to access so many sections of the park, damage through the dunes or mud flats is necessary. If the land was made into a federal fish and wildlife area, the sensitive landscape would be protected from the ever increasing influx of man.

Correspondence ID: 420 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 09:16:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been a volunteer for years with PAIS at the turtle lab after retiring as an educator. Over the years, I have witnessed a very well organized program that continually adapted to the increasing turtle population, growth of personnel and expansion of facilities. It was a program that was stellar, well funded through NPS and grant monies and upbeat in attitude.

The atmosphere changed under this current superintendent. He never came over to the lab to ask questions or even greet the volunteers. Other superintendents asked for and were given tours of the unique Incubation Room. They listened as it's time honored procedures were explained. They marveled at the dedication of staff and volunteers. I never saw Mr Brunneman visit the turtle lab to meet the volunteers and seek to understand all the duties they perform.

Seemingly he assumed his position with preconceived opinions and a vendetta against the head of the program. Even before he was fully installed as superintendent, he rudely asserted that Dr. Shaver was to resign as SERSTM (Southeast Regional Sea Turtle Network) president right before a major conference which she had worked hard to organize. I was appalled that this world wide sea turtle expert was being treated this way. She had brought honor to the NPS with her many awards and recognitions.

The atmosphere at the turtle lab deteriorated as this new Superintendent continued to slice away at it's former organizational leader by changing procedures and asserting his ideas about how the program should run.

It was learned that Mr Brunneman had caused two other animal conservation programs in two other National Parks to be modified and radically changed and not for the better.

The fact that Mr Bruneneman lacks transparency regarding his ultimate plan for this endangered species fosters anger and has caused volunteers to pull back. I am one of them.

Come on NPS, you have lost the respect of so many in our community and created mistrust and angst within the program.

Correspondence ID: 421 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 12:50:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My family has fished and camped "down island" at PINS since before WWII. The Seashore is extremely special to us and is part of our family's heritage. PINS is one of the few places on earth where a person can experience a pristine barrier island and enjoy being a part of the natural world. Unlike other beaches in the U.S., PINS is a place to escape crowds of people, noise, commercialization, and other commotions.

Please do not ruin the tranquility of the island by building a road on the back side of the beach to access remote southern areas. A road would bring the park closer to reaching "capacity" and require more debates and public meetings about how many is too many. When more and more people are allowed on the beach at any given time, there will be more regulations, permits, and restrictions. Once there are more people on the beach, the park will have to provide more safety with emergency services, first aid stations, and amenities like restrooms and drinking water. The people who make the effort to buy, rent, or borrow a 4WD have invested in the park's pristine condition and are therefore the ones most likely to protect it! Access with a 4WD-only is self-limiting because only those who truly value the pristine down island experience will make the extra effort to go there. Texas already has many city and county beaches that are easily accessible and often crowded; we don't need more. If the park service decides to make the southern parts of the island more accessible, the rare quality of remoteness that my family and many others treasure so much will be forever lost.

A big part of the experience on PINS is the wonderful wildlife that can be encountered while on the beach. Most of us fishermen enjoy seeing sea turtles and want to help save them. Does PINS not trust us to continue to do that? Also, having the turtle patrollers protect the turtle eggs is why we can drive on the beach during turtle season in the first place! It's truly a win-win situation. Since the patrollers carry radios, they also help calling in emergencies when needed. Do not close parts of the beach to driving or close the beach to driving on a seasonal basis. Do not stop sending the turtle patrols down the island. Changing these things is totally unnecessary and would destroy the perfect balance that PINS has created for the public to enjoy beach driving, wildlife, and remoteness. This balance of resources and recreation at PINS is genius. Please don't change anything.

Correspondence ID: 422 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 14:36:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for taking the time to read this. I will try to be brief.

We moved here after retirement in 2021. One of the main reasons for moving to this area was for the drivable beaches where my husband loves to fish. He has health issues that makes the ability to surf fish important to his overall health. He is a diabetic and the exercise does wonders for his numbers. If he had to drag all of his fishing gear to the waters edge (like in Florida) he would not go as often. That would impact his health negatively.

I am also not an advocate for not having vehicles on Malaquite Beach. We all know there are emergencies that arise on the beach as well as needing to monitor for illegal things happening on that part of the Beach.

As for driving along the beach on PINS, I think that it is a great way to enjoy the beach in an area that is less populated. The presence of some people all along the beach also deters illegal activity.

The fishermen also keep an eye out for injured wildlife. If you have only a person driving a couple of times a day that will increase the amount of injured animals that could have been reported and helped.

As for a road that goes down someplace past mile 5, I think that is justified only if the park has funds to build and maintain it. It will help in some aspects but also cause other issues that will need to be addressed at another time. Most importantly! If you allow the EPA to get involved you will be taking the whole thing out of the hands of Texans and give the land use to people who have no skin in the game. They do not care about the health of the citizens or the crime that could insue with a 60 mile of coastline that would be unmonitered.

Also, I am not in favor of limiting people on the beach. As it is there are many days that the gate is unmanned. I do understand it's a staffing issue, but what happens when people come from the other side of town or further only to find out there is noone to let them in. That makes no sense at all. As for the staffing issue, if you have a person scheduled for a particular day and someone on call to fill in for a call in, that would take care of that issue for the most part. Many agencies have on-call positions. If you had the office manned at all times your revenue would increase so you could pay for those extra on-call positions.

In conclusion, I am not in favor for a formal change in the management of the beach . I do, however, think that some issues could be addressed without a formal plan change.

Thank you for taking my opinion into account.

Correspondence ID: 423 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 16:28:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you in advance for this opportunity to submit comments on the proposed beach management plan for Padre Island National Seashore. The Seashore is a fabulous resource that has been set aside for our citizens to enjoy and protect. I personally use the seashore to fish, birdwatch, collect shells and sea beans and many other activities that are enjoyed there. My comments will follow the outline of the Civic Engagement Newsletter #3.

SEA TURTLES SCIENCE AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

The NPS is doing an excellent job in protecting the nesting sea turtles. The improvements i am suggesting are the following:

Clearly mark nest on the beach so the public can be informed of the nesting activities taking place. The NPS needs to provide much more easily accessible information to the public in the park to help the public understand the turtle program. Much of the turtle program is managed in a manner where the public is not aware of what is going on with the exception on the public releases.

I do not favor holding fewer public releases. These events provide public support and information for the turtle program.

I do not favor limiting egg collection to the Park only This could impede the turtle recovery program.

I do favor an alternative incubation facility that would help to protect the eggs from storms and other natural predation issues, this site could also be used to provide more public education material on the turtle recovery program and what the park is doing to protect the turtles.

I do not favor using unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor the nesting sites. These aerial vehicles could be used in manners not originally planned for.

SAND MANAGEMENT

I support north beach access improvements.

The other sand management activities should be kept in place as they exist today.

BEACH DRIVING

I am opposed to any changes in the present beach driving program with the exception of providing a bypass entrance road past the 5mm.

I am opposed to assessing visitor capacity or even thinking about a beach driving permit system. The NPS does not have the staff to provide the staffing for the entry booth 7 days a week during daylight hours. Managing a beach driving pass system would just use limited resources on something that is not needed. A beach driving pass system would just provide another obstacle to the public in the enjoyment of this great resource.

Beach driving is essential to me to provide access to the seashore for my activities. The access that is provided in places like Florida that have access parking lots are not acceptable to me.

I am not opposed to keeping NPS vehicles off of Malaquite beach if that is what the public would like. If that happened how would the NPS provide patrols of this area as well as the monitoring of turtle nesting sites there?

HURRICANE AND STORM RECOVERY

I am a supporter of the initial resource check and basic visitor safety only for park reopening.

MARINE DEBRIS

The NPS should work more closely with local organizations on beach clean ups and debris removal. The annual clean up that takes place is a great event and example of how the NPS and the public working together can accomplish things that are beneficial for everyone.

In summary I am opposed to developing a formal Beach Management Plan that will need to be in compliance with NEPA and could greatly impact the publics access and use of this valuable resource, The present programs are very good and with a few minor changes as i have commented would get even better.

Correspondence ID: 424 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 19:34:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is very sad that there is an effort to restrict the turtle patrol from assisting endangered species such as the sea turtles. I understand that the turtle patrol has aided many many sea turtles because they have been given motor access to the beaches. The patrol has successfully aided in excavating eggs and hatchling releases. They must continue to have motor access to the beaches

Correspondence ID: 425 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 19:52:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Driving: Love the idea of being able to jump past the first 5 miles when heading down beach but not sure what impact a new road would have on the current environment. Keeping the entire beach open should be a priority. Enforcement of speeds would go a long way.

Marine Debris: More beach clean ups are always great! Consider working with scouting organizations to get more kids helping out.

Being able to drive down PINS, fish, camp, and be with nature in a beautiful beach environment is what truly makes it such a special place to visit.

Correspondence ID: 426 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,12 2023 20:10:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have been following this project on Nick Myers UTUBE Channel We have been coming to PINS for over 20 years and really the place hasn't changed. We come down there about 3 times a year and I am retired Military, so we stay at NAS CC PLEASE just leave it the way it is - we fish every time we come just love the peace and quiet of the most beautiful National Park in Amer1ca - we plan on going to Yellowstone this year - but that will be a onetime thing - going to PINS is a yearly thing we look forward to every time - i hope it just stays the same thanks for all the work keeping it like it is

Correspondence ID: 427 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,12 2023 20:12:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I have concerns with the turtle program changing and it negatively impacting my beach access rights.

Correspondence ID: 428 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,12 2023 20:21:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I have concerns with the turtle program changing, and it negativity impacting my beach access rights.

Correspondence ID: 429 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,12 2023 20:25:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: i have concerns with the turtle program changing, and it negativity impacting my beach access rights.

Correspondence ID: 430 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,12 2023 20:26:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I have concerns with the turtle program changing, and it negatively impacting my beach access rights.

Correspondence ID: 431 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,12 2023 22:32:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The Kemp Ridley turtles ARE NATIVE on the Texas Coast from Mustang Island down into Mexico. It is only because of humans that they are on the endangered list. We ALL have a responsibility to be good stewards of ALL wildlife. Isn't that one of the main functions of our national park system??? The turtles program works and is highly respected around the globe. It's international and it is critical as the secondary nesting site. After you shut it down, who gives the thousands of turtles out in the Gulf the message to NOT return to this beach to nest. Why was grant money taken away from the division for turtles???
Turtles do not get run over by vehicles. Why is driving on the national seashore even an issue you brought up for discussion? Why would you even consider cutting a new road five miles behind the dunes line?? I grew up on the beach and the rules were always to stay out of the dunes. Let nature coexist with us. Now why is it all of a sudden acceptable to put this on the table for discussion??
The public deserves more openness. For example, the superintendent Brunnemann finally made a statement to a news agency. He claimed that grant money was secured for Sea Turtle Recovery. Yet, he FAILED to mention that the money he was casually referring to had nothing to do with PINS, but for a park in Florida. This is the sort of dishonesty and misleading that caused the park to lose the trust of the public.
If the park is truly interested in public comment then why are we not being given ALL the facts? Why is the communication more a one way street than a two way street?? Why is the park saying they only have VAGUE IDEAS and have NO PLAN.
Come on now, the park has been in operation since the 1960's. They DO HAVE OPERATIONAL PLANS . Why do I have more questions than I can get answers?
The seashore belongs to the public. Access to driving is a major PLUS for the seashore. The turtles program works so reinstate it back to it's full prior operations. Keep more roads and more people out of the dune areas. We already have a primitive walking beach, why is another needed? Use the money that would have been spent on the new road things like a first aid station, education, improve the trails that are already in place, wheelchair accessibility near the ranger station, more events that get the rangers more involved with the public, more

education and events highlighting other endangered species in the park.

Include in your NEW beach plan enhancements to the great park WE ALREADY HAVE instead of these mischievous ideas that are no good for our seashore.

Correspondence ID: 432 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 01:35:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Annual parks pass holder, and fishing license holder. Please do not remove vehicle access to the beach. This is what makes the Texas coast unique and enjoyable. Texas has few enough natural areas to camp and enjoy to be alone and out in nature. Do the work to find ways to protect nature, provide access and keep the beach clean. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 433 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 06:11:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Park in its Pre-NEPA Comment Request is proposing doing limited pilot studies including reduced driving by NPS staff and nest studies involving Malaquite Beach and/or near the research cabin to test the best way to protect turtle nests. This would only reduce the ability for staff to identify issues, nests, emergencies. The reduced impact to protected species would be minimal and not great enough to justify the loss in ability to identify issues, nests, or emergencies.

We believe that this study would be skewed to a pre-determined outcome to justify less beach access based off cherry-picked data instead of relying on the existing beach vehicle FONSI.

Correspondence ID: 434 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 08:33:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hi. Thank you for reading my comments. There is already a pedestrian only area, 4 miles of beach, and only a portion of it is used by my judgement when I am out there multiple times a week. Visitors aren't going to walk 4 miles of beach lugging all their gear around. Also, yes the first 3 miles of pins during the busy season can get very congested posing a safety issue to those that walk in front of cars, unattended children running in front of vehicles, and even loose pets. My opinion: the pedestrian only beach, Malaquite, needs to have 3 miles of its beach limited to campers, rv's, and day beach goers only. No thru traffic. This is more reasonable than spending millions of dollars to maintain a 5 mile road behind the dunes and would be much safer limiting traffic. This area could easily be maintained much like at Whitecap beach with sand management so that those folks in rv's family sedans, vans, cars have a great place to park and be worry free of getting stuck.

I personally in the last month have reported 3 turtles at pins. I am a fisherman and I frequent the park 2-5 times a week. Without our extra set of eyes, more turtles would not survive the wild. The coyotes are out of control at pins. Vehicles are not the problem and do not prohibit the turtle program. I have never seen a turtle ran over on the seashore, but have heard and done so myself - reported stranded wildlife. There have been hundreds of days I have been further down on the seashore and went all day without seeing a ranger. I'm fact, one evening on a rare occurrence that a ranger drove by, I found an egg and waved down a ranger for assistance and she was completely annoyed and bothered I stopped her.

I was injured in the park on November 2022 by a stingray. We had our flashers heading to the ER driving down the beach. We finally saw a ranger and we pulled over. I waved him over out my door to tell him I was severely injured and needed to go to the ER. My husband asked for a secure escort out of the park twice and was denied by ranger Eli. Ranger Phil also told me my injury was not an emergency because I refused an ambulance and even though I was showing signs of going into shock, he told me I wasn't dying and he was going to deal with us speeding down the beach before he would let me get to the hospital. After crying and begging to please let us go, I was in a GREAT amount of pain, and after my husband and rangers got into an argument over, they finally let us drive out under the condition that they would FOLLOW us out of the park to make sure WE DON'T SPEED. I have filed a complaint against the park. My injury was so serious I spent 3 days in the hospital, had to have

surgery, and even now 4 months later, I'm still in physical therapy. I almost lost my foot. With that, there needs to be some type of training for rangers to better assist injured paying visitors instead of being harassed. A first aid station would also be helpful.

I love the park and thank you for listening to my input.

Correspondence ID: 435 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 08:51:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am not agreeable to any changes that would change, remove, or deny access to ANY American citizen.

These parks belong to the people and are FOR the people.

I would also like to request the immediate resignation of Eric Brunneman. He is not only lacking basic human communications skills, he refuses to communicate with the community members and park attendees that is a basic job responsibility.

Correspondence ID: 436 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 09:47:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program

I find it incredibly disturbing to think the NPS is considering making the proposed changes to a program which is so critical to increasing populations of several species of federally protected sea turtles. It is my feeling the experiments described should only be considered for implementation once populations have rebounded to the point sea turtle species are no longer federally protected.

Sand Management

I believe it would be beneficial for the Seashore to adjust sand management practices to be more protective of sensitive habitats.

Beach Driving

I feel the road for thru traffic is a good idea for lowering traffic volumes on northern beaches.

Marine Debris

Is the NPS familiar with an organization called 4Ocean? They seem to be highly successful in offshore cleanup efforts around the globe and in bringing awareness of the problem to the public. Perhaps some sort of partnership with them could be beneficial?

Correspondence ID: 437 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 10:02:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello, my name is Colin Davis. I own and operate Padre Island Expeditions, LLC. I offer guided camping, fishing, beach combing, shelling, birdwatching, and photography tours/charters on the Padre Island National Seashore. My goal is to further a love and appreciation for our National Park System in particular PAIS. I offer history tours of the Island's past as well. I am a user of PAIS since 2005.

I support no changes to beach access or driving privileges. What I do support is a total revamping of the Turtle Science and Recovery program. For decades, the program has been allowed to operate almost as its own entity with its own fiefdom completely apart from the administration of PAIS. As a volunteer under Jim Lindsay, the prior Chief of Science and Resource Management, I watched as Donna Shaver would routinely pull in millions of dollars in grant money while Resource Management operated on less than a couple hundred thousand to manage literally everything else other than turtles in the park. I watched as Donna Shaver waited for the Chief of Science

to go on vacation to request law enforcement to kill a coyote that had been routinely roaming near her turtle egg pens. I watched year after year as the visitor experience was completely ruined on South Beach by 6am to 6pm turtle patrols sometimes every 15 minutes ALL DAY LONG tearing up the beachfront, destroying the beach road, and making noise. I watched as the every morning truck after truck bringing supplies to the turtle cabin tore up and destroyed the beachfront from the 0 to the 40mm on south beach. No matter how bad the seaweed would be in the spring I watched as the turtle patrol patrolled anyway with no changes, ruining the driving for the rest of us who might venture down South Beach. I watched as turtle UTV's and Vehicles were destroyed driving through the weed and were towed off the beach by the dozens year after year. Most importantly, I watched as less than 1 percent of the Kemp's Ridley's population nested on PAIS even after more than 3 decades of the program existing. I watched as millions and millions of dollars poured into Donna Shaver's program, even though it was an abject failure in relocation the Kemp's species to PAIS from their natural home in Mexico. I watched as this invasive nonnative turtle species was crammed down Padre Islands throat while native species like coyotes were shot and killed for interfering with her turtle program. I watched the million dollar necropsy and incubation buildings be built while the other turtle programs in the country allow the eggs to hatch on the beach naturally instead. I watched as Sea Turtle Science and Recovery at PAIS got the speed limit reduced for MONTHS on the beach to 15mph, causing massive anger and resentment from the local users of the beach. I watched as the brand new turtle patrol cabin was built at a massive cost to the taxpayers on top of Iron Hill, a wonderful cultural site of PAIS. I watched as it towers now over the dunes, ruining the solitude and natural beauty of the area. I watched as Donna Shaver herself performed a traffic stop on me without law enforcement present in the year 2006 at the 28 mile marker, to come to my vehicle to tell me to drive slower as there were nesting turtles in the area. I watched board by board of the new turtle cabin go up, while Yarbrough Pass's road is an abject failure and remained closed to the public for months out of every year now because rain in the forecast rendering it to be closed thereby shutting off one of the only public access points to the Upper Laguna. I watched as the turtle science program at PAIS expanded to the crowded tourism beaches of Port Aransas and Mustang Island. I watched as Turtle buggies drove through and around families trying to enjoy the vehicle free beach of Malaquite. I watched as the turtle patrollers deliberately went around gates at north and south Malaquite beach by driving over the dunes to avoid having to get off and unlock and relook the gates. I watched maintenance have to fix the dune and fence areas because of these actions. I watched as a turtle patroller stole alcohol from a campsite back around 2010, got drunk while on the buggy, and got arrested for DUI. I watched as cell towers became more prominent and turtle patrol would get off their buggies and spend hours on the dunes on their phones, disrupting the solitude and privacy of nearby campers and users of the beach. I watched as the turtle program operated their own separate social media and took over everything from the painting on our local water tower to taking it upon themselves to "rescue" green turtles in the winter, an important food source for winter residents of Padre such as coyotes and raccoons which are native to the area. I watched as the PAIS turtle program bought airboats to "rescue" hundreds of green turtles cold stunned from the Laguna and then charter a offshore boat to go dump them in the open Gulf of Mexico after they recovered. I watched year after year as the volunteer turtle patrollers on South Beach deliberately and vindictively obstructed traffic in the only available driving lane by doing 8 to 9 mph in their buggies forcing vehicles to drive through the surf or vegetation to get around them. I watched as at 2300 hours in the middle of the night turtle patrol launched a SUV based loggerhead patrol, driving past my campsite ALL NIGHT LONG in the dark putting me and my guests in harms way while "patrolling for turtles," and utterly ruining the camping experience for us.

I could go on and on but I suppose I already have. I support allowing the turtle eggs to hatch naturally on the beach. I support vastly reducing patrols and limiting them to the national seashore ONLY. I support publicly admitting that the Kemp's relocation/2nd population experiment has been an abject failure and that now in the year 2023 at direct odds with increased visitation and should consider going somewhere like Matagorda Island NWR if it is to continue. I support disbanding the incubation lab and the necropsy lab. I support zero public hatchling releases. I support eliminating turtle recoveries for Green turtles and any other species besides the Kemp's which the program was originally designed to deal with. I support completely closing Malaquite beach to the turtle patrol's patrol vehicles. I support eliminating sand moving and manipulation just for the turtle patrol cabin. If back island road entrance and exit is not kept open then we shouldn't keep the turtle area open either. Visitors use should come before the turtle program as a priority. The new cabin at the 40mm has already knocked

a dune down to get access to it, and what's next? Constant heavy equipment down there moving sand?

I do not support a new road at the 5mm or anywhere else. South Padre Island has tried this and it closes shut constantly and is always in need of maintenance. PAIS is NEVER full to the point a 4wd visitor cannot find a quiet place to go. We do NOT need a new vehicle free area as Malaquite beach more than serves that need and purpose. I DO support a pamphlet/education for visitors at the fee station as we are currently allowing park access with zero education and the beach driving needs such as 4wd is a must/etc. The general public is a free for all at many times on the beach, completely disregarding the 4wd signs, the speeding limits, and the northbound right of way rules of South Beach. Education is a must. Yarbrough must be fixed before any other road. Its constant closure is unacceptable and must be a priority. I have watched as turtle patrol goes down beach on patrol when the south beach is CLOSED to the public. This must never be allowed to happen. Similarly, I support all areas reopening earlier after a storm related closure, after a minimal initial resource check and basic visitor safety. There is 60 miles of south beach that should not be closed because 1 percent of the park up by Malaquite has damage to buildings/etc. I support no changes to Marin debris programs.

The NPS MUST reign in the turtle program. No longer should it take precedence over every other division of the park in addition to actual visitor usage. If not eliminated as a failed and wasteful poster child of government excess and waste, at a minimum it should be vastly diminished. It should only operate in the park boundary, and should allow eggs to hatch on the beach only, and with limited patrols. Patrols should be limited to kemps only. All other species should be left as is. Science and Resource Management must be given a higher budget and greater priority as they manage the "other 99%" of the park's species that Turtle Science deems "unimportant." The speed limit should be taken back to 25mph year round except at the 0 to the 2.5 mile marker 15mph area.

Thankyou for your time. The beach should remain as natural as possible while allowing visitors to actually access it as an undisturbed natural area. This isn't an attack on turtles but on the management and the turtle science people themselves that have allowed the turtle program to become a problem to the point that we actually have to even have these conversations today. If I were involved in any way with the turtle program at PAIS I would hang my head daily in repentant shame at being a part of such a indisputable waste of the taxpayer's money on such a failed program that over 3 decades later has never broken the 1% mark of the world's population of Kemp's Ridley, ALL IN ORDER to create a unremovable permanent income stream for themselves thinly veiled as "Conservation."

With all sincerity,

Captain Colin R Davis
USCG License 2627896

2nd Mate Unlimited Tonnage upon Oceans, 1600 Ton Master upon Inland Waters, Master of Towing upon Great Lakes, Inland Waters, and Western Rivers
Bachelor's of Science in Marine Transportation, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, 2005

Correspondence ID: 438 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 10:56:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a beach access and beach cleanup organization, Friends of Padre strongly supports leaving the current rules concerning vehicular access at the Padre Island National Seashore in place. The need for a pedestrian beach, if it exists, is already met through a four-mile stretch of non-vehicular beach adjacent to the Malaquite Visitor's Center. The fact that the majority of this stretch goes unused by beach goers is a result of visitor's inability to walk any considerable distance carrying their belongings with them. Because the remainder of the park's beaches are open to driving, people are able to spread out along the 60 miles of beach front.

The proposed back road that would be built behind the dunes from the 0-5 mile marker is unnecessary and would

be costly, in terms of money and damage to the resource. The environmental impact study would be cost prohibitive, not to mention the high mitigation costs that would surely be associated with placing a road behind the dunes. The road at Yarbrough Pass is significantly shorter than what is currently being suggested, and the park has historically struggled to keep even this short road maintained and open. The support required to design, build, and maintain a five-mile long road behind the dunes should be used by the park in ways that enhance the resource, not damage it. Friends of Padre would prefer that current rules concerning vehicular access remain unchanged.

We strongly support the proposed actions to increase the amount of marine debris removed from the park, and in order to do so, it's imperative that volunteers have vehicular access to all areas of the driving beach. If people can't get to it, it won't be picked up. This year's Big Shell Beach Cleanup saw 2,500 people cleaning 32 miles of beach in one day. That would not be possible with restricted vehicular access. If the park wants to increase these types of beneficial activities, visitors must be allowed driving access. We appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on this subject and hope they will be taken into consideration.

Thank you,
Friends of Padre

Correspondence ID: 439 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 11:52:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Since April 26, 2020, the new superintendent, Eric Brunnemann at PAIS, has been dismantling a world-famous sea turtle program that benefits the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle and the threatened green, loggerhead, hawksbill, and leatherback sea turtles. Since 1978, the NPS, USGS, USFWS, TPWD, and Mexico have worked bi-nationally to save these species. Dr. Donna Shaver, Chief of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery program at PAIS (STSR), and her team have worked for decades to ensure the program's worldwide success. In addition, she created an ecotourism event that educates people on the importance of conservation, provides volunteer opportunities and internships for college students, and generates millions for our community.

Now, Mr. Brunnemann and the NPS are dismantling the program. Ending a successful NPS program is a shameful act on behalf of the United States government. We, the people, have yet to be heard by Washington D.C. Therefore, we respectfully request a meeting, interview, visit, or phone call by you, Mr. Brunnemann.

Correspondence ID: 440 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 13:06:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is interesting that Texas Highways thinks the sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore is important enough to do an article about the program and Dr. Shaver. We Texans are very proud of our state turtle and Dr. Shaver's hard work for over 40 years to help this critically endangered sea turtle. We do not need changes in this program as it has proven to be successful. PAIS and the NPS should be proud of this work and should be supportive of the work continuing. The PAIS could have a hand in helping to save a specie along with educating the public. Everyone loves turtles no matter what they think of other animals and having more public releases helps them to learn about the turtles.

I'm not sure why PAIS wants to disband the turtle program and overlook Dr. Shaver's over 40 years of hard work but it's the wrong thing to do. The turtles will suffer.

Correspondence ID: 441 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 14:55:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello, I am an avid beachgoer who has been going down Padre Island National Seashore for the past 20 years, and even moved from Austin, TX to Corpus Christi to be closer to the park.

Here are my comments on the pre-NEPA plans.

Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program:

1. In-situ nesting seems like a terrible idea for our beach. Currently the beach is the narrowest and flattest I have ever seen it over the past twenty years. Between rising sea levels, increased storm activity, and damming of rivers preventing silt buildup, this problem will only increase in the future. There is a far too great chance that the beach will have a flooding event during nesting season, and wipe out all progress and hinder the program.
2. Moving nests higher on the beach would most likely have no positive impact, as the water floods up to the dune line far more frequently than in the past. This would be a waste of resources for no benefit.
3. Removing vehicles would not materially effect the turtle program. There have been very few incidents of vehicles striking a turtle, and that risk does not justify shutting public vehicle access for the whole beach. I believe keeping and enforcing the 15mph speed limit would solve all vehicle related problems. Driving at 15mph gives drivers plenty of time to handle any sort of obstacle or wildlife in the road. In recent years park rangers have not patrolled the entire beach frequently enough, and I have seen many people speeding down south beach. I believe the park rangers should patrol the beach more looking for speeding and aggressive drivers. More and more people are buying 4x4's and unfortunately they do not all have respect for their resources and natural environment.
4. Using UAV's would probably do...something...but probably nothing material.

Sand Management:

I believe the park service should work with the GLO and maybe some other authorities to develop a sand management plan, other than that there aren't enough details to form any conclusions or suggestions.

Beach Driving:

1. If done correctly, beach permits could be a potential helpful solution. Maybe permits could be required to go past the 10mm or 15mm or some other point. The fees from this could be used to assist the turtle program. The process to develop the permitting rules and processes would need to be done with transparency and public input.
2. Regarding a new bypass road to the 5mm, I don't believe this is a good idea. There is already a road behind the dunes which ends at the south beach entrance. Roads are incredibly destructive to natural habitats and wildlife. I think we should deal with the roads we already have.
3. Regarding pedestrian only beaches, there is already a 4+ mile section of vehicle-free beach. I actually walk from the south sticks to the north sticks and back frequently. It is nice to have some hiking space without worrying about vehicles. I believe the current pedestrian beach is plenty for the entire park. This beach is not used very much (let's be honest Texas is not a very active state) but I do run into other people when I am walking it. On a side note I have seen someone in a silver Jeep Wrangler (with civilian vanity plates) driving on the pedestrian only beach, not sure if it was a park staff member bending the rules but they seemed to have exited around the park headquarters.

Hurricane closures:

I believe the park should not close the beach unless there is complete flooding to the dunes. After that point it should be up to the visitors whether they want to risk driving down. This is how the park handled things before Hurricane Hanna.

Marine Debris:

I believe the park should remove any large items that are toxic or plastic. Wood and metal objects will help to build up the dunes and shouldn't be a risk to wildlife or visitors. Every time I head down south beach I try to collect at least 1 large bag worth of trash (mostly plastic and styrofoam) and dispose of it at the dumpsters at the

south beach entrance. I unfortunately don't see a lot of other visitors picking up trash. Potential solutions could be to offer easily accessible free trash bags around the beach entrances. The park could also place trash bins for the first 10 or 15 miles of beach. While not an elegant solution, there are some people who will just not dispose of their trash unless there is an easy option to do so. In the past few years, with outdoor activities gaining popularity there are unfortunately just more people out leaving trash. I have traveled around the country and have picked up trash all over left behind by people. At Padre Island, most of the trash coming in is from offshore and I am not sure what we can do about that short of federal or global regulations on plastic and plastic waste. It may be futile picking up trash when more just washes in every day but I will keep doing it.

Thank you for your time in reading this comment.

Correspondence ID: 442 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 15:29:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In situ nesting will not work. don't even bother with a study. continue to collect the eggs and put them in the incubation room. continue to allow NPS vehicles to drive on Malaquite Beach. please allow Unmanned aerial vehicle (Drones, etc) to be used in the park. start a drone/UAV permit for the park. make it 20 bucks a year to register. continue and increase public hatchling releases.

Sand management - only maintain the entrances, or if there is damage to the dunes, repair them. simply maintain the north entrance.

Beach driving - don't change a thing. no new beach driving permit! I'm not sure the wetlands can be avoided for the possibility of constructing a new back road for the first five miles. It's an intriguing idea.

Hurricane and storm recovery - open the beaches up immediately after an initial safety check. do not keep the beaches closed for more than a day or two after the storm. The Hannah response closure was way too long, and completely unnecessary. In fact, someone should get in trouble for keeping it closed for so long. staff can work on their facilities after a storm on their own time, NOT the public's.

Marine debris - continue to work with Friends of Padre, CCA, and other organizations on beach clean up activities. continue to allow staff help support these clean ups.

Correspondence ID: 443 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 16:07:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: NPS: Please listen to the people who have responded to this Pre Nepa. You should be able to tell that there are bad feelings and great mistrust in many of the local people. Some of the lack of trust has been years in the making but much of it has arisen with the coming of the current superintendent with his lack of transparency.

Did you know that he ushered the Island Newspaper editor out of his office refusing to even have the decency to engage in a conversation? Also when asked to attend the Nueces County commissioners meeting, he refused.

He has caused havoc with 'new procedures' at the turtle lab without consultation with personnel who have been working for decades to perfect a working plan. Instead of being proud to head a park with the greatest number of nesting Kemps ridley turtles in the United States, he seems to think of them as an irritating problem. Instead of seeking to understand the Kemps unique nesting habits, he seems to rely on information from out of state persons who deal with different beaches as well as different turtle species.

He doesn't seem to understand how critical is it that Kemps research be continuing since he has sent back research grant monies and is unwilling to promote this important research by turtle lab personnel.

If he has been sent to PINS by NPS to represent their grand plan, then shame on the Park Service for this disrespect to the people of our country who valued these parks, seashores and support their existence.

Correspondence ID: 444 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 16:42:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do cut cut funds Padre island national seashore.

The hard work through the years which has built up our turtle rescue. We'll be in danger. These programs are desperately needed.

Correspondence ID: 445 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 16:42:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do cut cut funds Padre island national seashore.

The hard work through the years which has built up our turtle rescue. We'll be in danger. These programs are desperately needed.

Correspondence ID: 446 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 18:26:14

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program:

First and Foremost, regardless of the action taken to continue, revise, or otherwise change the current Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program, the National Park Service (NPS) shall administer Padre Island National Seashore (PINS) first as a public park and recreation area. The NPS shall not infringe on the rights of the public to access PINS as established by law.

My concern is that the NPS will use the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program or some other conservation/environmental issue to limit, restrict, and/or prohibit vehicular access on PINS. An example, would be closing sections or entirety of PINS to public/vehicular access during turtle nesting season. This is unacceptable and is contrary to the First and Foremost NPS responsibility.

The Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program has been successful, because it addresses and mitigates the risks of predation of eggs and hatchlings. This is accomplished thru recovery of eggs which are carefully protected and incubated. Hatchlings are also released in a controlled protected setting to reduce predation. The numerous predators which populate PINS, include coyotes, raccoons, badgers, seagulls, herons, and hawks. The recovery of eggs from nests also reduces risk of egg damage or loss due to inundation from tidal or storm surge. No doubt, the success and efficacy of the mitigation efforts are backed by scientific basis and research information gathered over many years of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program.

The NPS like other Federal, State, or business entity must have contingency plans in the event of funding shortfalls, cuts and/or elimination. The NPS should exhaust options for volunteer work and/or teaming with local Universities or other organizations to bridge the resource and funding gap, if possible. Impact statements are typically prepared when requesting funding and detail the impact if not received. The NPS should have been better prepared to execute and move forward with an approved legal contingency plan given funding cuts or elimination. The NPS should have priorities for projects as well and these need to support and align with the First and Foremost NPS responsibility.

Perhaps, the NPS needs to reassess the viability of the PINS to continue the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program given the predation issue, ever changing beach topology, and inundation from tidal or storm surge. The current program is successful, but requires significant funding, personnel, equipment, and facilities. Perhaps the

limited funding that is available could be sufficiently used on a beach (not PINS) where predation, changing beach topology, and tidal inundation are not issues. A more acceptable sustainable beach environment would lend itself to reduced funding and resource requirements, i.e. less human intervention with the turtles.

With regard to “Potential Pilot Study 4: Would unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology be effective monitoring for nesting sea turtles?” There is a NPS prohibition on use of UAVs. This option conflicts and is contrary to existing policy, so why is it listed? From the NPS website and Facebook, “Flying of all drones, quadcopters, and small unmanned aerial vehicles is prohibited in all areas at the National Seashore and in all national parks. The reasoning why they are prohibited, is they can be used to film visitors (invading their personal privacy), disturb visitors and daily activities (by being loud), impact wildlife in the area (at Padre it could make nesting birds and sea turtles abandon nests and nesting), and potentially interfere with emergency rescues. To learn more about unmanned aerial vehicles, visit: <https://www.nps.gov/.../unmanned-aircraft-in-the-national-par...>”; If the use of UAVs is not an issue, then the NPS should remove the prohibition on PINS.

Sand Management:

It is not clear what sand management really means. No specific details are provided. In other beach areas, such as Port Aransas, north and south of Bob Hall, regular maintenance of beach roads with heavy equipment occurs. This is usually accomplished early in the morning, or other opportune times when beach traffic is low. This maintenance also includes removal/relocation of debris and seaweed. It can also include removal of jellyfish or dead fish during red tide events. This type of activity keeps the beach clean, safe, accessible, and drivable for visitors. At times the entry points to PINS can become congested with stuck vehicles due to soft sand. In my years of visiting the NPS, I have rarely seen any efforts by NPS to maintain entry points clear and accessible. The NPS should adopt a regular type of beach maintenance as used on other beaches which helps with public access, vehicular movement and safety. As a prerequisite, any sand management activity should not limit, obstruct, restrict, or otherwise infringe on the rights of the public to access PINS.

Beach Driving:

PINs (vehicle access) is approximately 60 miles long from the end of the Blacktop of Park Road 22 to the Port Mansfield Jetties. Malaquite Beach is a pedestrian beach (no vehicle access) approximately 4-5 miles long.

If a visitor prefers a nonmotorized experience, then the Malaquite Beach already provides this type of setting. With approximately 4-5 miles of beach, there is plenty of room to accommodate visitors. Since it is a walking pedestrian beach, more visitors will gather and crowd around the beach in front of the Malaquite Visitor Center. Why? Because visitors have to haul, carry, lug their chairs, blankets, food, drinks, ice, towels, umbrella, and other items crossing the sand to the beach. This can be a demanding ordeal especially if elderly, handicapped or physically challenged. The NPS does offer beach wheelchairs and purports to be accessible to all individuals. The reality is the Pedestrian Beach can be difficult to access and enjoy. It is likely that the full extent of the pedestrian beach capacity goes unused given the arduous task of carrying all beach supplies from the car in the parking lot to the beach. While it may be crowded around the beach in front of the Malaquite Visitor Center, other beach areas are not as populated. This does not equate to needing a bigger pedestrian beach.

The following statements must pertain to PINs (vehicle access): “As visitation increases, the number of vehicles can also be expected to increase. The National Park Service is obligated to assess visitor capacity to protect resources and visitor experience. Once capacity is determined, if visitation exceeds capacity, the Seashore may need to take action.” “Would changes to the current driving program better protect visitor experience and Seashore resources? Potential option: Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience. These statements strongly suggest or infer that the NPS will infringe on, limit, or restrict the rights of the public to access PINS. Just as some visitors elect to embark on a Pedestrian Beach experience, there are other beach goers who elect to drive and/or park on

the beach. The references to "Capacity" and "Diving Permit" are guises used to infringe on access rights. There is approximately 60 miles of beach which provides plenty of capacity for visitors, and visitors already pay for the beach access.

The following quote from the NPS also impedes on vehicular access: "Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island. Moving vehicles headed down island to a back road could improve visitor experience and safety for visitors recreating in the first five miles of the Seashore and for visitors traveling down island. Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience." A vehicle-free pedestrian beach already exists with unused capacity as explained earlier. There is no need for another road which in its construction would impact the very environment the NPS is purported to protect. Instead of a new road, bypassing the 0MM - 5MM, the NPS should focus on maintenance and upkeep of the existing beach entrance road and beach roads. The NPS should apply the earlier stated sand management and beach maintenance for keeping beach driving entrance and beach roads clean and clear of soft sand to promote a safe driving environment and experience. The NPS should also consider adding trash containers and perform trash collection along the 0MM - 5MM. The NPS should also consider adding bathroom facilities along the 0MM - 5MM to improve the visitor experience.

Instead of building a new bypass road, the NPS should also focus on improving and maintaining the Yarbrough Pass access and road to ensure access and availability to PINS visitors. In most PINS visits, I have observed the Yarbrough Pass as closed.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures:

With regard to PINS, vehicle access should be restored as soon as roads are safe for travel (particularly park Road 22), and the beach allows for vehicular travel at visitor not park discretion. The NPS has published information related to traveling down island. As stated by NPS under Rules and Regulations for Traveling Down Island, "The driving conditions at the beach are constantly changing due to currents, winds and tides. Please be aware that changing conditions and marine debris washed ashore by the currents can create hazardous driving conditions. You are driving at on the beach at your own risk. Padre Island National Seashore is not responsible for injury to visitors or damage to vehicles while driving on the beach." The statement from the NPS applies to all Beach Driving including after Hurricane and/or storm.

Vehicular or pedestrian access to the beach should not be impeded by damage which does not impact access. For example, if the Malaquite Visitor Center is obliterated by a storm, there is no reason to close PINS vehicular access. Conversely, if a storm produces a huge mound of sand and debris covering the entrance to PINS, then access must be closed, but only until the sand and debris are cleared. The NPS should ensure safety and resumption of beach access in a timely fashion. The resumption of beach access on PINS after a storm should be relatively quick as compared to facility or other infrastructure repair. Opening of the pedestrian or vehicular beach after a Hurricane or Storm should not be predicated on facility or structure repair, when that repair has nothing to do with safe access. Imagine the beach around Bob Hall Pier being closed until the pier is restored. That would not make sense.

Marine Debris:

As stated earlier, the NPS should also consider adding trash containers and perform trash collection along the 0MM - 5MM. Having dispersed trash collection on the beach may reduce congestion near the dumpsters at the PINS entry. Since 1995, the Annual Billy Sandifer Big Shell Cleanup has removed tons of debris from PINS over these years. It is likely that similar events promoted by the NPS for trash collection and beach cleanup would draw public support and participation.

Other:

-The NPS should consider security personnel actively patrol the Malaquite Visitor Center parking area and Bird Island Basin. The NPS should consider adding cameras as well for monitoring and security. I do not know if the NPS has this type of security in place.

-The cell reception on the PINS is nonexistent, or spotty and unreliable. The NPS should consider a method (cell tower perhaps) to improve communications on PINS. This would allow visitors to communicate with the NPS on park matters or other law enforcement personnel depending on the issue.

-The NPS should conduct daily patrols minimum on the full length of the PINS and establish coordinated plans with law enforcement (police, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Coast Guard) and Border Patrol to deal with issues pertaining to human and drug trafficking, illegal fishing (long lines, gill nets), or other unlawful activity.

-The NPS should have a first aid station to assist park visitors in an emergency. The NPS needs to assist and help visitors who experience an emergency/injury. The behavior of park personnel with a recent stingray attack on a woman lacked compassion, urgency, and assistance to get the woman off the park. Park personnel chose to focus on speeding and failed to render aid when needed. The NPS needs to establish a plan for dealing with visitor emergencies and injuries. The NPS needs to have a plan to safely and expeditiously escort visitors off the beach.

-The NPS should work to gain the trust of the public and be transparent on plans, priorities, and funding. The NPS should release data (on their website) on a yearly basis minimum that details funding received and how it is allocated and spent on projects, personnel, facilities, etc.

-Finally, with respect to park fees, any increase should be capped not to exceed 2%. It is expected that fees will increase, but they should be reasonable and capped. The 2% aligns with the current FED effort to bring down inflation to a manageable level.

Correspondence ID: 447 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 18:52:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The Park's four Sea Turtle Science and Recover Program ideas for pilot studies:

1. Potential Pilot Study 1: In-situ nesting - can predation be reduced without moving eggs?
2. Potential Pilot Study 2: Does moving nests protect them from inundation, or flooding?
3. Potential Pilot Study 3: Remove or reduce NPS vehicles from Malaquite Beach, except for emergency use.
4. Potential Pilot Study 4: Would unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology be effective monitoring for nesting sea turtles?

The presented pilot studies seem unnecessary because the studies have already been done. Instead NPS should use the existing studies such as the 2020 peer reviewed study that tracked 155 nest sites on the beach at PINS over a 3-year period. It evaluated the factors impacting turtle eggs and the survival of hatchlings on the beach similar to the suggested pilot studies. According to the study (Shaver et al 2020) "Results of these two studies illustrate that, since in situ nests on the Texas coast face significant threats and yield fewer hatchlings than relocated nests, relocation of Kemp's ridley clutches for protected incubation must be continued for this critically endangered species."

Although its not pointed out, clearly collection of eggs is directly tied to the ability to hold public hatchling releases. These public releases may be the only time not just locals but all Americans can view this event in their lives. Also, the research from the collected eggs and hatchlings provides educational opportunities to students that would be unavailable otherwise in our country. Before Covid, the Park held 20 to 27 public hatchling release viewing events annually. In 2021, due to COVID, the Park held 7 viewing events. To save National Park Service (NPS) money, the Park in its Pre-NEPA Comment Request is proposing holding fewer viewing events which consistently bring tourists to the coastal bend. The public disappointment was heard online and in person everywhere I went. Some friends who only come to see the hatchlings planned alternate vacations. While this was

a small set example its easy to see how if the egg collection and hatchling releases are discontinued or reduced there will be a decrease effect to tourist levels and associated economic loss. I do not think egg collection or hatchling releases should be reduced or discontinued by any means. Existing studies refute that leaving eggs in situ works. It does result and all or most of the eggs being eaten by crabs, birds, ants, raccoons, coyotes, opossums, etc.

The Park in its Pre-NEPA Comment Request is proposing doing limited pilot studies including reduced driving by NPS staff and nest studies involving Malaquite Beach and/or near the research cabin to test the best way to protect turtle nests. This would only reduce the ability for staff to identify issues, nests, emergencies. The reduced impact to protected species would be minimal and not great enough to justify the loss in ability to identify issues, nests, or emergencies. I believe that this study would be skewed to a pre-determined outcome to justify less beach access based off cherry-picked data instead of relying on the existing beach vehicle FONSI. In my work on San Jose Island in the previous 30 years on the island the most nests found was 7. With my crew on the island we found 17 in 2021. That's not a high year, that's the result of more eyes on the beach finding nests and collecting them to release as hatchlings. The one nest we didn't find in time was completely destroyed by wildlife within a matter of 12 hours between surveys of the beach. I do not think that a limited pilot study to reduce NPS staff on Malaquite beach would provide useful information and would be a waste of public funding and staff time.

NPS would like to find some method of leaving more or all eggs on the beach so that it can reduce the costs of its turtle program (such as, the costs associated with its incubation facilities and costs associated with paid and volunteer turtle patrollers). I think it would be better if NPS continues and grows the sea turtle program while creating a 5 year plan identifying funding to move lab and paid turtle program staff to university, city, county, or private NGO in the Coastal Bend.

According to the 2020 study, inundation only accounts for about 3.3% impacts to in situ nests. While it may protect those few nests, inundation is not a great threat to in situ nests; therefore, this study is unnecessary.

Instead of these pilot studies, I suggest the Park apply for a beach maintenance permit under Section 10/404 with Section 7 consultation for potential impacts to protected species. USACE should be the lead federal agency on the application and their decision document will cover the necessary NEPA review of the actions required for beach maintenance.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) would be an additional tool that, when conditions allow, could be used to reduce the amount of beach that has to be surveyed by foot or vehicle. Often our winds are too strong to use an UAV effectively, they are expensive, require maintenance, and permitted pilots so it would not be a reliable source of technology. So I do not think they should replace surveys by volunteers and staff but could be used to supplement and add to efforts.

The Park's two sand management potential options:

1. Potential option: North Beach Access Improvements
2. Potential option: Adjust current sand management to be more protective of sensitive habitats.

I think a better approach is having the Park apply for a beach maintenance permit under Section 10/404. With USACE as the lead federal agency on the permit they would handle the public/agency comment and conduct a NEPA review through their decision document process. Then this maintenance could be planned out on a routine schedule and around storms and reviewed by USACE/USFWS/GLO. A good example of this is in the Galveston County Beach Maintenance Permit (SWG 2014-00448).

In summary, I suggest the Park apply for both a beach maintenance permit (for sargassum and debris removal) and a beach nourishment/sand management permit (for movement of sand) from USACE for Section 10/404 impacts. During the permitting process the plans could be reviewed by agencies and the public for impacts to protected habitat and address specific protective measures such as reduction of speed, placement of bollards, and

additional monitoring. See City of Corpus beach nourishment permit for reference (SWG 1998-00131). Through the permit process the agencies could determine how to protect sensitive habitats and a set schedule for maintenance could be set to ensure safe and consistent public access on roads and beaches.

The Park's three beach driving potential options:

1. Potential option: Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience.
2. Potential option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island.
3. Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience.

PINS has 61 miles of beach which should provide plenty of capacity. A sign counting visitors to the park could be posted at the front gate to warn incoming traffic of visitors so they can judge for themselves if they want to go further down the beach and would know if bathroom and other facilities would be crowded. The Park in its Pre-NEPA Comment Request is proposing that the Park consider limiting the number of vehicles which can access the beach. I do not think that is a reasonable proposal due to the size of the park. Without a clear need and purpose for a reduction in capacity I do not support limiting capacity.

I support a beach permit if the cost and profit are tied to the cost of the turtle recovery program (but only between April and July 15th).

The Park, in its Pre-NEPA Comment Request, is considering increasing beach access by adding a new road to bypass the first five miles of the beach. This is a good option but shouldn't be combined with the beach management plan permits. This should be a standalone EA/EIS once a clear need/purpose and funding for the road is identified.

Its unclear why the Park, in its Pre-NEPA Comment Request, is proposing the creation of additional vehicle-free pedestrian beach areas to "enhance visitor safety and experience". There is already a vehicle free area at Malaquite beach. I believe that the walk-area at Malaquite Beach is not being fully utilized and needs additional improvements to increase its utilization. I do not support this because it appears to be an attempt to limit driving on and access to the beach.

The park should add additional parking lots at the end of Malaquite Beach with dune walk-overs so walkers and visitors not wanting to drive on the beach could use the area. I also think a parking area off of Yarboro Pass Road with vehicle-free paths to wetland and wildlife viewing areas would enhance visitor enjoyment of the Park.

The proposed options look like the Park is attempting to find some way to limit vehicle use on the beach. I believe that the Texas Open Beaches Act must be followed and that the beach should be open at all times, except during limited emergencies such as during and for a few days after a hurricane and during beach maintenance or other equipment movement that would create a temporary public safety hazard.

For any alternatives considered they must all look at the economic impact impacts. Based on a 2009 Marine Resource Economics working paper, it is estimated that when the Park is closed during the summer the Coastal Bend area and its businesses may lose over \$400,000 a week.

The Park's four post hurricane reopening plan potential options:

1. Potential option: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only
2. Potential option: Similar to the Hurricane Hanna response
3. Potential option: Similar to Hurricane Hanna response, but areas would open earlier.
4. Potential option: Remain closed until all facilities and infrastructure are repaired, clean-up is completed, and resources are surveyed.

After the most recent hurricane the beach was closed for two weeks to search for possible, newly unearthed artifacts. The plan should be to clear the access roads and post any public facilities that are closed to the public at the entrance gate until they can be repaired while still allowing the public access to the national park. Reopening to the public as quickly as safely possible, reduce loss in revenue, and gets more eyes on the beach for potential issues.

The Park's three marine debris potential options:

1. Potential option: Increase beach clean-up activities with local organizations
2. Potential option: Consider ways to market trash cleanup and reduce trash left by visitors.
3. Potential option: Consider bi- or multi-lateral agreements at both the state level and the international level to address the source of marine debris, as most of the marine debris that washes onto the Seashore comes from offshore.

I agree, in addition the Park should reference existing research available on beach debris cause and cleanup such as that by Tony Amos (<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/61489>).

The Park should post signs in English and Spanish on mile markers citing financial penalties for littering. The Park could consider removing trash containers on the beach or changing the type of container provided. If trash receptacles are continued to be provided on the beach they should be animal and flood resistant. Barrels that float up poles with rising waters with heavier lids that reduce animal foraging could be an option. Increased peace officer and park staff presence to identify and ticket those that leave trash behind is another option that the Park should look into additional funding for.

Correspondence ID: 448 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 19:29:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: If the Seashore is "...considering developing a Beach Management Plan..." - does that mean there have been no written management policies or standard operating procedures in place? It is hard to conceive that is the case and it makes this request for public comments seem like a precursor or justification for cost-cutting measures that may negatively impact the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program and/or Beach Driving by the public.

We moved to Corpus Christi in 2016 when we retired, purposely to be close to the Padre Island National Seashore (PINS) and be able to visit it at all times of the year. We have bought passes to PINS for around 15 years in a row.

The Civic Engagement newsletter focuses on five issues. I'll provide comments on each of the issues separately:

Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program

Ideally, the program should continue as is. If costs need to be cut, perhaps have fewer public hatchling release events. Each hatchling release could also be recorded on video and made available via YouTube (nothing fancy necessary). Isn't there an alternative incubation facility already? In order to provide useful commentary, it would be helpful if PINS staff would provide the current budget so the public can see what the costs are related to the program and where there are financial shortfalls. That way, we can provide input on possible ways to increase funding and/or prioritize portions of the program. Everything should be done to maximize the number of turtle eggs that are successfully collected and hatched.

Sand Management

No real details are provided regarding the potential options. Just continue doing what you're doing.

Beach Driving

Visitor capacity - is there a problem now? What does staff consider maximum capacity?

No thru road should be constructed - that would just disturb more grassland and dunes. It is likely there are

wetland areas behind dunes for those first five miles. Not a good idea.

There's already a vehicle-free pedestrian area by the Malaquite Pavilion. Beach driving should be allowed year-round. We are always very mindful and vigilant for turtle tracks during turtle nesting season when we are driving on the beach.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery

Preferred option: similar to Hanna response, but areas would open earlier. Most of us that drive on South Beach are well aware of debris and obstacles - only large trees and poles/lumber need to be moved enough to allow driving access.

Marine Debris

We participate in beach cleanups and the annual Billy Sandifer Big Shell cleanup. I believe more people would make a trip to PINS to participate in public cleanups. Definitely consider ways to market trash cleanup and reduce visitor trash.

Correspondence ID: 449 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 19:54:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not agree with any future beach management plans that intend to modify, restrict, or deny any levels of access to PINS whether temporary, seasonal, or indefinitely.

Correspondence ID: 450 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 20:18:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea turtle program:

I have had the privilege of observing a sea turtle release. It was exciting and educational. I am from out of town, so I was also bringing dollars into the local communities. I understand that the releases attract even more people than when I attended, so I think that you should consider a sign up or ticketing system. I think that it would even be reasonable to charge a small fee to offset administrative expenses.

As to whether releases should be done at all, I think that at least a nominal program should be retained for educational and local support reasons. However, before any changes are made at all, I think that what is a sustainable number of nests needs to be established. Right now the eggs are protected from all predators and environmental factors that would reduce the number of turtles. If the decision is made that the sea turtles are on their own, then there is no way to keep coyotes and other predators (even of the human kind) without mounting armed guards. The current turtle program sounds better to me.

Sand management:

I'm not sure why something needs to change. The less that sand needs to be moved around for the benefit of humans, the better. I love the current natural environment and do not see the need for more infrastructure.

Beach driving:

None of the displays addressed that fact that there is already a stretch of no vehicles allowed beach. If parents are concerned about the safety of their children, they should be going to Malaquite Beach. I am very concerned that extending the road five miles down the island would cause much more environmental damage than driving down the beach. Talk about the need for more sand management! Paved road = more sand management. Beach driving = no need for sand management. It might be nice for the people who want to race down further south along the beach, but I don't see it as environmentally responsible.

Hurricane and storm recovery:

I don't see the need for new regulations, interference, faster recovery, etc. For decades the NPS local staff has assessed and addressed each situation individually, and I believe that that should continue.

If you are concerned about continuity of staff action, then document what they are doing that and set that as the standard.

Marine debris:

Again, what has been practiced in the past seems to work just fine. Document it if you need it on paper. I do think that it would be helpful to get local volunteers involved in clean-ups that need more man power. Boy and girl scout troops and other youth groups that need service hours could be coordinated by the park staff. As far as debris ending up on the beach in the first place, perhaps the NPS should get involved with advising international groups.

Correspondence ID: 451 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 20:22:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I moved to North Padre Island because of the National Seashore. It is spectacular and should be enjoyed by the public like all national parks. It's one of the best managed parks I have been to and I have no idea why current policies are not sufficient.

Turtles: Leave the turtle program alone - it has been successful as is. Do not restrict NPS vehicles. Often visitors actually find a nest or turtle. I know we always look for tracks when we are there during nesting season. It's something to be proud of, not something to dismantle. Limit or eliminate the public releases if you need to save money. It's more important to keep the program intact than to make it a tourist attraction.

Sand management: Whatever the park is doing now works great. PINS on-site park service employees and Dr. Shaver should develop these policies.

Beach driving: I go to the park often and have never seen it so crowded as to cause a problem. (Unless it's during the public releases.) There is already a pedestrian-only beach at Malquite. No need for another on South Beach. Do not restrict driving at all ever. Those without 4WD can enjoy miles 0-5 almost anytime and anyone who likes can travel further down. Under no circumstances should a project as disruptive as a 5-mile paved road be considered. The wetland habitat destruction alone would be devastating.

Hurricane recovery & debris removal: The park manages this fine right now. Some of the public may complain but the regular visitors understand temporary closures after hurricanes/storms are necessary. As long as there's a path to get to the Mansfield Cut, it's good enough. The park is beautiful and interesting because it is kept natural.

Correspondence ID: 452 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 20:53:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My family has been camping on this beach since the 1980's and we've made a lot of good memories. My children, grand children, and great grand child have all gone every year since. I knew a woman that worked for the turtle program and we've even seen the turtles being released into the ocean after hatching. I feel as though the turtle program is a very important and makes a huge impact on not only the turtle population in texas but to texas beach wild life in general. I also think that being able to drive on this beach is exteamoy unique because this is the only beach you can do that on, and it should stay that way.

Correspondence ID: 453 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023 21:33:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

I am a home owner on North Padre Island and life long resident of the coastal bend. I am also a conservationist,

beach-goer, fishing enthusiast, bird watcher, and host to family and friends who come to visit our beautiful beaches year around. I would like to comment on the vital importance the turtle program has in our community. For residence of all ages as well as visitors who may have a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience the wonder the turtle program offers. Please protect it at all costs.

Additionally, part of the charm of NPI is the ability to responsibly drive on our beaches. Consider the implications that not being able to do this would have on the impaired, families, the elderly, and many more. It is not just a luxury for beach partners, it makes it possible for many populations in the community to be able to visit the beach. Please keep out beaches inclusive and continue to allow responsible driving to the shoreline.

Thank you for your time.

A respectful beach lover,

Correspondence ID: 454 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please don't defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore. Those poor, innocent, voiceless, vulnerable animals already have such a hard start in life and are at the mercy of man. They should be cherished and protected.

Correspondence ID: 455 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please DO NOT defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 456 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please save the endangered sea turtle program at Padre National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 457 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 01:10:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: tick tock, tick tock, tick tock.....

Correspondence ID: 458 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 01:26:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please KEEP the Padre Island Natl Seashore Sea Turtle program going. It provides a valuable environmental and ecological service as well as being a huge educational resource. It is a well-designed and, under Dr Donna Shaver's leadership, a well-managed program as well.

Correspondence ID: 459 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 01:34:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Get off your asses and save the turtles. Do not defund the endangered sea turtle program at the Padre Island National Seashore just because it is inconvenient for you and some deep-pocketed whiner. The comments are very much in favor of protecting the turtles, so do it, that is your job, both morally, and under NEPA.

Correspondence ID: 460 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 01:36:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Do not defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 461 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 03:28:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We must do everything we can to save wildlife and their habitats, especially endangered species...not turn our backs on them!!!!

Please save the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 462 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 03:42:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Protect the turtles and the environment! Leave the world better than we found it.

Correspondence ID: 463 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 04:37:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I'm writing to voice my opposition to the defunding and dismantling of the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 464 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 04:54:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To: National Park Service

Shame on you for proposing plans to defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore. You, of all organizations, should be protecting wildlife, including sea turtles, not the opposite. The citizens of the United States need to know their government is working to prevent extinction of species, not proposing to help ensure that all species, including sea turtles, are protected. Drop your plan!

Correspondence ID: 465 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 05:03:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The National Park Service should NOT defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.
Stop this madness for the sake of all these creatures.
Thank you!!

Correspondence ID: 466 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 05:30:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Erin Anderson and I am a current resident of North Padre Island. I also have a lifetime pass to the National Seashore and National Parks. I am a Freelance Photographer and access our beaches and bays on a daily basis.

I'm originally from the small logging town of Packwood, Washington. At one point my town was a thriving community just like the Coast Bend area. Unfortunately, the government decided to shut down the forests to all logging due to the Spotted Owl. This devastated not only our small town of Packwood, but many of the other logging communities of the Pacific Northwest. By shutting down our beaches for turtle nesting season, you will be doing the same devastation to our communities of the Coastal Bend. Which I previously experienced in the Pacific Northwest. Shutting down our beaches for nesting season would be devastating to the residents of North Padre Island's livelihood, but also the thriving industries of the Coastal Bend. The shutting down our beaches will open the doorway to illegal migration, sex trafficking, and drug cartels making our communities less safe to these elicit behaviors. Vehicle traffic does not harm the turtles, it actually creates a safety-monitoring system by the people driving and walking the beaches. In fact, many of the nesting turtles are found by the local community and tended to until the eggs can be brought to safety.

I ask that Padre Island National Seashore remain open for year around driving for the safety of the turtles and the residents of this community. This land is our God given land and no government agency should be allowed to take land from the people.

"Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches, or its romance." -Theodore Roosevelt

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 467 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 06:42:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Keep these turtles safe for future generations. That is why the park is here in the first place. Why even have a park where we aren't prioritizing preservation.

Correspondence ID: 468 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 06:49:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Wildlife is a natural resource. By protecting the sea turtles you will protect the earth's environment. Many of our natural resources are under attack but the National Park Service has the ability to protect our valuable resources.

Correspondence ID: 469 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:00:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: If we have the ability to help endangered species we should. The sea turtle program is important and it makes a difference. Please don't defund it. This program truly has made a difference. I understand the need reallocate funds, but it should not be at the expense of wildlife that needs our protection.

Correspondence ID: 470 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:02:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I object to the changes being proposed to the regulations to stop driving on the beach of Padre Island. The Turtle program has been running there, successfully, for a good many years and this would change dramatically if the ban to vehicles being allowed on the beach was introduced. This is an untouched area of 60 miles which could not be accessed without a vehicle which would impact the Turtle program's volunteers etc at critical times. Sea Turtles are endangered and this beach area is vital in helping to keep up numbers. It is not a good idea to give this operation to a non profit organisation when you have people with the expert knowledge and past experience doing an extremely good job. Simply trying to cover any backlash by passing this to a different

provider makes no sense and is just a smoke screen for this successful program to be run down and eventually stopped, people can clearly see what you are doing. The fact that Dr Shaver has not been consulted about these changes and has been subject to a gag order placed upon her smacks of underhand, unfair and unacceptable tactics.

I have been very lucky in being able to visit this wonderful place and see the turtle releases, it is something the area is proud of and the National Parks Service should be the same.

Correspondence ID: 471 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:11:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea turtles and the health of our oceans is important to all our lives. Please don't defund the program

Correspondence ID: 472 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:17:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea turtles are endangered worldwide. The US should be a leader in conservation efforts. Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 473 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:27:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against this happening!! Our beaches need to be open for all our residents and visitors to enjoy year round! The turtle program works great and we haven't had any issues with turtles being ran over. You expect people to pay to get in to the park well where do you expect funding to come from if they stop paying because they can't drive on the beach.

Our turtle program needs to stay in place we have helped so many turtles and people love coming to see the releases!

Don't allow this to happen

Correspondence ID: 474 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:28:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I recommend against implementing Pilot studies #1, #2, and #3 in the proposed PINS Beach Management Plan. Instead I recommend to support as much as possible the existing and visionary PINS plan focused on Kemp's Riddley eggs collection, incubation, and hatchlings releases.

The PINS leadership asked the public to review their proposed PINS Beach Management Plan. It seems like a great idea to have such plan. I attended the related Public Meeting on February 21st. It was a nice setup at the Texas State Aquarium but a bit of a disappointment that it was not a public discussion, instead a meeting where the public could ask questions to individual PINS staff members. I think a public discussion would have been better for the PINS management to hear the opinions of a well informed attendance and for the audience to hear more feedback from the PINS management.

I support the existing PINS Kemp's Riddley plan and characterize it as visionary because it addresses the growing impact of climate change and relative sea level rise. The rising seas are leading to an ongoing exponential increase of inundations to the dune lines. This will lead to increasing loss of nests. The warming sands will progressively impact the survivability of the eggs and will shift the sex ratio of the hatchlings (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/kemps-ridley-turtle>). The existing plan also allows for the option of broad access to PINS through driving on the beach with limited restrictions. The very popular hatchlings releases are a bucket list item for Texans strengthening their bond with our coast and the survival of marine species. The pilot plans advocate for restoring a more natural process but would leave more eggs on the beach and hence lead to less

hatchlings reaching the water. The Kemp's Riddley population has recovered some in the past 30 years but is still the most endangered sea turtle specie. If the Kemp's Riddley population was out of the danger of imminent extinction the proposed plans would be interesting but at present they seem ill advised and a misplaced resource allocation as I understand that the resources have been more scarce for the existing program.

I was told at the meeting that a subcommittee including PINS sea turtle scientists proposed these pilot studies but I was not provided with a good rational for what these pilot studies would achieve. In general, and if realistically possible, it is well intentioned to test restoring more natural processes once a specie has recovered but the Kemp's Riddley are still highly endangered with the survival of the specie very much in question. Their survival ought to be the priority and PINS has a plan that has worked and takes into account relative sea level rise and global warming. Implementing Pilot studies #1, #2, and #3 in the proposed PINS Beach Management Plan does not make sense in the present context (highly endangered specie). I recommend against these three pilot studies and instead to support as much as possible the existing and visionary PINS plan that has worked and is focused on Kemp's Riddley eggs collection, incubation, and hatchlings releases.

Correspondence ID: 475 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:31:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not defund and discontinue the program to protect endangered sea turtles at Padre Island National Seashore. Please continue to protect the park as a National Seashore free from development.

Correspondence ID: 476 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:38:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a former volunteer at both the Visitor Center and the Turtle Division, I am appalled at the current administration's constant behavior to ban driving on the beach and to destroy the very program that will sustain the existence of a critically endangered sea turtle. In fact the "proposed" changes, some of which have already been enacted over the last 2-3 years concerning the Turtle Division, would decimate the population of the Texas State Sea animal, the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle! The National Park Service is supposed to protect all wildlife, especially the endangered species, under its care. Already protected sea turtle species, Green Sea Turtles, are not given the same rescues so desperately needed when a stunning event occurs as water temperatures plunge below 50 degrees.

* Banning driving on the beach under the guise of helping nesting turtles is contradictory. The truth is that there have been 2 incidents involving a vehicle and a turtle in the last 10-15 years. The fishing community and the biotechs serving the turtle division work closely together as fisherman notify the down island biotechs of mama turtles exiting and entering the surf when a patroller is not quite nearby. To say that beach driving is a cause of predation to the species is true but there are many larger dangers to the Kemp's that apparently the park service is ignoring.

Fact: Patrolling biotechs and fisherman being located from MM17-60 and to the channel helps to deter drug and human trafficking. I used to be a dispatcher for the turtle division and know that "packages" often arrive with the tides as well as suspicious vehicles that are called into LE and Border Patrol more frequently than is made public for obvious reasons. This need for help monitoring the 60 miles of beach below the VC has only increased with our current border policy. I have personal security video of illegals running across our front lawn at 7am as they are pursued by Border Patrol. I live 8 miles upbeach from the park in a subdivision off of Whitecap Blvd 1.5 blocks from the beach. This was a group of 34 who had been chased up from the channel through PAIS. Luckily they were all apprehended by Border Patrol.

* Leaving nests in situ, in the sand where mama laid her eggs, is the recommendation of a panel brought to the Turtle Division to critique its program back in 2018. This panel, composed in entirety of Florida and other east coast turtle people, determined that the egg incubation and releasing of hatchlings which has been proven to be a saviour to the Kemp's species should end. Instead, the resulting proposal was to leave the nests alone in the sand in the same way as is done in Florida except with other sea turtle species all of which nest at night!

Fact: Florida beaches are well developed. At PAIS, the natural beaches provide for almost 100% nest predation

from high tides, raccoons, ants, birds, snakes, ghost crabs, etc. (Please read Dr. Shaver's publications regarding this).

Fact: These turtle people from the panel are the very ones who compete for the same grants as Dr Haver's division. They have gained the \$\$ that have been turned back by this current administration at PAIS. They also were given the \$\$ from the BP oil spill earmarked for Texas turtles!

I could continue for quite awhile. Instead, charging additional fees for driving on the beach, the people's beach by the way as this is the people's park (check all NPS charters), is simply put, a money grab!

Downsizing the sea turtle division is also a huge money grab! Although the National Seashore is a treasure, it is most widely known for its turtles. That is what separates our park from any other national park on the ocean.

THAT is why we are notable!

How can supposed wildlife stewards disband a division headed by a globally renowned scientist thereby eliminating scientific research designed to aid a critically endangered species? Did they forget that Dr. Shaver being given the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Sea Turtle Society among many, many other awards brings prestige, honor, and purpose to PAIS? What do they think 40 years of a successful program and 40 years of research into sea turtles has done for the Corpus Christi area? Obviously, care is not given to the economy of the area but only to the park. Again, a money grab!

FOLLOW THE MONEY! its trail leads to a purpose that negates the original mission of the National Park System!

It is time for someone at this park to do the right thing. Step up and be the stewards that parks are supposed to be. Save the turtle division and leave the driving alone. Stop the money grab!

Correspondence ID: 477 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:40:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please protect our turtle's. Please

Correspondence ID: 478 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:56:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

I do believe it is important to the environment to establish a strict beach management system. These actions and procedures will protect our beautiful wildlife that we (corpus Christi citizens) get to experience daily. It is our job and responsibility to protect our "home" and everything that lives here. We should limit traffic control around certain areas of the beach to protect all wildlife. There should be a weekend were we dedicate to pick up a sack of trash and in return give the citizen some type of compensation.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 479 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 07:59:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am writing to urge the National Park Service to CONTINUE the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 480 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 08:31:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please save the turtles at Padre Island. Having visited the sea shore on numerous occasions I cannot believe that you would not do everything in your official capacity to help these turtles.

Correspondence ID: 481 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 08:54:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is my understanding that a Bill is being presented to our Texas Legislature that would restrict or eliminate access to our Texas Gulf of Mexico Beaches for the public. I am animatedly opposed to any such Bill and/or law restricting the people of our state to public access to our beaches. We also own a house on North Padre Island in Corpus Christi, and one of the main attractions and reasons we purchased our Corpus home was due to the beautiful beaches we have easy access to from our home. Our State legislators should be held accountable for such a terrible decision, if this bill should pass. We the people feel our historical access to our beaches is a given right. My family has enjoyed beach access for over 75 years, What in the world is someone thinking. There must be some self-interest involved here to even present such a terrible proposal. If there is any move to give Developers special consideration to then incorporate our beaches into their developments, as I have heard may be behind this proposal, this would be a huge disservice to the Public of Texas.

I also support the ongoing sea turtle program and encourage that it continues along with the publics access to our beaches, totally unrestricted

We Need the Director of the Texas Parks Department and our local assigned Texas Parks Staff to Step up and pay attention to the desires of the people, or they should be replaced immediately. It seems that we the people may not be getting proper representation from TPWD!

Correspondence ID: 482 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 09:04:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against the proposed changes to beach access. The public is responsible for much of the beach cleanup, recovery of the turtle eggs and love the experience of a free and natural place to enjoy. Your regulations will profit only a few at the expense of many. Do not do this, PLEASE.

Correspondence ID: 483 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 09:06:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not destroy our freedom

Correspondence ID: 484 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 09:06:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear NPS committee members,

I would like to address the possible dismantling and defunding of the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore. My family has lived in Corpus Christi for the past ten years, five of which have been on Padre Island. One of the things we love so much about this area is being on the water and and the creatures that live in it. Sea turtles are near and dear to our family. We spend cold winter days in search for them on the shoreline of the canals surrounding the island. We have helped to recover cold stunned sea turtles and attended many of the local sea turtle releases. This love of sea turtles, life on the water and education provided at the National Seashore is currently driving my oldest daughter to pursue a career in marine biology and coastal conservation. I respectfully implore you to continue to fund the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore. Allow us all the opportunity to be involved and educated through the program there.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 485 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 09:19:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am a wildlife biologist, retired from 45 years of U.S. government service, and have spent over 30 years working professionally with domestic (7 yrs) and international sea turtle conservation programs (23

hrs) and projects. My following comments are informed by my experience noted above.

I totally support the National Seashore's decision and see the critical need to develop a beach management plan for all beach activities and within this context to review current beach activities including beach driving and the sea turtle program. I offer the following more specific comments:

1. Daily nesting surveys should be continued to identify and protect Kemp's Ridley (KR) and other sea turtles and their nests from vehicles and excessive predation, and to collect sea turtle stranding data. A review of how much of the Seashore should be surveyed daily should be determined based on an analysis of abundance and frequency of historic nesting on the Seashore also bearing in mind threats from predation and beach driving, logistics, and costs relative to added conservation value.
2. Nest protection methods should be the least intrusive and manipulative necessary with the goal of removing the threats so ultimately nests do not need to be relocated in perpetuity and nests can hatch naturally, and hatchlings emerge and crawl to the ocean without delays or interference. Moving nests to incubation facilities such as has been the long-term ongoing practice at the Seashore is not only unnecessary but the most manipulative form of protection. It should be phased out as rapidly as practical as it is not in alignment with best sea turtle nesting beach management practices. Until the threats from beach driving can be satisfactorily reduced or eliminated nests can be relocated to safe sites on the beach, protected from predators if necessary, using non-metal screens; or to self-release hatcheries if necessary for the short term, with appropriate signing to keep beach users from interfering with nests intentionally or unintentionally.
3. Nests from outside the Seashore's boundaries should not be relocated to the Seashore. They can be adequately protected at the site of deposition by other entities if necessary.
4. Hatchlings should not be released during the day for public events or any other reason as there is a reason most nests hatch, emerge and move to the ocean during the night. Daytime releases of hatchling results in greater hatchling mortality and delaying hatchlings also negatively impacts hatchling frenzy which enhances their survivorship as they traverse the beach to the water and swim offshore to the relative safety of currents and weed confluences.
5. Beach driving should be moved off the beach to the maximum extent possible. The Seashore's proposed potential option for relocating traffic off the beach to a back road along the first 5 miles of the Seashore is an excellent start but does not go far enough. I have no illusions of the difficulty of doing this with some members of the public believing it is their right to drive on the beach, but the Seashore is a National Treasure for all U.S. citizens and not a playground for those activities that abuse the wildlife and plants the Seashore is required to protect. I cannot fathom why if for no other reasons than human safety of beach users that the beach can be used as a highway for the convenience or "pleasure" of some.

I know there are many challenges facing the Seashore leadership and staff in developing this beach management plan and you have my respect and deep appreciation for all you do every day to better protect the Seashore's natural resources and beauty.

Correspondence ID: 486 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 09:19:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I don't understand why the National Park Service would discontinue a valuable and proven successful sea turtle protection program! Please don't dismantle it. The poor endangered turtles have made a come back through this program. Just because turtles don't vote or pay taxes doesn't mean they don't have a right to share the earth and sea with us. They have been here since the time of the dinosaurs! Please keep the program!

Correspondence ID: 487 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 09:29:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: My feelings about any changes to the National Seashore to the south should not be made. I feel that North Beach and Malaquite park should be maintained for visitors that come to enjoy the beach and recreate the sand and water as they should.

The island to the South should always stay wild. It has always been that the first 5-8 miles were maybe drivable in 2 wheel vehicles at times, however, you just had to take care and know the beach. Only seasoned beach drivers with proper 4 wheel vehicles venture further on to Big Shell, Little Shell and Yarborough Pass and on the Manfield Cut to shell hunt and fish and camp.

The fact that the beach left in its natural state was constantly changing posed challenges for us all through . I have been traveling down to Mansfield Pass since 1967 and have seen many changes.

I don't feel that a back road around the first few miles would be a very good idea. It would entice visitors that should not travel further down the beach to venture anyway and possibly get into trouble with the conditions they encounter once reentering the beach.

This would also put unnecessary additional traffic that would otherwise not be on the island that far down.

Please consider not making any changes and I am not in favor of any beach repair or sand removal or replacement.

Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Correspondence ID: 488 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 09:50:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do not shut down driving on the beach from April to July or any other time. Do not stop the sea turtle program.

Driving on the beach has been open to the public forever and is the only way for the public to access the National Seashore. It should stay open.

Correspondence ID: 489 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 10:04:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea Turtles are majestic animals and they are an important part of the ecosystem, they are one of the few animals to hunt jellyfish, which are starting to overpopulate the oceans due to climate change.

Unfortunately, because of human activity like plastic pollution, bycatch and habitat destruction sea Turtles are becoming endangered. We might end up losing these beautiful animals forever if we don't act. Because sea Turtles nest at the same place every year and many nest in the USA. It is important to protect these nesting grounds to ensure the survival of their young. The USA must lead the world in terms of environmental conservation and defunding the program is a fatal mistake because it would certainly put the balance of the world's ecosystems in jeopardy and we may lose several charismatic species of turtle.

Correspondence ID: 490 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 10:20:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Save the turtles!

Correspondence ID: 491 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 10:30:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not close the beach. We have enough turtles. No more

Correspondence ID: 492 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 10:31:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not agree with any future beach management plans that intend to modify, restrict, or deny ANY levels of access to PINS whether it be temporary, seasonal or indefinitely.

I would also like to demand the resignation of Eric Brunneman. He is absent of basic human skills and understanding and is HORRIBLE at his job.

Correspondence ID: 493 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 10:31:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Padre Island National Seashore is a unique and breathtaking location that attracts visitors from all over the world. With over 70 miles of pristine beaches, sand dunes, and natural habitats, the area is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers. There are many positive aspects to leaving beach access open to vehicles on Padre Island National Seashore, including increased accessibility, enhanced tourism, and support for the local economy. One of the most significant benefits of vehicle access is that it increases accessibility to the beach. Visitors who may have mobility issues or disabilities can easily access the beach via their vehicles, allowing them to enjoy the natural beauty of the area. This is especially important since many people may not have the opportunity to experience the beach without this option. Another positive aspect of vehicle access is that it enhances tourism in the area. Many visitors travel specifically to experience the thrill of driving on the beach, and the option to do so draws more people to the area. This, in turn, generates revenue for local businesses, including restaurants, hotels, and shops. Finally, leaving beach access open to vehicles on Padre Island National Seashore supports the local economy. The fees collected from beach access help fund the preservation and maintenance of the national seashore, which is crucial for the long-term viability of the area. Additionally, visitors who come to enjoy the beach with their vehicles often spend money at local businesses, which helps to create jobs and support the community. In conclusion, there are many positive aspects to leaving beach access open to vehicles on Padre Island National Seashore. Increased accessibility, enhanced tourism, and support for the local economy are just a few of the many reasons why keeping vehicle access is essential. By carefully balancing environmental concerns with the needs of visitors, we can ensure that this unique and beautiful location remains accessible for generations to come.

Correspondence ID: 494 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 10:33:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

I am writing this comment in hopes that the National Park Service will not defund the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island. Our planet is currently on the brink of another mass extinction. We can all see it. We hear about the countless species of flora and fauna that have gone extinct over the course of our lifetimes. However, it's important that we try and save the species that are still here and need our help. Sea turtles are beautiful animals that deserve to be on this planet as much as we do, but we are killing them with pollution, beach erosion, and global warming. All of these are caused by us, so it's our job to clean up the mess we've created. We need this sea turtle fund so these wonderful animals can live in and enjoy this national park as well.

Thank you for your time.

Correspondence ID: 495 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 11:01:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello. My Name is Johnny Haas. I have lived out on North Padre Island since 1988. I am grown up on the beach here on North Padre in all up and down our gulf. Over the years, I have seen personally what the national seashore does for the economy on and around North Padre Island I have, and now I have also taken my children to see see Turtle releases, and have also helped in rescuing sea turtles during cold snaps. We

feel strongly that the sea turtle program is a huge benefit to the economy in and around North padre Island, and also a huge help for the endangered species. On the same token, we feel like restricting access to our beach is taking away our fundamental rights of being a Texan. We are totally against any and all restrictions on driving on any beaches in the state of Texas. Please do not restrict, are access to our texas beaches. This also will be a hindrance in our economy. People will be less likely to travel through here to get to Padre national seashore. This would be a huge loss for our local economy, as well as the taxes to the state of Texas from all the fuel and other items purchased along these visitors route. Thank you very much

Correspondence ID: 496 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 11:26:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear National Park Service: I am submitting my strong opposition to your plan to defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

I'm not sure why you would even consider defunding the ENDANGERED sea turtle program on Padre Island National Seashore? Sea Turtles are critically endangered and are critical to a healthy ecosystem.

Given that this is a U.S. taxpayer funded program, why would you consider dismantling this program. The majority of Americans want endangered species such a Sea Turtles to be protected so that their numbers can increase.

Isn't the National Park Service's mission to act as Stewards in support of our National Parks, Seashores, Monuments and the wildlife that inhabit them?

Please do not defund or dismantle the endangered Sea Turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore!

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 497 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 11:30:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: WE PAY YOU TO PROTECT ALL YES EVEN TURTLES IF YOU CAN NOT DO YOUR JOB, PLEASE GET THE HELL OUT NOW, GOT IT?!

Correspondence ID: 498 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 11:35:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do not close driving on the beaches of Padre Island National Seashore. The people driving on the beaches keep better care and take more responsibility than most of the staff. My family and I go to the beaches on PINS weekly so do not take that right away from the millions of visitors.

Correspondence ID: 499 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 11:40:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please don't stop saving sea turtles, there will be no chance for them if you do! There is no good reason to turn our backs on them and we're certainly not helping the future by doing so. Please reconsider and don't defund the saving of sea turtles, I implore you, conservation cannot be abandoned or we ALL lose..

Regards,

A Concerned American Taxpayer

Correspondence ID: 500 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 11:45:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Stop beach driving and cars on the beach. It is dangerous.

Correspondence ID: 501 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 11:46:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Speaking for my family and the community of North Padre Island we do not want beaches closed off from vehicles. The memories that have been created the bed of a truck or a canopy have been a huge part of what makes Texas great. All of our children experienced their first time at the beach on a quick trip from the comfort of our vehicle. We are responsible and respectful of the natural beauty of the island. Not only do we pay taxes here, we the common hard working family's should have a right to have our liberties and freedoms protected not taken away.
Please continue to allow open driving on beaches, protect our Texas traditions and memories, and allow common family's living paycheck to paycheck to have vacations and freedoms they can afford as well.

Again I am AGAINST not allowing vehicles to drive on Texas beaches.

Don't ruin Texas

Correspondence ID: 502 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 11:56:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Keep the Padre Island turtle program intact!

Correspondence ID: 503 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 12:01:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please do not defund and dismantle the sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 504 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 12:01:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please do not shut down the beaches. Having people traverse them provides benefits to other wildlife, as well as individuals who may be in need. Park Rangers cannot be in all places at all times.

In addition, the extremely successful, and highly supported, sea turtle program, conducted under Dr. Donna Shaver, is an invaluable addition to our PINS, and really has put us on the map. Removing it is doing a disservice to Dr. Shaver, as well as to the turtles and the people who have supported this program with both their time/service and donations.

One individual should not be permitted to come in and upend a highly successful program. The wishes of the locals, who support the various programs, should be considered. We all love PINS and want only the best for turtles, beaches, and locals/visitors.

Correspondence ID: 505 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 12:13:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: PINS needs to remain open to the public, both for the annual cleanup of tons of trash that washes ashore from boat, ship, and human stupidity and for the saving of and continued restoration of multiple turtle species including but not limited to: Kemps Ridley Turtles, Green Sea Turtles, and Loggerhead Turtles. To close it down for selfish, albeit Political reasons is Assanine and unjustified.

Correspondence ID: 506 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 12:15:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In the last 20 years I have lived here and visited the national park I have never seen or heard of anyone driving over and either hitting or killing a turtle. I have driven all the way to Mansfield channel often and have always been careful as have many others. Do not close the beach to driving. It would also go against texas open beach policy if u did.

KEEP IT OPEN!!! AMEN

Correspondence ID: 507 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 12:16:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Stop disrupting the sea turtles. Leave them be. Let them thrive. Enough taking over natural habitats for profit. The Earth is meant to be shared with every creature.

Correspondence ID: 508 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 12:29:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The proposals provided along with the options for each are vague. If the National pRk has never had a "beach management plan" then surely over all these years of the parks existence there are protocols or procedures that have been used over tge years for hurricanes and cleanup after a hurricane and wind blown sand mitigation. Beach trash is primarily brought in from the Gulf of Mexico itself from who knows where MOT from visitors. There are numerous volunteer beach cleanups held throughout the year..if the park at any time has a need for volunteers to pickup trash all the park has to do is to make an announcement and there will be many many volunteers that would be ready to help! The Turtle program- Dr Donna Shaver should be allowed to return to her efforts and her scientific program to save the Kemp Ridley Turtle. Tge park superintendent Eric Brunneman needs to come forward and be transparent on why he has put a gag order on Dr Shaver and has virtually stopped tge work of Dr Shaver. The turtles will not survive if left to their natural habitat...we have MANY predators that would consome the eggs b4 they even had a chance to hstch! ABSOLUTELY NO CLOSING OF OUR NATIONAL SEASHORE BEACH FOR ANY RESON SHOULD EVEN BE CONSIDERED. THE TURTLE RELEASES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IMMEDIATELY AND DR SHAVER ALLOWED TO GO BACK TO WHAT SHE IS REVERED FOR - SAVING OUR TURTLES. THE PARK IS PREVENTING SIGNIFICANT TOURIST DOLLARS FROM THE ECONOMY BY REDUCING OR ELIMINATING TURTLE RELEASES.

If anything the park should consider a beach maintenance plan. The coastal shoreline and the natural events it creates are never going to be the same. Hurricane Harvey a Cat 5 created way less damage than Hurricane Hannah a cat 1 did!. On any given day the winds can blow strong for weeks creating wind blown sand issues and bringing more trash in from the gulf. Have a maintenance plan, as I'm assuming the park has had for years and use best standards to implement.if the Park needs funding increase the yearly pass fee, daily park fee, etc.

For all of the proposals and options because of their vague nature I say NO to all of them and in particular ANY that are attached to closing the beach for ANY amount if time! The Texas Open Beaches Act gives all the right to freely have access to the beach for enjoyment.

Correspondence ID: 509 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 12:34:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not go forward with your plans to defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 510 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 12:57:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I oppose your efforts to close our beaches to vehicles. Those beaches belong to the PEOPLE not the National Park Service. It is WE THE PEOPLE who pay to maintain our parks not matter their location. You work for us THE PEOPLE!

Correspondence ID: 511 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:10:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not close down the Turtle program. I vacationed with my family along the Texas coast and saw the majestic turtles. I know that funding decisions are difficult, I don't want to know what doesn't get paid for if the turtle program receives funding. But I think in my naively formed opinion, turtles conservation and rehabilitation are important projects

Correspondence ID: 512 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:19:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Do NOT defund or dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore!

Correspondence ID: 513 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:21:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Humans have hurt animals for far too long. It is our responsibility to do all we can to protect them now. Please save the sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore. To dismantle it would be another act of evil by humans.

Correspondence ID: 514 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:31:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I support driving and camping on our N Padre Island Beaches and am here to support that effort.

Correspondence ID: 515 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:41:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Good Day, as a visitor to you beautiful country I find it hard to believe that there is any question on the science of saving turtles. turtles. We as well .have nesting nox covers and must support the hatchling by being present and taking them straight to waterto avoid predation. You must allow your volunteer already proven success to continue. If you close this program you already know the outcome will be the species will not survive. Ather motives must be at play. This is unfortunate when our plane t is in such peril.

Correspondence ID: 516 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:44:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not change anything on our North Padre Island beaches and National Seashore. Let us drive on the beach like we have for years, since I was a kid. It's a HUGE part of our Island life. And a HUGE tourist attraction. Leave it alone. Some changes are not for the better, and this is one of them. Drive on the beach is best for all. Thank You!

Correspondence ID: 517 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 13:47:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Hello,

I am writing in full support of all of the hard work that Dr. Donna Shaver has completed in support of sustaining the Sea Turtle Program at Padre Island National Seashore. The proposed changes to the sea turtle program must NOT be allowed to be implemented.

This sea turtle program is the reason that the sea turtles that nest there has survived, despite the poor odds stacked against them by predators and high tides. The persistence of the new superintendent of Padre Island National Seashore to destroy the program and silence Dr. Shaver from speaking publicly is abhorrent and disgusting. The role of the superintendent of the PINS is to protect and support the seashore, not destroy this refuge and harm its innocent inhabitants. He is clearly not the right person for the job if he is determined to undermine any and all good work that is being done for the seashore and the sea turtles that call PINS home.

Although I do not support the use of recreational vehicles (ie. dune buggies and the like) on the beach where the end result is wildlife being run over, I DO however support the use of vehicles on the beach that allow tourists and sea turtle program personnel access to the beach so that they can enjoy the beauty of the seashore and allow the rescue of injured or sick sea turtles and other wildlife. It has not been proven that turtles have been hit by cars but it has been clearly demonstrated over and over that many turtles have been helped by the Sea Turtle Program. Without the ability to drive on the beach and access beach areas that are many miles up and down the coast, these sick and injured turtles would have zero chance of being taken to a veterinarian and rehab facility and surviving. With sea turtle populations at risk already, we must do everything we can to help these unique and special animals.

The ability to drive is also crucial to allow Sea Turtle Program personnel to reach turtle nests and relocate them to a safe place to ensure that they hatch and bring forth the next generation of turtles. If the nests are left on the beach, they will surely be predated on by coyotes, fire ants, opossums, and raccoons. With the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle as the most endangered species, we cannot allow any nests to be predated on if we can take action to prevent this. As of now, the Sea Turtle Program is protecting the Kemp's Ridley eggs, monitoring them, hatching them under supervision, and releasing the baby turtles with as much protection as possible. For this reason, I am in opposition to having a nonprofit organization take over the Sea Turtle Program from the National Park Service. The NPS's role is to take care of our nation's parks! They are the experts in managing the park and animals and it makes ZERO sense to have a nonprofit take over, risking decisions and actions that are not scientifically appropriate which will decimate the turtle population.

The NPS staff, rangers, and volunteers ensure that the beach is clear of predators and raise netting over the hatchlings as they make their way from their nest to the sea. This protection is necessary to make sure that turtles actually make it to the water and have a fighting chance for survival. If the NPS was not there to do this, there would be no eggs, no hatchlings, no surviving turtles to make it to the ocean to grow up and return to reproduce.

The release of these baby turtles is also a tourist attraction capturing the attention of those who love turtles and animals in general, bringing awareness of the plight of the turtles, as well as bring money into the area which would benefit the park and surrounding businesses.

There are only two primary nesting locations for the Kemp's Ridley. One is in Mexico and the other is Padre Island National Seashore. We must preserve PINS as is to do whatever it takes to help the Kemp's Ridley and all other sea turtles survive as their populations continue to decline worldwide.

For all of the above reasons, it is only logical to retain the rules governing the Padre Island National Seashore as

is. For the sake of the sea turtles, please take the appropriate action and do not proceed with the proposed changes.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 518 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:52:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am writting to tell you that I am unhappy about your plans to defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

You must not defund this program. We must do everything we can to save endangered species. We owe it to our children and grandchildren.

Please do not defund this program.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 519 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:53:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am opposed to any alterations to access to PINS whether temporary or permanently.

Please stay away from beach access. TEXAS OPEN BEACHES ACT MUST BE FOLLOWED.

Correspondence ID: 520 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:57:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is my hope that the beaches in the national seashore remain open year round. With a bill currently in our state legislature seeking to privatize some beaches, it is fundamental to maintain access to area beaches for all. In addition, I hope the Seashore will continue to fund the sea turtle program.

Thank you for receiving and considering the hopes and wishes of the area public.

Correspondence ID: 521 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 13:58:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Although I have frequented the Padre Island National Seashore almost every weekend for over 20 years, I have never felt more distrust of the leadership of the Park as I do right now. Everything done by the Superintendent from day one has been done with lies and deceit. This farce of needing a Beach Management Plan because one has never existed is a prime example. Brunnemann and his staff have repeatedly announced that there is no Beach Management Plan, however there are two plans on the NPS website for Park Management Plans regarding driving on the beach and its' effect on the turtles. The March 2012 FONSI report found NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT! So, either this doesn't fall in line with the Superintendent's plans for the Park, OR he and his staff are incompetent and cannot find the required Plans already in place. Either way, the PreNEPA plans for creating a Beach Management Plan should be thrown out immediately. It is not needed as one was completed using the NEPA process just a few years ago. Nothing has changed since then except the Superintendent's desire to play nice with Florida. We are NOT Florida, and our turtle program does NOT have to be run like theirs. The situation is completely different. Quit using this as an excuse to keep users from driving to the south end of the beach. Admit there is already a plan and start abiding by it!!

Correspondence ID: 522 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:00:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: No to closing the Padre Island National Seashore to vehicular traffic any time of the year.

Correspondence ID: 523 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:15:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against closing The National Seashore at anytime during the year. We have plenty of turtles and driving on the beach has never been a problem for turtle migration and/or nesting. A closure would be a economic hit to our city and county which we don't need.

Correspondence ID: 524 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:20:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I oppose the proposal to dismantle and defund the endangered sea turtle program and restrict driving on the beach.

Correspondence ID: 525 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:20:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Leaving the Kemp Ridley sea turtle eggs in-situ on Padre Island National Seashore makes absolutely no sense! The 2012 FONSI report found that doing so would actually harm the survival rate of the eggs/hatchlings. This report was created through the NEPA process, including required environmental assessments. However, the current Superintendent seems to be following a Review that he had completed upon his arrival to PINS. This Review does NOT take the place of a NEPA previously conducted on the same issues. Some changes from the Review have already occurred, and this is against NPS rules and regulations. You cannot ignore a NEPA outcome because it does not line up with your personal plans for a Park. So, NO, do not leave the eggs in-situ just to be destroyed by the multitude of predators that inhabit PINS. There's no way to protect the eggs or the hatchlings to ensure they at least make it to the water. Follow the current NEPA and quit trying to rewrite what has already been proven true: in-situ nests on PINS will not work in a beneficial way for the survival of Kemp Ridley turtles.

Correspondence ID: 526 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:25:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please leave the turtle program to the scientists and the beach driving alone. Public access to the beach has been a staple for many peoples vacations and recreational time.

Correspondence ID: 527 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:26:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We live on the Island and use the beach almost daily, parking our car or our golf cart carefully and driving properly up and down the beach. Any attempt to restrict the rights of people to access and drive on all the beach, while respecting all creatures and the environment is not welcome. Nature is there for the enjoyment of man. We strongly oppose any attempt to restrict our rights.

Thanks

Correspondence ID: 528 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:37:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Until recently, PINS had a highly successful conservation and research program to help save the Kemp's ridley from extinction and also contribute to the conservation of other sea turtle species. Why mess with a great program? Dr Shaver's work is proven and VERY successful. In-situ nesting might work on the east

and southeast coasts, but they work with different species of sea turtles under very different conditions. With high tides, sargassum and the fact that Kemp's ridleys nest during the day, leave the program alone!

Sea levels are rising, the climate is changing and the PINS turtle program is visionary. It takes climate change into account while also allowing visitors to drive on the beach and enjoy the full area of The Seashore. Collecting the eggs and incubating them has proven very successful. The scientific contributions from the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Division are extraordinary. This is a national model that should be duplicated and not changed.

Why divert resources from a very effective and popular program for 3 potential pilot studies that would not help with conservation? The 3 pilot projects have no chance of improving the survival of the Kemp's ridley and should not be attempted as long as the species is close to extinction. Instead this very successful program should be supported and built upon.

A beach clean-up is only good until the next tide. Work collaboratively (using PINS employees and equipment) with volunteers, the TCEQ and U.S. Coast Guard as necessary during various events. Don't divert funds from the very successful Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program for anything.

Finally, teach the other divisions at PINS to write better grant proposals!

Correspondence ID: 529 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 14:40:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent,

As a federal agency with shared jurisdictional responsibilities for threatened and endangered sea turtles, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute comments on Beach Management at Padre Island National Seashore (PINS). NOAA Fisheries has worked closely with PINS staff in support of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) in Texas, emergency response to cold-stunning, and other matters related to sea turtle conservation and recovery. We recognize that changes to the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program may have consequences that impact NOAA and are available to discuss and provide input as desired.

Regarding changes to management of sea turtle nests, NOAA supports in situ protection and limited manipulation of nests and hatchlings to the maximum extent feasible. We would welcome any measures on the Texas coast that successfully mitigate threats to the extent that as many sea turtle nests as possible can be left in place.

Regarding changes to the extent of PINS' involvement in strandings, rehabilitation, and releases of rehabilitated turtles, as the lead for coordinating the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network nationally, NOAA welcomes the opportunity to discuss options for altering the scope of PINS' involvement in these activities. Any changes to the current roles or scope of PINS staff involvement could entail significant restructuring of the TX STSSN, which is one of the largest networks in the country. We respectfully request sufficient time to manage any planned changes in order to ensure continued STSSN operation and capacity. Please feel free to contact us if we can be of any assistance during this process.

Sincerely,
Stacy Hargrove
NOAA Fisheries, National Sea Turtle Coordinator

Correspondence ID: 530 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 14:42:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please do not shut down our Car access to Padre Island National Seashore from April to July.. This is a third of the year, and for so many of us, residents from Nueces County, and especially from the Island,

one of the best time of the year to enjoy all what our area has to offer.

Also, please make sure to fund and continue to actively sponsor the endangered sea turtle program. This has been a staple of our area, and so beneficial to the turtles, and enjoyable for all ages of residents.

Those two ideas go totlly counter to what the residents, and tax-payers, wnat to happen in our area.

Thanks for listening and taking action.

Sincerly.

Correspondence ID: 531 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:43:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I do not believe the Park should lessen or do away with the public release of turtle hatchlings. In the PreNEPA information provided by the Park, it stated that the Park should focus on educating the public. There is no better way to educate someone about a topic than in-person, hands-on learning. I was an educator for 35 years, and I know good instruction! People come from all over the country to see these releases and learn about sea turtles. If anything, you should increase the public releases and change them to include additional learning topics. As a retired educator, I'd like to see an incubation center that teachers could bring students to learn about endangered species, the Kemp Ridley Sea Turtle, Predators and Prey, other species of animals in the Park, etc. There could be an area the kids could observe the nesting turtles without interfering with them. The scientists could work in the background and the education department run the field trips. There could be stations with different topics throughout the center. You could charge for the field trip to help fund the program, and families could also pay on weekends and summers to do the same. The souvenir shop would also increase their sales due to the lessons learned and interests created. Anyway, bottom line, do NOT lessen turtle releases for the public!

Correspondence ID: 532 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:50:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: National Park Service:

Please do not defund the endangered sea turtles program at Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 533 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:53:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The PreNEPA idea to complete a study using Malaquite Beach and no vehicles makes no sense. If the purpose is to show no vehicles on the beach helps nesting turtles, it would probably do so, but would be a totally bogus study to create the Park's desired outcome. There has already been a study regarding leaving eggs on the beach and beach driving. These are listed under Management Programs on the NPS website. The March 20112 FONSI has already answered you questions regarding this issue. Do NOT try creating a staged study just to get what you want. The incompetence of the person(s) providing this suggestion is unbelievable. I cannot believe a true scientist would put their name on such a bogus study.

Correspondence ID: 534 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 14:56:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The government is at it again overreaching it's authority and trying to limit rights of Americans. The National Parks are PUBLIC lands. The lands belong to US the American People, They ABSOLUTELY do not belong to unelected government bureaucrats. OUR land is OUR's to use as WE see fit. If WE want to continue to drive on OUR beach as we have done since the automobile was invented, then it is US who get to make that decision and not you. Of course there is a limit to what we should do on OUR land, but that is for US to decide and not unelected government bureaucrats. While it is certainly important to protect turtles, it absolutely cannot be done at the expense of OUR rights. No one is for purposely hurting wildlife. But, we do not authorize you to close our lands because of turtles, or any other reason for that matter, unless WE say it is okay. This comment period is important, but we all know that you have already made your decision, and this is just a

show to say that you considered all sides. The government is not one of the sides that is able to dictate what WE do with OUR land. We realize that there are many competing interests for OUR land. The only fair way is to put it to a vote by US the people who actually own the land. We get to decide what we do with OUR land, not unelected government bureaucrats. We THE PEOPLE have been using OUR beach the way that WE want for a lot longer than the government has controlled it. You do not have the right to limit OUR rights just because you say so. The land does not belong to you. You do not get to shove regulations that WE do not want down OUR throats If a majority of US want to close the beach to driving, than that is the only ethical way to do it. It belongs to US and not unelected government bureaucrats. If WE decide to close the road, than so be it, but you do not get to unilaterally close OUR beach to driving against OUR will. If you want to close OUR beach to driving, than the decision lies solely with US, the owners of the land. The ONLY way is to put it to a vote. If WE say no driving, then there will be no driving. If WE say that we want to continue to drive on OUR beach, than you cannot tell us that WE can't drive on OUR land. It is that simple. You do not have the authority to close OUR beach unless WE tell you that it's okay. Put it to a vote if you really want to close it, period. We will not accept any other way. It is Our land and not yours.

Correspondence ID: 535 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:00:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I object to your plans to defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle project.

Turtles need protection. Please continue to protect them so we do not lose anymore of these beautiful creatures.

Correspondence ID: 536 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:06:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear Padre Island National Seashore,

I am an MS- and PhD-trained sea turtle ecologist and conservation biologist, with a background that includes master's research on stranded sea turtles in Virginia, doctoral research on nesting and incidentally-hooked sea turtles in Texas, and several years as a science and policy fellow and a National Marine Fisheries Service contractor in the Washington DC area. I have co-managed a large, multidisciplinary sea turtle research program in Florida for the past eight years, including monitoring and research projects that span high-density nesting beaches, in-water sampling, and strandings. I am writing to provide my feedback as part of your "Pre-NEPA civic engagement" process and voice my support for the sea turtle program led by Dr. Donna Shaver and for continued nesting surveys, egg protection, research, and stranding and salvage operations within the Seashore, as well as continued engagement, collaboration, support, and public education throughout Texas' coastal areas.

The Seashore's sea turtle conservation and research program has successfully fostered and protected a small secondary nesting site for the (IUCN) Critically Endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle. Nests within the Seashore and on North Padre Island outside of the park account for a large proportion of the species' nests within Texas - and within the US. Although recent state nesting numbers are generally encouraging, the species has not reached a level where its characteristic predator-saturating arribadas (mass nesting events) occur at biologically-relevant levels (1s to 10s of nests in a day throughout Texas vs. 100s-1,000s in recent arribadas at Rancho Nuevo, Tamaulipas, MX). As such, each Texas nest is an important contribution toward growing Texas' nesting population. To find these nests, most frequently laid during daylight hours on windy days by fairly-light bodied, light-colored turtles, repeated daily surveys are an important detection tool. From my own experience, I know that Kemp's ridley tracks, the most important clue that a nest exists, can go from obvious to all but gone and undetectable in a very short time span - and certainly within 24 h. Outside of the Kemp's ridley nesting season, once daily surveys should be adequate for detection of other species' nests, particularly leatherbacks and green turtles.

Although a labor-intensive, invasive process, egg collection and relocation to a beach corral hatchery or

incubation facility, remain important tools for increasing hatching success of nests that might otherwise be fully predated by mammalian predators, including coyotes and raccoons known to occur at the Seashore and on other Texas beaches. Shallow Kemp's ridley nests make them an especially easy target for coyotes, which are also fully capable of finding, digging, and destroying loggerhead, green turtle, and occasional leatherback nests. Additionally, some beaches, particularly on some of Texas' more developed shorelines, experience seawater washover at rates that likely preclude any successful nest incubation (or placement in a local corral) during normal spring-summer tidal conditions. Corral and incubation facility locations should be assessed with respect to coastal and oceanographic characteristics, as well as temperature and moisture regimes and climate change, but at present, the bulk of Kemp's ridley nesting and incubation occurs outside of Texas' peak severe tropical season. Incubation of nests within a corral or incubation facility provides a unique public engagement and education opportunity in the form of hatchling releases. For many, seeing just one sea turtle is a memorable, impactful event, and I know that an event of the magnitude of seeing a hatchling release - or release of a rehabilitated turtle - can be "life-changing" and lead to changes in day-to-day choices and support of conservation, habitat restoration, and public lands.

Collection of stranding data, salvaging of carcasses for additional examination and study, and rescuing debilitated turtles for transfer to rehabilitation facilities are also invaluable activities conducted by the Seashore and its many collaborators in Texas. Strandings are provide a better understanding of population trends over space and time and are vital to understanding natural and anthropogenic threats, as well as changes in population structure (size class and genetics), health, and diet over time. In my experience, strandings can also complement or provide a viable alternative to more costly and logistically-difficult in-water capture and sampling of federally-protected sea turtles, and they represent an avenue for larger, collaborative studies spanning ecology, health, and genetics. Not collecting data and collaborating with other researchers on strandings is a lost opportunity, with potential to miss changes in a population and emerging - or declining - threats to sea turtle health and survival.

Regarding the Seashore's "Potential Pilot Studies," I would proceed cautiously and using an abundance other data before employing #1, #2, and #4 with viable (federally-protected) turtle nests. I would recommend use of camera traps or other predator identification surveys to provide an understanding of existing nest predators at the Seashore, followed by a thorough review of the literature on relevant predators and discussions with other nesting beach projects that manage these predators. When testing nest protection approaches (#1), I would advise using mock nests instead of sea turtle nests, as I would also suggest for any pilot studies related to nest inundation and flooding (#2). Regarding use of drones to detect nesting sea turtles, the long length of the Seashore, relative infrequency of nesting events, short duration of the Kemp's ridley nesting process, and light/faint Kemp's ridley tracks would all be of concern to me for detecting any and all nests. Ground-truthing via vehicle-based surveys would be needed in concert with drone surveys multiple times a day to evaluate effectiveness. While the drone approach has shown to have some utility at higher-density beaches in Tamaulipas, MX, they are working with much higher densities of turtles nesting in a relatively small geographical area and often in arribadas - their goal is not to find every nest. Drones could be valuable for sighting mating pairs prior to the nesting season or females about to nest, but again, the lower densities of turtles at the Seashore may limit utility. Additionally, I consider the benefits of locating nests, and thereby being able to count them in the statewide total and protect the eggs, in the vehicle-free zone to more than offset periodic disturbances by a slow-driving utility vehicle during the nesting season (#3).

In closing, while I appreciate the need to improve and evaluate programs, I consider maintaining the Seashore's nesting surveys, egg protection, research and collaboration, stranding and salvage, and educational outreach programs run by Dr. Donna Shaver and her staff to be of vital importance to the continued growth of the Texas Kemp's ridley nesting population and better conservation and management of all of Texas' sea turtle species. To reduce or remove these programs and their experienced personnel would be a detriment to species recovery, conservation, and public education.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 537 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:08:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am totally against requiring permits to access the full length of the Padre Island National Seashore or limiting the number of vehicles on the beach. This Park is not overcrowded. The real problem is within the first five miles of the beach. If a vehicle cannot safely drive to a spot on the beach, maybe the Park should consider maintaining the beach access by using a dirt mover as the City does in town. If the first five miles is not sufficient because of numbers, maintain further south so the first five miles does not get congested. I do not understand why the Park's first options are to remove access when a simple fix could actually grow the use of the Park. I thought that was why the Park was created.

Correspondence ID: 538 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:13:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: These turtles need environmental protections. They pose no threat to any being.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 539 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:16:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against additional vehicle free areas on the beach. Malaquite Beach is already underused because there is little access to it. People are NOT going to walk miles with their belongings to find a spot on the Beach. Before any additional vehicle-free beaches are considered, the Park needs to make the 4 miles of vehicle-free beach accessible to the entire 4 miles. Create a back road that runs behind the 4 miles of beach with space to park and provide walkover access every quarter mile or so. This would increase the ability for people to utilize the entire 4 miles of vehicle-free beach.

Correspondence ID: 540 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:24:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not keep us from driving on the beach, it's a family tradition to pull right up, park and enjoy. My kids and I often do random beach cleanups and are thankful to be able to indulge in the beautiful beach we can so graciously drive on!

Correspondence ID: 541 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:28:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please continue and in fact expand the Ridley Turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore. 3 reasons: it brings a large number of people to PINS as well as to the general area which in turn brings PINS and the area a great deal of money; second, it serves the purpose of helping an endangered species- the Ridley turtle; and three it educates the community not only about the turtles but also about conservation in general. It will be a crime to limit or discontinue the Ridley turtle program.

Correspondence ID: 542 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:33:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While deciding whether or not to have a beach management plan, please factor in the Kemps Ridley Turtle Program and include it in the planning. We do not want it eliminated or changed. We especially do

not want the pilot program where nests are left unprotected on the beach. They will surely fall to prey. Keep the driving as it is with no further fees. Our park pass includes our right to drive on the beach. We also have the right to open beaches in Texas, and we want that to stay the same. Having a first aid station would be something new and beneficial to consider. Keep involving the community in these discussions and use us for volunteers. We love our PINS and beaches dearly. I am sure there are many people who would serve as volunteers. Thank you to NPS Staff for your daily service and for your community outreach.

Correspondence ID: 543 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:34:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Since 1964 I have been a resident of Corpus Christi on n off due to attending college for several years.

Going to the beach was part of our lifestyle whether it be for a relaxing drive on the beach or full days of playing in the water, walking along the shore line, beachcombing, basking in the sun and grilling. It was an enjoyable time and place to meet with friends and make memories. Some surfed and some fished. And again we gathered to enjoy the beach that many of out-of-towners envied. Restricting driving on the beach and closing certain areas that we so rightfully access will definitely take away from the full essence of our unique North Padre Island. I support the Open Beach Access Law and cannot imagine the Negative Impact restrictions will pose to the local population as well tourism.

Correspondence ID: 544 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 15:46:50

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The following are comments from Dr Amy Bonka regarding the Pre-NEPA Padre Island National Seashore Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program. These comments are focused on the science of the proposed pilot studies. As a researcher, I have over 10 years experience working with Kemp's ridley sea turtles. My Master's research was focused on hatchling biology, specifically emergence from the nest and post-emergence orientation towards the surf. My Doctoral research was focused on arribada nesting, specifically predation associated with arribada nesting, the timing and distribution of arribada nesting (when turtles move into nearshore waters for nesting, where along the beach nests are distributed, and the timing of each nesting stage), and the control and chronology of emergence from the nest.

Below I have outlined individual concerns regarding the current proposal and recommendations. At a high level the current proposal appears to be in contradiction to best practices and research already conducted by Kemp's ridley experts. This proposal appears to lack foundation in the science around Kemp's Ridleys and specifically Texas beaches.

Potential pilot study 1: Predation

Studies at Rancho Nuevo, the primary nesting beach for the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, indicate an increase in the abundance of predators following arribada nesting through hatching of those nests. This beach has high density nesting, and large numbers of nests are sometimes left in situ following a high density arribada. Data shows predators were significantly more abundance following arribada nesting through hatching. Data showed a typical succession of predation, where a mammalian predator would initially open the nest and upon daybreak birds would feed on the exposed nest (Bonka, 2020). Texas beaches have lower densities of nesting, and based on the results of high density beaches, any number of nests left on the beach have a very high probability of being depredated before hatching.

During 2022, Sea Turtle Inc had over 100 nests laid on South Padre Island and Boca Chica beaches. Of these nests, in 5 cases the nest area was fully blown out by winds before a responder could arrive at the site. Despite trying to locate the nest site, these nests were not located. As a result 100% of these nests were later depredated before hatching resulting in the loss of eggs and potential hatchlings.

Based on the science and research conducted in this area, it is a logical conclusion that nests left in situ on Texas beaches would almost certainly all be depredated prior to hatching. Kemp's ridleys are a critically endangered species, and as such every egg and potential hatchling is incredibly valuable to this population. The specifics of the predation mitigation measures were not made clear on the announcement, thus it is difficult to comment on the specifics of those measurements. Caging is the most common predator mitigation measure, and caging on individual nests was implemented at Rancho Nuevo in the 1970s when few, isolated nests were laid (similar to current Texas nesting numbers), and predators would attempt at every nest laid. Thus, caging on isolated nests/low density nesting must be extensive to protect the nest from predator attacks, and on Texas beaches, this can be very costly and/or logistically impractical in comparison to relocating to a protected beach corral.

Potential pilot study 2: Inundation

The majority of Kemp's ridley nests are laid near the base of the dune (position 4 on the Texas nesting datasheet). Relocating nests above the high tide line to avoid tidal inundation would likely result in the movement of nests from the base of the dune into the dune system. This would result in moving the nests further from the water table. Though this may be advantageous to reduce tidal inundation, too far removed from the water table could negatively affect development. Additionally, re-burying eggs into the dune vegetation would almost certainly result in vegetation roots infiltrating the nest and killing the eggs. This could be just as detrimental to development as tidal inundation. Based on the Texas beach topography, moving nests as indicated in the proposal would simply not resolve the risk but in fact introduce an additional risk to an already endangered population.

Potential pilot study 3: Remove/reduce NPS vehicles

If vehicles are not responding to nesting turtles, this could place the nesting turtle at risk of harassment from the public. Sea turtles are protected under federal and state laws, and though public interactions with sea turtles are almost always come from a place of curiosity and a desire to learn more about a species not often seen, interactions with sea turtles during the nesting process could result in a false crawl, or the return of the sea turtle to the ocean without laying her eggs. Removing the ability of trained personnel to find, protect, and monitor nesting sea turtles is counterintuitive to their protection for recovery.

Potential pilot study 4: Unmanned aerial vehicles

Unmanned aerial vehicles can play a critical role in the understanding of nesting behaviors and the collection of data surrounding nesting events. In the 4 years I personally worked with unmanned aerial vehicles the benefit of this method of data collection was clear. However, the level of comprehensive programming and oversight required to make this valuable to develop more detailed individual information regarding a specific turtle or nesting behavior is lacking in the current proposal. There is no additional information provided for this statement in the announcement regarding public comments for the beach management program, thus it is difficult to provide comments on the science of this pilot study without the applicable information regarding the parameters surrounding the use of UAV or video technology for monitoring nesting sea turtles. Kemp's ridleys are critically endangered, and their only major nesting beaches within the U.S.A. are found in south Texas, including North Padre Island, South Padre Island, and Boca Chica beach. An important aspect of nesting programs is documenting individual turtles, as this contributes to understanding their population. One of the main ways turtles are identified is through the use of metal and/or PIT tags. UAVs and/or video technology are unable to scan a turtle for a PIT tag (though depending on their power, may be able to zoom enough to see a metal tag). This tag information is critical for determining biological information such as remigration interval, inter-nesting interval, and other data that informs population assessments for this endangered species. Further, Kemp's ridleys are known to primarily nest on windy day and it can be very difficult to fly UAVs in the high winds associated with nesting events, which could result in the inability to properly monitor nesting events. In conclusion, the inclusion of comments regarding the use of unmanned aerial vehicles appears to need a large amount of additional information and testing for it to be considered a valid solution in the current proposal.

In conclusion, thank you for accepting public comments around this critically important issue. I encourage the deep review and consideration of any process changes to be compared to and reviewed as it relates to the current

published research in the same field and area. The decisions here have the potential to impact the 52 years of conservation efforts in Texas as they relate to the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle. Signed, Dr Amy Bonka, Chief Conservation Officer, Sea Turtle Inc.

Bonka A., 2020. The Ecology of Arribada Nesting and Early Life History Events in the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*). Doctoral dissertation. University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham AL.

Correspondence ID: 545 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 16:00:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Keep beaches open for driving!

Correspondence ID: 546 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 16:03:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Padre Island is my chosen home. A big part of moving here is easy access to the beach and all that it offers. That includes driving on the beach and fishing. If you take away driving on beach, you are taking away my opportunity to enjoy the park. I don't have the ability to walk on the beach and need access by a vehicle. People should be able to enjoy the beach instead not being able to access it.

Also, everyone I know who drives on the beach is respectful to the turtles and the park.

Correspondence ID: 547 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 16:07:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I do not recommend closing the beach to auto traffic. Our beach is one of only a few that allows auto access for families to enjoy our beach. Automobiles DO NOT hinder sea turtles or other wildlife. Please let us keep this wonderful access to future Texans.

Correspondence ID: 548 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 16:23:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I oppose shutting down our beaches. Please reconsider this proposition

Correspondence ID: 549 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 16:27:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: March 14, 2023

PAIS Superintendent
Attn: Beach Management
Malaquite Visitor Center
20420 Park Rd. 22
Corpus Christi, TX 78718

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION TO https://parkplanning.nps.gov/Padre_beach_comments

Re: Padre Island National Seashore Pre-NEPA Beach Management Plan comments

Dear Superintendent Brunnemann:

On behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), I am writing to provide input into the planning process regarding Padre Island National Seashore's Beach Management Plan (BMP). As the largest stretch of undeveloped barrier island in the country, the park offers year-round recreation opportunities from swimming, fishing, beach driving, shelling, wind surfing and more. It also is an important stopping ground for migratory birds and the birthplace and important site in the recovery of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle. Additionally, the park is home to a diverse variety of amphibians, reptiles, flowering plants and many other species - all unique to this part of South Texas that people come from across the world to view. The park also holds significant parts of our history from Spanish shipwrecks to examples of our state's ranching heritage.

Managing all these resources, especially with a changing climate, requires a thoughtful and extensive approach, and we applaud park leadership for starting this process by taking public input to help inform beach management. We see this opportunity for holistic beach management as not taking away anything from the park - rather working together to make the visitor experience and health of the flora and fauna better for all.

As one of the last coastal prairies along this protected barrier island, the BMP must keep in line with the values of resource protection, while balancing visitor use and experience of the park, as well as be crafted in such a way as to consider potential affects as outlined in the Coastal Hazards & Sea-Level Rise Asset Vulnerability Assessment (July 2017).

At this time, NPCA would like to offer our voice to the continued protection of the diverse natural and cultural resources, landscape and wildlife of Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS).

Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program

As a major driver of visitation to the park, the sea turtle science and recovery program is vital to park engagement, and we encourage the support of increased research and education for the sea turtle program. We recognize that the research performed by the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery staff is unique to the entire National Park System and has led to the bi-national expansion of the nesting range of the endangered Kemp's ridley. Evaluating and assessing the program for efficacy and resource management is necessary for the effectiveness of this program going forward.

Pilot studies like the proposed options listed in the PAIS fact sheet on the beach planning process - reviewing the effectiveness of in-situ nesting, reducing NPS vehicle use and adopting less invasive technology for monitoring -- are all appropriate studies to assess how the park and partners can protect and continue to recover the species with less human intervention. NPCA supports these potential studies as well as considering the long-term protection of facilities which house these research projects.

Sand Management

Beach access is paramount to the visitor experience at PAIS. Improving access for the North and South Beach access points in conjunction with enhanced signage, including maps and other habitat protection information, could provide a more informed visitor experience with necessary protection improvements for the park.

For the protection of the diverse and numerous species that call PAIS home, it is critical to better understand and manage sand to be more protective of sensitive habitats. As the park continues developing comprehensive beach management plan, we ask that NPS provide more public information about what sensitive habitats could be improved by sand management and how to limit the impacts to those protected areas.

Beach Driving

As one of the last coastal prairies and home to endangered species, protection of the wilderness areas in this region is paramount. Building a bypass road through this delicate area could create negative effects and harm the ecosystems and wildlife that are protected due to the isolation and vehicle-free right of ways. Additional traffic through this undeveloped area could increase the number of wildlife fatalities, open the pristine area to potential degradation from traffic and visitation, and increase damage and erosion from run-off and debris.

NPCA strongly encourages PAIS to address beach driving in a manner that stays in line with the current state law regarding beach access while addressing safety issues for beach drivers, campers and recreational visitors and wildlife habitat protection. Potential options may include:

Assessing and limiting beach capacity by creating a beach permitting system to track the number of vehicles driving on the beach, including, but not limited to, scannable annual beach passes for local visitors to access the beach in off hours;

Creating a reservation system for out-of-town visitors via Recreation.gov;

Creating increased signage regarding beach driving safety; and

Considering options to monitor speed or other vehicular impacts to wildlife and coastline via video or radar technology with the assistance of law enforcement officers based at the park.

We encourage public information be given on where driving and access is occurring on the beach and have data available for:

Where pedestrians are centralized, including the concentration of campers and traffic;

High visitation times around migratory nesting and sea turtle work and how that impacts access; and

Location of driving and recreation areas compared to sensitive habitats.

Evaluating and communicating these impacts could all be part of a holistic approach to slowing damage to this coastal region and continuing to provide beach access and safety for all visitors.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures

The chaos created by large storm surges and hurricanes in the region as a result of a changing climate create unique challenges balancing resource protection and visitor protection with resuming visitation, particularly from the local community who utilize the beach consistently. Creating and providing direction for these situations is vital as storms become more frequent and damaging along the coastline.

As a fee-based park, visitation is a vital funding driver which must co-exist with protection and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the park. Allowing beach access after initial safety and resource checks are performed provides visitor access, particularly for those local visitors who engage with the beach on a consistent basis, is always preferable but protection of the park and visitor safety should take precedence. Each storm will create different challenges and a uniform re-open policy may not be appropriate in all situations.

The potential ideas listed in the civic engagement newsletter are all strong options, but due to inconsistent outcomes of these storms, it may be appropriate to consider a tiered system trigger checklist consisting of all the options listed. By taking each step individually, park access can be expedited in safe areas of the park while tending to the needs of harder hit sections in need of protection and rehabilitation and decrease the loss of funding mechanisms for the park.

Marine Debris

Having recently participated in beach clean-up activities held at PAIS, it was remarkable to witness the coordination of many moving parts of this large operation. NPCA supports the continuation of these activities with local organizations with the time, resources and volunteer base to further the removal of debris washed ashore by dueling currents along the seashore.

Increasing these community opportunities not only provides consistent clean-up management, but more opportunities for education and community engagement. Additional awareness of Leave No Trace principles is always a necessary part of protecting our national parks, and we encourage more public information and education about Leave No Trace practices while visiting.

Addressing the source of marine debris, both from a state, national and international level, is vital to decreasing items from washing ashore along the coastline. What could NPS do to increase involvement in tackling these recurring issues?

Other Concerns

During a recent visit to the park, the remoteness and lack of communication ability was noted while encountering a beached sea turtle down the coastline. With no access to communication with the park about the issue, the turtle was left in place as we traveled 30 miles back to the visitor center for reporting. As a wilderness park with frequent access to undeveloped parts of the park (most notably the 50-mile stretch of coastline to Mansfield Dam,) does the park have a plan for location of cell towers or other communication support down the beach corridor to support visitor and wildlife safety?

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments into this process early in the park's planning. I look forward to working with you to produce an effective and innovative plan that protects the values of the park and helps promote Padre Island National Seashore with a holistic approach to management that ensures the park can remain resilient in light of increasing storm impacts from a changing climate.

Sincerely,

Sandra B. Ramos
Texas Coastal Program Manager
National Parks Conservation Association

Correspondence ID: 550 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 16:37:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: March 10, 2023

PAIS Superintendent
Malaquite Visitor Center
20420 Park Rd 22
Corpus Christi, TX 78418

Re: Pre-NEPA Beach Management Request for Comments for Padre Island
National Seashore

Initial Comments

Lumping the four issues into one "pre-NEPA" discussion appears inappropriate. The big, controversial issue for most of the public is likely beach access (vehicle driving). Consideration of cessation of public driving on the beach is of sufficient recreational and economic impact, not to mention controversy, that it should be discussed via its own NEPA process. It could easily be argued that this issue alone would require an Environmental Impact Statement.

The other two "beach management" issues, beach replenishment and debris removal, could be considered within one NEPA process, and may require only an Environmental Assessment.

The issue of sea turtle recovery should be examined as an Endangered Species issue, and considering the program was established long ago and has been very successful, any changes to existing protocols and practices should be examined via its own NEPA process, with a thorough, scientifically-based, and objective discussion involving all Texas turtle recovery partners.

Furthermore, any examination of the turtle program should ONLY be done AFTER the beach driving issue is settled (through a rigorous NEPA process). With the beach driving issue under review, it is irresponsible to consider ANY changes to this successful program.

Beach Driving

First, the NPS needs to determine if it has the authority to end beach driving at PAIS. The Texas Open Beaches Act (TOBA) guarantees that the public has the free and unrestricted right to access Texas beaches, including a Texas beach located within a national park. No mention is made in the congressional language of the 1962 legislation establishing the park of limiting public beach access contrary to Texas law. In other national seashores/lakeshores created at the same time, accommodations were made for existing recreational uses. A thorough review of Congressional committee and subcommittee hearings is needed to determine the intent of the agreement between Texas and DOI regarding beach access (vehicle driving). A written summary of the legal issues and findings regarding this matter is essential to justify beach management decisions now and into the future.

Second, any attempt to limit beach access at PAIS will be met with resistance by Texas citizens, public officials, business leaders at the local, state, and federal levels. All will vigorously oppose it. Even if the NPS has legal authority to close the beach to vehicle traffic, will it be worth the antagonism it will create?

Third, and perhaps most pertinent, PAIS and interested local parties have long compromised on beach management to allow continued access and sea turtle recovery. In fact, in 2012, just 11 years ago and after an extensive public involvement effort over three years, the PAIS superintendent signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a Beach Vehicle Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA identified and examined impacts of five alternative management options (including one from a local vehicle users' group). These included an NPS preferred alternative. The FONSI stated that the NPS has selected its preferred alternative, which limited vehicle speed to 15 mph from March 1 through Labor Day. Outside of those dates the limit was 25 mph. This alternative allowed beach driving all year but kept in place speed limits and closures in specific sections of the beach. Examination of the EA and FONSI finds thorough consideration of every viable, and some non-viable, alternatives for management action. A reasonable compromise was made to accommodate competing interests. The EA essentially has served as a management plan since 2012. Considering the long and difficult NEPA process, which resulted in selection of the NPS preferred alternative, the question has to be asked: Why has the NPS decided to re-examine and rehash these issues after only 11 years? What changes in visitor use or resource concerns has occurred in that short timeframe? NPS motives for suddenly abandoning reasonable decisions vetted through a rigorous NEPA process such a short time ago seem highly suspect and unjustifiable.

Sea Turtle Recovery and Management

PAIS has had a successful Sea Turtle Science and Recovery (STSR) Program since the 1980s, with its head, Dr. Shaver, brought back to the NPS specifically to run it. In fact, in 2000 this program was chosen as one of the highest priority natural resource priorities in the national park system, much like the black-footed ferret recovery program at Badlands National Park, and both were granted significant base funding from the Natural Resource Challenge. But like when he was at Badlands, this superintendent seems to have chosen to abandon this important endangered species recovery effort despite its long record of success.

It seems clear that the superintendent was sent to PAIS specifically to carry out the recommendations of the 2021 review of the PAIS sea turtle program. The problem is that the review seems like obvious retaliation against Dr. Shaver for speaking out about certain issues and being too successful in obtaining funding for her program. Much pressure is applied within the NPS on management personnel at PAIS because other turtle recovery programs managed by the NPS outside of Texas (such as, in Florida) leave a turtle's eggs in situ at the beach and can close their beaches to public access. Such non-Texas beaches are visited by much fewer turtles than the Texas beaches so any contribution they make to the species or error made in its management is inconsequential to survival of the species.

The report appears to have been directed to find fault with the turtle program and the success of Dr. Shaver specifically because eggs are not left in situ. There seems to have been little input from Texas turtle partners and experts. One such person, an academic, said he was asked to participate in the review, but was only on one phone call, and he felt like his input wasn't really wanted. Regardless, the review report raises several issues such as excessive overtime costs and an unlikelihood of being able to sustain the current high level of short term (soft) funding.

The report cites expense of the program, due to its practice of collecting turtle eggs, incubating them, and then releasing hatchlings. It's obvious the proponents of the review want PAIS to reduce the program by eliminating beach driving, thus allowing leaving eggs in situ and opening the door for competing programs to obtain funding they can't access due to Dr. Shaver's success. The future of STSR and its practices are directly correlated to beach management (driving) and permanent decisions addressing this issue should be made following a strenuous NEPA process BEFORE any changes are made to STSR. Once again, the question to be answered right now is why the 2012 beach driving EA and FONSI are no longer seen as the guiding policy for beach access.

A big problem with this situation is that the PAIS superintendent refuses to step up and speak publicly about his reasons for crippling the STSR program. At the very least this lack of transparency reflects a disingenuous attitude about the issue. Someone familiar with the superintendent in his prior positions would see it as cowardice that has been seen before. He has refused to meet with local officials or the press. At the pre-NEPA public meeting, he and his staff refused to provide any answers to even the most basic questions. He is on video doing his very best to dodge very pertinent and direct questions. His only statements on this issue were in the form of written responses to written questions submitted by local county commissioners. In his responses, he cited low park morale, the high budget of the program (compared to turtle programs at other parks), and the amount of overtime. What he did not claim was that the program had not been successful or that money had been inappropriately spent. The primary considerations of ANY endangered species program are how successful it is and if it contributes to recovery of the species. That is what should be the basis for the PAIS STSR program, not internal park morale, jealousy and micro-management of the program budget. If low park morale is a concern, the first place to look is in the superintendent's office---not at any successful park program. The superintendent should not react to low morale by targeting the successful program but by addressing the jealousy and back-stabbing that the low morale reflects.

Also, it does not seem appropriate for people outside of the park (and Texas for that matter) to be judging personnel and budget decisions within a park program. The superintendent is responsible for that overseeing that, and he should be working with the program manager to reduce costs or SECURE MORE FUNDING to keep the program successful. To arbitrarily remove funding from the program and retaliate against the program manager for objecting is inappropriate and a prohibited personnel practice. But then again, doing so at the behest of his superiors has saved this superintendent's career before and is likely what will keep it going.

Except on PAIS, Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests on coastal national parks are left in situ incubation (or placed in

corrals) on the beach, and driving on the beach is prohibited to protect Turtles and their eggs. However, Texas is unique in that it has the Open Beaches Act, allowing driving on all Texas beaches. Turtle programs in other states do not have that consideration. There seems to be a belief within those elements that PAIS can simply eliminate beach driving. If that were the case, it's likely that option would have been taken by park management many years ago, certainly at least in the 2009-2012 NEPA process. Again, beach driving must be addressed before any decisions can be made regarding STSR protocols and practices.

Nonetheless, the park superintendent has made several decisions about STSR in response to the review report, including redirecting funds obtained by Dr. Shaver to other purposes and forbidding her from seeking other short term project funding. In effect, he has made the review report a self-fulfilling prophecy by making its prediction of unsustainable funding levels a reality. Not only is this unethical and retaliatory at least, it indicates decisions being made prior to initiating the required NEPA process. NO changes to the turtle program, regardless of the recommendations of the review report, should be made until complete and thorough NEPA process is conducted, first for beach driving, then for STSR. The ramifications of changes to either should be addressed in at least an EA but may require and EIS.

The cost of STSR should be examined not just by looking at overtime and overall expense but also by figuring in how costs are matched by volunteer time and partner involvement. High overtime costs could be reflective of the need to have qualified supervisors overseeing volunteers and partners. Dr. Shaver appears to have made great use of outside assistance. Overtime costs must be examined in comparison to other personnel options to determine if they are actually a better use of funding than hiring more permanent positions that can't be funded with soft money.

Furthermore, changes being made to the turtle program at this time don't just reflect recommendations in the review report, but also the superintendent's (and more likely his superiors') long-held desire pass off the expense and responsibility for endangered species recovery on to partners and other organizations. The National Park Service prides itself as being the premier protector of the nation's natural and cultural resource treasure, and to cede responsibility for any endangered species program within its boundaries is an abdication of that role. It would seem that this superintendent and his superiors place resources in a subordinate position in the budget hierarchy. He has done this before in his career. No national park endangered species program should be predicated on other entities taking the lead under the direction of a sycophantic superintendent carrying out the wishes of his politically-minded superiors. National parks are often the most secure environments for endangered species. Other public and non-public lands are often less reliable in their dedication to stable recovery programs. The NPS and PAIS management must recognize this fact and continue strong support for endangered turtle recovery.

If the rumors circulating within the NPS and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are true that the NPS used its influence within the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to convince its leaders to not distribute any grants (even if won in a grant competition) to any turtle recovery program in Texas because of the existence of the TOBA, then it is somewhat disingenuous for the NPS to assert that the STSR Program needs to be downsized due to lack of funding. Such political maneuvering is contrary to successful, science-based endangered species recovery.

PAIS has several predators of turtles, their eggs and hatchlings (ghost crabs, coyotes, hogs, skunks, raccoons, badgers, gray foxes, snakes, fire ants and birds). Research strongly suggests that in situ incubation will greatly increase nest loss. Another major problem is that high tides flood portions of the beach all the way to the dune line multiple times a year, which could wash away or uncover in situ incubating eggs thereby exposing them to predators or risk of desiccation from the sun. Climate change is causing environmental conditions that could further reduce nest success and also increase the intensity and frequency of freezing situations that were evidenced two years ago and forced the collection of hundreds of cold-stunned turtles. The NPS needs to be a leader in anticipating, preventing, and responding to these negative influences on sustained turtle recovery. Cutting or revising STSR in light of these existing and potential impacts is ill-conceived and unconscionable. It is irresponsible to cut the program and force in situ nest management when so many forces exist that will likely reduce nest success. Let those who wish to reduce the PAIS program do the necessary work to eliminate beach driving, and face the anger of the local community. I'm sure the superintendent would appreciate that because he

is always happy to let the target be on others.

The pre-NEPA document mentions that the incubation facility may not survive a direct hit from a hurricane. The answer isn't to simply change to in situ nest protection but to study alternative sites or harden the existing facility, unless rigorous study and a NEPA examination supports changing to in situ management.

It is absurd to argue that hatchling losses resulting from human-caused mortality factors (human beach debris or high tides, climate change, ocean current changes, and predators) are materially different from vehicle-caused mortality, especially since the latter is an insignificant factor when all causes of hatchling deaths are considered.

The NPS has substantially reduced the of number public hatchling release viewing events. For many years pre-Covid, the NPS held between 20 and 27 hatchling release viewing events annually. No events were held in 2020, and the release events in 2021 were substantially reduced from before. Only 7 release events were held in 2022. The pre-NEPA document states that the NPS intends to "Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education." This leads to the question: Aren't these public releases focused on education? It is disingenuous to claim they aren't. The public hatchling release events are a significant attraction and present excellent opportunities, as they have for many years, to educate the public about the plight of sea turtles and other aquatic species, the implications of climate change, and the impacts of human activities (oil spills, sea debris). The NPS should not deny the importance of these releases for increasing hatchling survival or for public education.

Finally, it is striking that an endangered species recovery program that has for so long drawn wide recognition for its success, produced numerous professional papers, pioneered practices that have greatly increased survival, and gained accolades for its director, has now in a sudden turn of events fallen into disfavor. While previous superintendents and the Washington Office have supported this program, now there seem to be high level elements within the NPS working to cripple it and undermine the person in charge. I have no doubt, based on my experience with the current superintendent, that he was sent to PAIS with clear direction to reduce STSR and to retaliate against the program director when she fought for her program. In my experience he provides no leadership, is afraid to make decisions, and will destroy any employee his masters direct him to. Just as at Badlands, he has lost all credibility with his staff and the interested local public. He has a history of failure and has long been a disgrace to the National Park Service. The NPS should be ashamed of the people who have put him at PAIS and instigated this underhanded and cruel retaliation against a dedicated, highly regarded, accomplished employee.

Correspondence ID: 551 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 16:48:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please allow us to continue to drive on our beaches.. This driveable access makes the whole process that more enjoyable. For myself as a local and avid beach goer there are few places like it! I truly treasure it! Please do not limit our access.

Correspondence ID: 552 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 16:50:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: hi there I am a beach fanatic. My family loves to go to the beach. And one of the beautiful things about our Texas beaches. Is that we can drive on the beach and it's accessible to anyone and everyone. Please do not close the beaches and not allow people to enjoy the beauty of our coast from my family to your family that's one of the beautiful things about living in Corpus Christi is our access is to the beach. I've lived in other places where you have to park and you can't. There's no access because privatization has occurred and people of influence have blocked access to beaches, so please don't access all people to the beach.

Correspondence ID: 553 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 16:56:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is not right for the beach to be restricted against people who cannot walk or are otherwise disabled to enjoy.

The seashore is for all to enjoy and should be easily accessible by vehicle

Correspondence ID: 554 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 16:59:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am writing to inform your agency of my vote of NO to stopping driving

On Padre Island beaches from April to June. I also vote NO to

Stop the Turtle Recovery Program. The Turtle Program is fine as is

And has a proven track record of bringing endangered turtle population

Back to healthy numbers. Drivers on the beach have contributed to the

Program by being eyes on the ground when park rangers are elsewhere

In the park. I would like to emphasize again, I vote NO to stop driving on

The beach from April to June and I vote NO on dismantling the Turtle

Program. Leave things as they were

Correspondence ID: 555 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 17:01:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The NPS should work to maintain beach access at the existing entrance points as well as add additional pedestrian only access points to Malaquite Beach. All of the visitors on Malaquite Beach are clumped together by the visitor center. Adding another parking area and trail could help spread people out on Malaquite.

The area between North beach bollards and the campground has little visitors. Adding a trail with parking area to this section could be useful and give people another option besides the visitor center or driving on south beach. A trail at the Novillo area would work great and have little disturbance since there is already a dirt road there. Pave the the dirt road with concrete to make a walking path but keep it closed to cars. A boardwalk could be constructed to get people over the dunes. This would. Create better access for pedestrians in a low use area of the beach.

Correspondence ID: 556 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 17:12:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like to encourage the NPS to let the sea turtle program that has been in place for the last few decades remain. This program has been successful to the education of the public and restoration of many sea turtle species. Where else can the public go to watch the live release of baby sea turtles? Im not sure why the NPS would dismantle a successful program in favor of something that may or may not work.

Correspondence ID: 557 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 17:14:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I very much enjoyed my opportunity to see a Sea Turtle release. I was disappointed at the idea that the number of releases might be reduced, or only available for a Turtle "Week"; instead of multiple opportunities over the course of a summer, and I hope that this concept has been abandoned. A one week opportunity seems guaranteed to ensure massive crowding and a less impactful experience. While I realize that the turtle releases do require an extra investment in staff resources and time, it seems like the upside of park exposure and visitations would warrant the investment.

I am supportive of the idea that reduced driving on the beach may be needed to ensure habitat protection and to support the recovery of endangered species.

I support the existing PINS Kemp's Riddley plan and characterize it as visionary because it addresses the growing impact of climate change and relative sea level rise. The rising seas are leading to an ongoing exponential increase of inundations to the dune lines. This will lead to increasing loss of nests. The warming sands will progressively impact the survivability of the eggs and will shift the sex ratio of the hatchlings. The existing plan also allows for the option of broad access to PINS through driving on the beach with limited restrictions. The very popular hatchlings releases are a bucket list item for Texans strengthening their bond with our coast and the survival of marine species. The pilot plans advocate for restoring a more natural process but would leave more eggs on the beach and hence lead to less hatchlings reaching the water. The Kemp's Riddley population has recovered some in the past 30 years but is still the most endangered sea turtle specie. If the Kemp's Riddley population was out of the danger of imminent extinction the proposed plans would be interesting but at present they seem ill advised and a misplaced resource allocation as I understand that the resources have been more scarce for the existing program.

In general, I think that the work and investment of Dr. Donna Shaver should be lauded by the park and the National Park Service, and I hope that the previous issue where grant funding acquired by Dr. Shaver was redirected to another facility never happens again. In a conversation with the then newly appointed Park Superintendent Eric Brunnemann at the conclusion of my turtle release experience a few years ago, I was disappointed by his statements regarding the reallocation of grant resources to another program; he stated at the time that he felt other programs needed those funds. This position was rather shocking to me, as it didn't appear that he thought his job was to secure funding and resources for the park he was assigned to manage. If Mr. Brunnemann can not bring himself to support the amazing work being done with the Riddley turtle program, perhaps he needs to be reassigned to a park where he can't undermine a decades long successful program. Muzzling a well respected scientist like Dr. Shaver doesn't speak well of Mr. Brunneman's leadership abilities. The entire debacle from 2020 with the review of the program, the blindsiding of Dr. Shaver, and the attitude of park staff from my visit (there were other park employees standing around when I had my conversation with Mr. Brunneman) which appeared to be that the bother of having to come out early in the morning and staff the turtle release was too much didn't paint the leadership of PINS in the best light. I have never experienced park staff who didn't thrill to the idea of attracting visitors to their park to expose them to the specific things that make that park great - including being the location of a groundbreaking program to save an endangered species.

In sum, support Dr. Shaver, support her program, support the things that make PINS a worthwhile park experience.

Correspondence ID: 558 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 17:16:45

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please keep our access to beaches as they are now, thank you!

Correspondence ID: 559 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 17:31:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Comments on the 2023 -----PAIS Beach Management Plan pre-NEPA March 14, 2023

David Wm. Owens, PhD

Professor Texas A&M University 1978-1999

Professor emeritus, Grice Marine Lab, University of Charleston 1999-2015

Fulbright Scholar, Myanmar 2016; Lifetime Achievement Awardee ISTS, 2016; Hall of Fame Awardee SERSTN, 2023.

I apologize at the outset for mentioning my background in sea turtle research and conservation, but I want you to know how much I have vested with my 50+ years of teaching and doing research on sea turtles. They are such amazing creatures and Texas is such a critical focal point for their recovery.

First, I need to make clear the great privilege I have had of working for two decades with three Texas women who

in my experience placed the Kemp's ridley on the Texas map forever. They have fought for, bled for and screamed for the right of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle to make a living in the Lone Star state. In 1978 when I arrived in College Station to start my teaching career, not one in a thousand Texans knew we had prime real estate for sea turtles in Texas. Today, we owe a debt of thanks to each of these ladies for their decades of effort, all three being great teachers of course. However each also has special/super skills; one a superb organizer, one a gifted public relations icon and the third an inspired scientist, to the point now where nearly every Texan from school kids to scientists knows the Kemp's ridley success story. Or should I say "almost success story". Of course, I am talking about Mrs. Carol Allen, Mrs. Ila Loetscher and Dr. Donna Shaver. While many Men pontificated and procrastinated, these ladies actually got the conservation job done, day in and day out.

While these ladies worked, I was mostly pontificating with many others on the 1990 Magnuson National Academy of Sciences "Decline of Sea Turtles...." study and was also the leader of the 1992 "Kemp's Ridley Recovery Plan" team sponsored by N.M.F.S and U.S.F.W.S.. Some studies my student Dr. Mark Grassman did also showed that sea turtles have a fabulous memory for smells, which we argued was important in the artificial imprinting component of the Ridley recovery "experiment". This brings me to what I feel is the most important aspect of the work at Padre Island National Seashore. Work which I feel is suddenly in serious jeopardy. I was hammered repeatedly when I called the artificial imprinting/head starting project for the Kemp's Ridley a "critical experiment". Archie Carr and Peter Pritchard supported this desperate conservation strategy out of necessity in the early 80s and I would argue it may be the most important and meaningful long-term research experiment ever done on sea turtles. We have already learned and are still learning so very much about these critically endangered turtles from the ongoing studies at Padre Island. It would be a huge waste of effort and major loss of an investment to drop the intensity needed for the continued evaluation of the nascent nesting population at Padre Island National Seashore. Let's face it, because sea turtles imprint rather tightly to their natal beach (now proven by genetic studies) are we going to give up on the one strategy of nest relocation (artificial imprinting) to cooler areas? A strategy to develop nesting areas on cooler beaches may be the best way for the future of sea turtles as Global Climate Change intensifies over the next few decades. Because sea turtles have Temperature Dependent Sex Determination, we are right now watching the feminization of whole populations as well as reduced fitness of the millions (this is not an exaggeration) of female survivors of these over-heated nests.

So, as I read and reread the proposals in the Padre Island Management Plan I am actually favorably disposed to many of the ideas being suggested and think they will be of long-term value to the National Seashore. My concerns are more for the errors of omission regarding the clear need for continued assessment, quantification and enhancement of the ongoing studies that have been initiated on the Kemp's Ridley turtles of Texas. The National Seashore has always been the leader in this effort, with now hundreds of publications, each incrementally improving our understanding of sea turtle biology. Throughout the suggested plans I seem to see suggestions of diminished effort and support for the ridley sea turtle work. This would be a huge mistake. Without a doubt Dr. Donna Shaver has made it her life's work to fight for the continued survival of the Sea Turtles of Texas. Please do not compromise this ongoing and important effort for sea turtle conservation in Texas. Finally, viewing the release of the small sea turtles from the National Seashore is a life altering experience for a child and even for many adults. Please try not to restrict this important public relations coup for the Seashore into the future. At a recent Sea Turtle conference (SERSTM) it was brought to our attention that there are still millions of oil spill dollars that have not been allocated to the sea turtle conservation tasks for which they were set aside. Surely funding can not be the critical limitation.

These thoughts are my own and do not reflect any opinions of the Universities where I have worked in the past.

Correspondence ID: 560 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 17:47:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I attended the Pre-NEPA public meetings and it appears that the Beach Management Plan for Padre Island National Seashore is going to be developed to protect "beach resources" and not the "natural resources", such as sea turtles. At the meeting I overheard a FWS official ask an NPS official why the Beach Management Plan is strictly focused on only one T&E species at the park, the sea turtles, and the NPS official responded by saying that the other T&E species at the Seashore already have "Acts" to protect them like the Migratory Bird Act. This statement by the NPS official was misleading and incorrect and displays bias

against the sea turtle program. The Endangered Species Act addresses how to manage and protect sea turtles.

Padre Island National Seashore is the most important Kemp's ridley nesting beach in the United States and a secondary nesting colony is still being established. Although overall percentage of Kemp's ridley sea turtle nesting is low compared to the world-wide nesting population, the Seashore has the unique opportunity to directly contribute to the recovery management of this species by conducting almost all research for this species and published more peer-reviewed research on sea turtles in Texas than any other entity. Something the NPS should be proud of and should embrace.

Sea Turtle Management at Padre Island National Seashore must remain the same. The proposed methods of reducing protection leaves the Kemp's ridley and other species of sea turtles vulnerable to high tides, excessive high temperatures, predators, visitor harassment, and beach driving.

The authors of the pamphlet have errors and are INCORRECT and MISLEADING when stating that the purpose of the Kemp's Ridley Recovery Plan is to exist without human assistance. The purpose of the Kemp's Ridley Recovery Plan is to "CONSERVE AND PROTECT THE KEMP'S RIDLEY SEA TURTLE SO THAT PROTECTION UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT ARE NO LONGER NECESSARY and the species can be removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife" only after the species has recovered.

The Kemp's ridley has not recovered and remains the MOST CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SEA TURTLE in the world and is no where close to being removed from the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. They are not recovered in Mexico and in the United States or anywhere else in the world.

Kemp's ridley patrol efforts should increase or remain the same. Reducing effort will result in protection of fewer nests and will put nesting turtles on the beach in danger of harassment, poaching and vehicle strikes.

Monitoring of Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests is critical to understanding endangered species recovery and management. Reducing the patrol and protection effort, will reduce the knowledge for science that will be gained and shared with the scientific community.

Reducing and removing protection effort of Kemp's ridley and sea turtle eggs in areas north of Padre Island National Seashore, will result in unprotected nests, predation, and loss of data for ongoing sea turtle research such as the tag-recapture program.

Kemp's ridley sea turtle roam long distances between egg laying and can lay eggs at Padre Island National Seashore and then 2-3 weeks later, lay a clutch of eggs on North Padre Island or South Padre Island, outside of the Seashore. The park service should be committed to protecting all nests that it currently protects in the areas surveyed inside and outside the park.

The PILOT STUDIES are poorly outlined. As written, Pilot Study 3 does not pose a scientific question that can be conducted to study turtles and impacts of an area with no driving. A well-developed study has a control area that can quantify the area with driving and without driving. There would be no way to measure success. Just saying there were no impacts does not measure success, when there is no evidence that turtle nests exist or do not exist, when the biologists are not allowed to drive on the beach to examine the area for nests, tracks, and hatchlings. Just because you do not see the nesting turtle, tracks, or know about a nest, does not mean that they do not exist.

A well-developed pilot study uses less invasive methods, such as studying impacts to nests by high tides, predators and visitors with a mock nest (ping pong balls, confiscated dead turtle eggs, tortoise eggs) and not live, critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle eggs. None of the studies are needed when previous studies at the Seashore show that there will be increased mortality of sea turtle eggs, hatchlings and nesting turtles.

Current sea turtle management practices such as relocation of eggs, has been considered a "forward thinking" method to protect sea turtles compared to more out-dated, relocation methods and practices on the US East Coast.

Impacts such as nuisance coastal flooding are real threats to turtles, so thinking turtles will survive fine on their own is ignoring the realities of climate change. The Seashore cannot ignore that climate issues exist and the current methods at Padre Island National Seashore are methods that other nesting sea turtle beaches in the US should be using.

Trying to mimic East Coast Florida sea turtle methods is irresponsible and not scientifically or ethically sound science and will result in hundreds of dead nesting Kemp's ridleys and thousands of dead sea turtle eggs and hatchlings.

The US East Coast sea turtle management methods were designed for loggerhead and green turtle recovery (turtles that nest at night) and not Kemp's ridley sea turtle recovery (turtles that nest during the day). Kemp's ridley sea turtle nesting and behavior is geographically unique to the Western Gulf of Mexico and in the US (South Texas) and Mexico.

Why would the NPS want to jeopardize and reduce protection of one of its most rare and unique endangered species?

Why would the NPS want to harm and kill Kemp's ridley sea turtles for pilot studies with poor study methods and that result in harm to the turtles?

Why would the NPS want to protect less Kemp's ridley sea turtles for a few miles of visitor enjoyment?

Why would the NPS want reduce patrol effort and protection measures so that funds can be used for other natural resources programs in the park when the Kemp's ridley is still far from recovery?

Correspondence ID: 561 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 17:48:36

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please leave the beach to the people . It's the only free entertainment with limited income to fish, swim and picnic

Correspondence ID: 562 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:15:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not allow the public's beach access to be diminished any further. Do not allow changes which will negatively impact tourists' and Texas residents' access to drive and recreate on the beach. It is a way of life here in South Texas. It provides our region with the vital ecotourism that sustains this area economically. Do not further diminish the turtle program which is treasured and enjoyed by generations of TExans and out-of-state and foreign visitors.

Correspondence ID: 563 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:20:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: March 14, 2023

PAIS Superintendent
Attn: Beach Management

Re: Proposed Beach Management Plan for the Padre Island National Seashore

Dear Superintendent Brunnemann,

Please accept these written comments on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation Texas Coastal Bend Chapter ("Surfrider"), in regard to the proposed Beach Management Plan for the Padre Island National Seashore. The Surfrider Foundation is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves and beaches, for all people, through a powerful activist network. Our chapter was founded in 2004, and has focused since on the Coastal Bend region. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in the Pre-NEPA process regarding the proposed beach management plan for the Padre Island National Seashore. Our comments are shaped by 19 years of experience in advocating for public beach access, active stewardship of our beaches and involvement in a variety of Corpus Christi, Port Aransas and Nueces County beach maintenance issues. While many of our members are surfers, we represent the beach-going public in general.

Our chapter leaders have been fortunate to know and serve on various committees with Pat Suter, a notable local conservationist who, along with her husband Hans, was part of the small group of people involved in the establishment of Padre Island National Seashore (PINS) in 1963. In preparation for these comments, I and two other people were able to interview Mrs. Suter, who is now in her 90's, about the original reasons for creating the park and the intent for its long-term use.

SEA TURTLE SCIENCE AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

Like most residents and visitors to our area who frequent the Gulf beaches, our members love seeing sea turtles in their habitat. The Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program is very popular with Coastal Bend residents and brings people from all parts of the U.S to see hatchling releases. While we are not aware of specific economic statistics related to the tourism dollars generated by the hatchling releases, there are doubtless numerous hotels and restaurants that benefit from increased visitation when turtle releases occur. The website of Visit Corpus Christi (formerly the Convention and Visitor's Bureau) features the turtle releases as one of the outdoor adventures visitors can experience in the Coastal Bend.

When asked for her opinion on the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program, Mrs. Suter stated that PINS was established to protect and preserve wildlife and felt strongly that any program that increases the Texas population of endangered marine species, sea turtles included, should be continued and supported. To that end, we support the continuation of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program with the leadership provided by Donna Shaver and the work being done by PINS staff and volunteers.

Regarding the pilot studies proposed by the National Park Service (NPS):

Potential Pilot Study 1: In-situ nesting - can predation be reduced without moving eggs?

Based on decades of time spent on North Padre Island, it is our view that coyotes and other predators would quickly seek out and find most turtle nests if the eggs are left in place. Coyotes are intelligent and would be able to learn when and where to look for others after finding one nest. Thus, the current practice of moving the eggs to a corral housed inside a protective structure should provide the best results.

Potential Pilot Study 2: Does moving nests protect them from inundation, or flooding?

The new normal as the impacts from climate change continue to grow is that coastal management decisions cannot be based on past experience. Given the increasing and documented sea level rise in the Gulf of Mexico and the greater possibility of stronger hurricanes due to climate change, storm surges caused by future hurricanes will likely exceed historical surges.

The size and intensity of recent Gulf hurricanes have been difficult to predict due to hotter water temperatures, so any decisions on where to relocate eggs cannot be based on past events. Thus, moving the Kemps ridley eggs to another location seaward of the sand dunes, or and even in the sand dunes, would not guarantee that the eggs would be safe from flooding.

Potential Pilot Study 3: Remove or reduce NPS vehicles from Malaquite Beach, except for emergency use.

NPS driving on Malaquite Beach should be continued as needed to support the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program and to respond to emergencies.

Potential Pilot Study 4: Would unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology be effective monitoring for nesting sea turtles?

Drones and game cameras have been effective in monitoring many species of wildlife, so NPS should consider a pilot test for monitoring for nesting sea turtles.

SAND MANAGEMENT

The dynamic nature of barrier islands makes sand management a constant challenge. The combination of high winds, high tides and surge events can move large amounts of sand overnight. Finding a balance between maintaining driving access and avoiding the creation of holes and ponding can be difficult at times.

Surfrider has no opinion on possible changes to the North Beach Access, and supports appropriate adjustments to the current sand management methods to be more protective of sensitive habitats. Integrating maps of sand management activities with maps of sensitive habitats within PINS would be a logical step toward achieving this.

BEACH DRIVING

In Texas, the ability to drive on Gulf Beaches has facilitated beach access for many years. In 2006, when a developer supported a ballot measure to have cars removed from 7,200 feet of beach south of Packery Channel, Corpus Christi voters overwhelmingly disapproved.

Regarding the potential options proposed by the National Park Service (NPS):

Potential option: Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience.

Our chapter opposes the possibility of issuing a fixed number of beach driving permits as this would exclude lower income visitors while favoring those who can afford them. Mrs. Suter reiterated this concern and feels strongly that all visitors to PINS, after paying the initial park entry fee, should have the same right to access and enjoy the beach. She stated that like all of the national parks, PINS belongs to all Americans.

If, in future years, visitation numbers begin to exceed the park's ability to protect habitat and perform the necessary functions of a national park, the daily number of park visitors could be limited. Any study to establish what that number would be should be transparent and open to public participation.

Potential option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0MM - 5 MM) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island.

We have the following concerns about creating a new road behind the sand dunes for through traffic for the first 5 miles of the Seashore:

- Possible harm to fragile habitat when constructing and maintaining the road.
- A new road could encourage development such as hotels inside PINS.
- Lack of public access to the first 5 miles of the Seashore. The Texas Open Beaches Act should be used as a standard, with one or more parking lots and dune walkovers being constructed. The lots should contain one

parking space for every 15 linear feet of beach from which prior driving access is eliminated.

Potential option: Consider having vehicle-free pedestrian areas to enhance visitor safety and experience.

The Closed Beach already provides a vehicle-free pedestrian area and is lightly used by park visitors. In the summer, when most people visit the beach, it is too hot for most of them to walk long distances with their beach gear, cooler, shade structure, etc., so they prefer to stay near their vehicle. This has been seen time and again, from Galveston to South Padre Island.

HURRICANE AND STORM RECOVERY RELATED CLOSURES

It is important to balance the need to protect public safety and public park resources with the objective of providing continuous public beach access. To that end, we support the first three options below depending on the amount of damage sustained and debris deposited, and oppose the final option.

Potential option: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only

- Re-open the Seashore after an initial safety and resource check and basic visitor safety is provided.
- Limited facilities would be available as repairs and clean up continue.

Potential option: Similar to the Hurricane Hanna response

- Keep the Seashore closed until staff records the conditions of infrastructure, facilities, and resources (closure time would depend on the severity of impacts). Open facilities in the following order:
- Front country, visitor center, and boardwalk (beaches remain closed).
- Other facilities as storm impacts are documented.
- Criteria for opening areas include safety, resource protection, and public preference.

Potential option: Similar to Hurricane Hanna response, but areas would open earlier.

- Record damage in front country, then open (beaches may remain closed).
- Document damage at other areas, then open other facilities as work continues.

Potential option: Remain closed until all facilities and infrastructure are repaired, clean-up is completed, and resources are surveyed.

MARINE DEBRIS

Surfrider's national Rise Above Plastics program (and our chapter's Skip the Plastic program) seeks to reduce or eliminate plastic pollution, a more accurate term than "marine debris" since roughly 90% of the trash found on beaches and in the oceans is made of plastic. We strongly support any and all actions by the NPS to help resolve this critical problem that is affecting every level of marine life from phyto and zooplankton, to arthropods at the bottom of the Mariana Trench to sea turtles and giant whales.

Potential option: Increase beach clean-up activities with local organizations.

Members of our chapter have participated in numerous beach cleanups and the Billy Sandifer Big Shell Cleanup held by the Friends of Padre has to be the most impressive for the amount of coordination involved, the number of volunteers and the amount of trash removed. Every cleanup in PINS does not have to be this large, and smaller ones can help to reduce the problem. Our chapter would be willing to take part in cleanups.

Potential option: Consider ways to market trash cleanup and reduce trash left by visitors.

Yes! Give a trash bag out to every car entering the park and consider giving a partial or full refund if a car brings the bag back full when leaving. The City of South Padre Island has been successful with a program like this on its

beaches north of town.

Instead of waiting until 2032 as announced by NPS, stop selling single-use plastic drink and food containers inside PINS by 2025.

Create online and printed flyers with PINS' sea turtle mascot to educate park visitors about the harms caused to wildlife from plastic pollution and encouraging them to reduce their plastic footprint. Smokey the Bear comes to mind for forest fire prevention.

Potential option: Consider bi- or multi-lateral agreements at both the state level and the international level to address the source of marine debris, as most of the marine debris that washes onto the Seashore comes from offshore.

Yes! PINS and NPS in general should work with Texas, other states and other countries to address the sources of plastic pollution. On a global level, the U.S. should support and sign on the global plastics treaty currently being negotiated by the United Nations.

Sincerely,

Neil McQueen
Co-Chair
Surfrider Foundation Texas Coastal Bend Chapter

Correspondence ID: 564 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:33:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I moved to the Corpus Christi area almost six years ago, and time and again the two things I hear about Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS) are the sea turtles and the beach experience. In reading the call for comments posted by the Park Service ("Pre-NEPA Civic Engagement") I get the feeling that the NEPA has already been completed and the Park Service, or at least the local leadership, already have their plans in hand and are simply going through the motions regarding public comment. I hope that is not the case, but I've also worked with enough federal and state programs over the years to see the writing on the wall.

Padre Island National Seashore is a unique National Parks experience. It is the epicenter of Kemps Ridley sea turtle nesting in the US. It is 60+miles of shoreline on the longest barrier island in the US which has avoided development for decades. And it is in Texas, where vehicle access to the beach is considered state law. As such, the park is subject to a unique set of expectations by park users, and cannot be compared to other National Seashores any more than its management can be compared to Big Bend or Guadalupe Mountains NPS as Texas-based parks.

Sea turtles are well known in the Texas Coastal Bend and PAIS, thanks in part to the conservation efforts by park staff over the last 40+ years. The efforts to reestablish a Kemps Ridley nesting population here are well known in the community. When I go to the seashore in the nesting season, the turtle patrollers and sea turtle staff are the most visible park employees and volunteers, second only to the fee station employee. If anything, the park in general is not capitalizing enough on the work performed by this team. Only recently did the park start charging admission during hatchling releases, and given the huge crowd turnouts they should be doing more public releases, not fewer. I recognize that recovery efforts of this native species are difficult - long generation interval, inherently low survival to adulthood, etc., which means they need a longer period of assistance, rather than the restrictions that are being proposed at this time. Nests need to be protected in order to maximize the number of turtle hatchlings, which in turn boosts the percentage that survive to adulthood. The unique nesting behavior of Kemps Ridelys as well as the vehicle and beach access to PAIS means that management plans used with other sea turtle species elsewhere in the US do not translate into implementation here. It also has been frustrating to see the

sea turtle division not only force to give up hard-earned grant dollars that support the program (rumored to be over \$300,000) and not able apply for future grant dollars. Further curtailing the program, including restricting the use of incubation facilities, pursuing in situ nesting, and preventing staff from partnering with other Texas entities will effectively wipe out 40 years of progress of what should be a keystone conservation program. Yes, the Kemps Ridleys are on the road to recovery, but the population is not yet large enough to withstand the pressures of both natural and man-made (vehicular) nest predation and destruction.

The open beaches laws in the State of Texas are both a blessing and a challenge when it comes to public access to PAIS. Which is why I'm confused by the ideas put forth in the call for public comment. Closing the beaches for nesting season would effectively keep the public off of almost 60 miles of beach for six months of the year (April through September); this is counterintuitive regarding collection of admission fees and so I assume this is a red-herring suggestion. Suggesting to extend the access road an additional five miles so as to by-pass the most heavily trafficked section of beach also seems to be a waste of resources, especially when paired with the suggestion to reduce the amount of beach maintenance for vehicle access at other entry points. There cannot be one without the other, so which is it? If anything, the park needs to do a better job of expanding access to underutilized sections of the beach. For example, there is a wide expanse of what is known as "closed beach" between the north bollards and the headquarters access as well as between headquarters and the campground that could support walk-in patrons if only there was better parking access. Currently, there are many park visitors that park on the beach, just outside the north bollards and walk into closed beach, such that their vehicles then restrict access by other vehicles to the seashore north of this demarcation but still within park boundaries. I would also like to point out that the access to the north beach area is before park visitors reach the entry gate, and so their admission fees are rarely collected. It would be beneficial to do a cost-benefit analysis of whether to add another fee station to this area of the park.

Hurricane response is always a concern for land along the Texas coastline. Yes, it is a huge undertaking to recover from the likes of swell damage from Hurricane Harvey or a direct hit from Hurricane Hanna. Where the park service has failed in these efforts is effectively communicating with the public the extent of the damage, the plan for repairs, and a timeline for reopening. The long delays to reopening following Hanna led to a multitude of rumors and conspiracy theories in the surrounding community about what the park administration was hiding. Again, the surrounding community is accustomed to decades of open beach access, and any restriction on their ability to fish, camp, and otherwise enjoy the National Seashore will not be met kindly. Hurricane response needs to be timely, with adequate communication with the public as well as an incremental reopening rather than an all-or-nothing "open for business". How that translates into the best use of in-house park staff as well as partnering with other NPS entities and community resources needs to be address in the response plans.

The current park administration is underutilizing their contacts and resources in the surrounding communities. The park already enjoys a strong volunteer base for the sea turtle nesting program as well as the Big Shell cleanup. Based on participation in these two programs alone, it is obvious that the surrounding community takes great pride in their National Seashore. I believe there is more potential for support, both in the form of volunteerism and partnered, non-profit financial support for targeted programs. Asking for public comment during the pre-NEPA process is a step in the right direction. I just hope that administration is open to actually heeding the comments, and that they have not already made a decision detrimental to the future of the PAIS in terms of both its natural resources and the public's enjoyment of those resources.

Correspondence ID: 565 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:42:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The save the Turtles program helps protect and preserve a primary species involved in oceanic wellness. Turtles not only indicate a healthy environment, but also are key organisms in regulating the balance of biodiversity in any region. In addition certain species of sea turtle also consume jellyfish, which are currently considered to be overwhelming our waters! Without support many turtle species will fail to fulfill their key roles in our ecosystems.

Correspondence ID: 566 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:44:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Changing the current access to iur local beaches goes against the state's open beaches act. It basically shuts down the National Seashore. It will kill tourism and the local economy. It'll destroy all the hard work of the turtle lab from the past 4 decades.

PLEASE do not do this!

Correspondence ID: 567 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:50:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea Turtles are an indicator if the seashores eco system is healthy. To not support their cause is saying you do not care what happens on the shores of the island. Which further says you do not care for the island as everything works together into one ecosystem .

Correspondence ID: 568 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:50:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As the Padre Island National Seashore is seeking to develop a beach management plan, a proposed effort to develop a nomination to send to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for additional aid may be of interest. The purpose of the nomination is to seek recognition of the National Seashore as a National Marine Sanctuary and by doing so, the coastal bend can receive the resources it needs for protection and preservation. A nomination will need to include important information about the area of interest and community support to back the proposition. The Coastal Bend has a multitude of resources to offer and more reasons to protect the marine environment. The coastal waters provide food as an important ecosystem service to the community. According to the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, the Coastal Bend offers "the abundance of fish and shellfish that accounts for over 30% of all Texas seafood harvested each year" which must be regulated to continue to provide for the community. The Coastal Bend is also the longest natural barrier along the Gulf of Mexico. This is an interesting fact because the Dry Tortugas National Park is located in Florida and along the Gulf of Mexico, which is also considered a National Sanctuary. The Dry Tortugas had received 48,543 visitors in 2021 whereas Padre Island received 617,704 visitors the same year. The Coastal Bend, just as Florida, is home to the Kemp ridley sea turtle that is currently critically endangered which can be used to highlight the importance of maintaining the waters in this region. The several points provided above along with other information gathered from the local communities can be used to showcase the various resources the Coastal Bend has to offer. These can all be included in the nomination itself or to gain community support to back the proposal of a nomination. If the Padre Island National Seashore is recognized as a National Sanctuary, there will be additional resources to manage and create guidelines for this area.

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Correspondence ID: 569 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:54:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In a city that subsists off of tourism and beach-goers this would destroy local economies. National parks would lose significant amounts of donations from the lack of visitors. The state turtle program would be majorly impacted in their volunteer work will be cut off. Rethink the policy.

Correspondence ID: 570 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 18:56:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I understand the need for developing and adopting a Beach Management Plan. Even though a formal and documented plan does not exist today, it seems to me that the Rangers at the Padre Island National Seashore have done a very good job to-date at managing the park and its beaches. A much more reasonable approach to developing such plan would be to start with the current programs and only modify aspects that are scientifically unsound or are known to cause issues to the park, its wildlife and/or its visitors. I am not aware of any such issues, and I have serious concerns regarding the potential options for pretty much all of the management aspects listed in the published newsletter. However, due to limited allotted space on this comment page, I will focus my comments on the Sea Turtle Science and recovery Program. I recommend against implementing any of the proposed studies, and really any significant change to the current program. These do not seem grounded in science and completely unnecessary. Why change something that has been a resounding success for years and still is? Why put at risk an entire species that is already (still) severely threatened? The authors of the proposed changes have failed over and over to justify any changes to the current program. The existing PINS Kemp's Riddley plan is a resounding success and is visionary. It addresses the growing impact of climate change and relative sea level rise. The rising seas are leading to an ongoing exponential increase of inundations to the dune lines. This will lead to increasing loss of nests. The warming sands will progressively impact the survivability of the eggs and will shift the gender ratio of the hatchlings. The existing plan also allows for the option of broad access to PINS through driving on the beach with limited restrictions which is something the public has repeatedly voice their strong desire to keep. The hatchlings releases are not only extremely successful with respect to survival of the hatchlings but extremely popular with people from across the US coming to PINS to witness them. It has done wonders for strengthening the public's bond with our coast and the survival of marine species. The proposed pilot studies advocate for restoring a more natural process. This does not make sense: the only way a more natural process could occur is if humans stopped doing what they have been doing for the last 50 years, restore lost habitat, stop polluting air, water, and the food chain, and allow the earth to cool and the climate to stabilize. None of these things are going to happen and, hence, implementing any of the proposed studies would leave more eggs on the beach, leading to way fewer hatchlings reaching the water. The Kemp's Riddley population has recovered some in the past 30 years but is still the most endangered sea turtle specie. The proposed options completely disregard that fact and are all far inferior to the current program, which, again, has been a resounding success. None of the studies proposed seem to have as a goal to save the Kemp's Riddley and help strengthen other sea turtle species. Personally, I am appalled at what is being proposed here with absolutely zero justification and no science behind it. It has profoundly shaken my trust and respect for the National Park Service and has left me wondering who is in charge here and why these changes are being proposed. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 571 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:01:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Years years from now we will look back and say wow it was pretty terrible what we did I wish we could have done Years years from now we will look back and say wow it was pretty terrible what we did I wish we could have done something different than what we have but unfortunately things are done they can't be done and nothing different can be done anymore. Well luckily things can be done and in fact all you have to do is continue doing the thing that you've already been doing please continue it. thank you

Correspondence ID: 572 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:02:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: SAVE THE TURTLES, PLEASE!!

Please do not defund and dismantle the endangered sea turtle program at Padre Island National Seashore.

They need you, we need you. Please.

Correspondence ID: 573 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:07:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To whom it may concern, I spent a large part of my childhood on the beaches with the local beach bums. From around 8 years to now being 24 years old I have my own son now. He is 8 months old and I constantly look forward to being able to visit the beach during the summer with my own little family and bbq and relax on the beach. This is The way we always have done it and we would like to keep it that way. I'm sure that the vast majority of the islanders and myself included would agree with that. Let's keep the tradition of taking our children and our families out to the beach and being able to do things the way we always have. I know I want my boy to grow up the way I did. Removing our right to drive on our beaches will change that for many of us locals. Thanks for reading and have a great day!

Correspondence ID: 574 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:08:02

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It has been very difficult to watch the turtle program being totally gutted. The turtles do not have a chance to survive now that those who were dedicated to their survival have been thrown under the bus. This is horrible.

Correspondence ID: 575 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:12:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: You cannot dismantle the protection of sea turtles. It is our personal responsibility to protect marine and all life. We as a human species have single handedly thrown nature out of balance. We are exponentially destroying it. We need protect and rehabilitate this planet.

Best regards,

Correspondence ID: 576 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:12:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please continue protecting these vulnerable species.

Correspondence ID: 577 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:13:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like to continue to drive on the beach. I'm a disabled vet and I'm not able to walk a long period and definitely can't carry things. I love going to the beach. Please don't take this away.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 578 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:17:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We need to protect our environment, and a huge part of that starts with the TURTLES. We can't simply supplement our native species with large hotels and bars. These animals care not for monetary gain, but for a chance to LIVE. I want my daughters to be able to see and learn about these fantastic creatures, but that can't happen if we don't protect them. If they don't have us, who do they have?

Correspondence ID: 579 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:17:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am building a home on Mustang Island and I have a home in Calallen TX. I want to be able to have beach access by car and have others have beach access by car. It is one of the things that attracted me to Corpus Christi and it is what I still love. Young and very old can access the beach freely. No areas are marked for hotels, private owners. This allows everyone equal access. Driving on the beach makes that possible. Please don't change this. As far as side by sides and buggies they should also have equal access. If everyone obeys the law all is well. No one wants a parking lot then walk to the beach. Please keep it open.

Correspondence ID: 580 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:22:52

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am writing in support of open beaches on North Padre Island. I have been a resident of Corpus Christi since 1987. My family and I have benefited from having easy access to area beaches. I am opposed to closing the beaches.

Correspondence ID: 581 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:44:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a National Park I understand that project planning is a must and public opinion is a must as well. If any of these projects or planning interfere with us citizens right to access the park I am and will be totally against this. Generations of my family have been loyal conservationists and protectors of PINS for over 6 decades and we certainly hope and pray that we will be able to continue to do so. As far as the Kemp Ridley Turtle program goes, this has been a very successful project and I have been fortunate to help with the release, data collecting, guarding nests etc over the past 30 years. This program must continue and Donna Shaver must continue to lead this program.

We the citizens, fishermen, outdoorsmen have always been the protectors of this beautiful, bountiful Gods given paradise where we come to free our souls under the stars and sometimes hear the lost souls of the natives conversations and the voices of settlers running aground.

Please be considerate in your planning that our access will not ever be interfered with and our Turtle program returns in full swing.

Regards,

Local PINS Native for 53 years

Correspondence ID: 582 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:47:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against any act that would prohibit the public use or driving on any Texas beach including Padre Island National Seashore

Correspondence ID: 583 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 19:53:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am against the banning of driving on the beach!! The beach is meant for visitors to enjoy it and having to walk onto the beach will discourage visitors from coming. And allowing residents to enjoy it as well. The turtles have not been harmed by driving on the beach and the program currently in place is perfect!! It allows people to see the turtles being released into the ocean where we normally wouldn't be able too do it

Correspondence ID: 584 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:04:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Padre Island National Seashore has been a very important part of the recovery of the endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtle. The National Park Service should celebrate this great accomplishment. Many people have been enlightened by the tremendous efforts that the PINS sea turtle team has made in the protection of this endangered species. Please keep promoting the PINS Sea Turtle Conservation Program as a beacon of NPS success and continue to make the American people aware that our national parks belong to the American people yet to come!

Why would NPS want to limit sea turtle releases and public outreach programs?

How does the NPS defend pilot projects included in this proposed beach management plan over 30 years of successful accomplishments of increasing the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle population? Shouldn't proposed pilot programs be conducted at a different location?

Has the proposed beach management plan looked at scientific literature to determine if Kemp's Ridley sea turtle nests on the Texas coast will have a better success hatching rate on a public driveable beach than ones moved to a hatchery location?

Does the proposed beach management plan address current research to determine if aircraft are a viable alternative during high wind conditions to conduct beach nesting surveyors? Also what is the wind window to fly the proposed research aircraft?

Please continue the PINS sea turtle conservation research activities and the public outreach programs hosted by the PINS Sea Turtle Conservation Program. Many Americans have been inspired by the hatching releases at PINS.

Correspondence ID: 585 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:09:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am in favor of conducting all of the pilot studies mentioned in the newsletter. In fact, on page II-11 of the Bi-National Recovery Plan for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle(*Lepidochelys kempii*) SECOND REVISION, it states that "Alternative strategies such as in situ incubations of nests must be evaluated."

For the past 40 years, the same nest management strategies have been used without planning for the future; the nest management strategy of patrolling the beach and collecting every single egg from every nest is no longer sustainable. The fact that the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery has the largest staff at PINS and the program receives over one quarter of the base budget, which is nearly double the average for most resource management programs in the National Park Service is disconcerting. On average, the park secures roughly \$500,000 to \$800,000 in project funds each year to support sea turtle work, bringing the total program budget to \$2.2 million annually. That's \$2.2 MILLION dollars to protect one species of turtle where 1% of the population lays eggs in the US (not just Texas) and 99% of the population lays eggs in Mexico. As a tax payer, I am deeply dismayed that money has been allocated to "save the turtles!" at the expense of other park programs. For example, there was no potable drinking water at the park for almost 8 months in 2021-2022. Clearly the park priorities are out of order.

I am disturbed that Dr. Shaver manipulates the temperature of the eggs collected from the beach and taken to the

incubation facility to intentionally create more female turtles. Ample data exist to show that a female bias exists naturally in the Kemp's ridley population in Mexico, and as it states on page II-11 of the Bi-National Recovery Plan for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) SECOND REVISION, contributing to the female bias may be "advantageous to the short-term recovery of this endangered sea turtle, but manipulation of natural sex ratios may have long-term, unknown positive or negative consequences." According to the same document (page II-7), the sand is cooler at the national seashore than in Mexico, so PINS is an important source of males for the population. Male turtles are the limiting factor in the production of a healthy, genetically diverse population of turtles, not female turtles.

Correspondence ID: 586 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:12:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I attended the February 21, 2023, meeting concerning this subject. First, I drove all the way down there from Arlington Tx thinking that I would be attending a sit-down meeting and the ability to make comments with the entire group of attendee's and presenters, however, which you know didn't happened. Saying that, let me get to my comments. I will make my comments by page.

Page 1- All seashore national parks have the same management activities, and you note that the seashore would benefit from management planning to provide guidance on these different and sometimes conflicting uses Guidelines. This SHOULD already be in place. Of course, the beach uses seashore resources. Just like all National parks. Page 2- Where can we read this bi-national Plan? It's working. Tell us what is wrong with it. Donna Shaver has done a great job in the management of the sea turtles as well as writing research papers over the past thirty year. Page 3 - Provide for hurricane resiliency? How many times in the history of the turtle nesting season has a hurricane come ashore on Padre Island. - I understand the thought process of limiting egg collection to within the park. But we need to make sure that the other areas are covered because turtles know NO boundaries. - Manage corral location to provide for hurricane resiliency? Is this really an issue? How many times in the history of the turtle program has a hurricane threaten the nesting turtles and incubation of the eggs? How many times has the in-park facility be destroyed by a hurricane? The picture you posted was not the incubation building. It was the building up on the hill where volunteers park with their RV's. The damage shown has been there for 2 or 3 years. Why has the National Parak Service NOT fixed the building? While on this subject, last year when I camped at where the showers and bathrooms are. The handicap toilet had been broken for a season, a hole was uncovered in front of the men's restroom for a season or two and the handicap ramp to go to the beach has not been fixed in 2 or 3 years. Tables have not been replaced since hurricane 2 or 3 years ago. No trash cans on beach for people enjoying on beach. WHY DOESN'T THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FIX THESE ITEMS PRIOR TO DESTROYING THE TURTLE PROGRAM????--Turtles CAN NOT BE protected against predation, inundation, and other threats with less human intervention. UNLESS, you kill all the coyotes, red ants, racoons, birds, snake, etc. You don't want to do this, do you?Turtles are protected at the 40-mile marker by a high fence and other protection. They are not left on the beach to be destroyed. - Why hold fewer public hatchling releases? Public education is stressed in these releases. People come all over to support Corpus Christi and Padre Island to go to these releases? T. he PARK benefits from these releases financially. - A partnership exist between the Seashore of stranded, rehabilitations, etc. Don't take that partnership away. We care about the nesting of Ridley as well as the other rehabilitation of turtles. - Again, you pilot study doesn't currently cover a good range to see if less human intervention can be supported. How many turtles have laid eggs within a mile of Malaquite Beach or within a mile of the research cabin at the 40 - mile marker. Not a good study. - Relocating the nests higher on the beach to improve chances for survival. Still have predators. - - Close Malaquite Beach so NPS staff so staff does not impact wildlife(?). Maybe visitor experience if it is closed. AGAIN, how many in-situ nests and other wildlife are found in and around Malaquite Beach. - Unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology. That is expensive. - One organiazstion is saying that you plan to restrict beach driving from April through July. Why? Not ONE turtle has been killed by a motor vehicle. Texas has an open beach act? - Another organization indicates that the Park will sell land to build condos on the La Page 4 - Sand Management - Not sure what North Beach is. Going out Ranger road? Any road going to beach needs regular maintenance. No new issue here. Picture associated with this section appears to be located at 40-mile marker Beach Driving - Visitor experience. People go to Padre Island to enjoy the beach from mile 1 to mile 60 down island. You must

drive! Except Malaquite Beach. You currently can't drive there but you have Maintenance for the parking lot and paths to beach. First five miles does get crowded. Maybe a bypass is a solution but then you have more road maintenance. You will also destroy the habitat that lives in that road area currently. Maybe extend the five miles to 10 miles so it is less crowded. We already pay for entrance to park. Why a beach driving permit. Page 5 - Seashore's Hurricane Response Plan Quicker repairs needed to buildings, restrooms, walkways to beach, etc. As stated above, somewhere still pending last year. Waiting for all facilities to be repaired. Takes WAY too long. Page 6 - Marine Debris - Increase beach clean-up. We volunteer twice a year and always pick up our trash and other trash while on beach. It would be helpful if more trash cans exist. No visitor as far as I have researched has been injured or killed by beach debris. The other two potential options should be researched.

In closing (I think), Donna Shaver was not even invited to these meetings nor permitted to comment on what you are trying to shove down our throats. She is under a gag order not to comment? Only Congress can override this order. Guess I will have to contact member of Congress. I was also told at the meeting that ya'll had talked to Donna Shaver 30 or 40 times. I have good information that this was a lie.

Sure, there are going to be differences between her and whomever is stirring up the pot. That is natural but should be able to come up with a solution.

KEMP'S RIDLEY IS OUR MOST ENDANGERED SEA TURTLE. THE ONLY THING PROTECTING THIS TURTLE IS THE COLLECTION OF THEIR SEA TURTLE EGGS. WHICH ARE THEN MONITORED AND RELEASED WITH AS MUCH PROTECTION AS POSSIBLE.

FUTURE PARK MANAGEMENT WILL BE UNDER A MANDATE TO PROTECT THIS PROGRAM IF WE CAN ENACT LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE SEA TURTLES. WE NEED FEDERAL SUPPORT AND WE NEED PARK MANAGEMENT NOT TO REALLOCATE FUNDS COLLECTED FOR TURTLE PROGRAM TO SAVE SOME CACTUS IN ARIZONA.

SORRY FOR GRAMMAR AND SPELLING, ETC. THAT IS NOT THE ISSUE I AM TRYING TO GET ACROSS.

Correspondence ID: 587 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:14:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: How dare you consider dismantling the protection for the national park?!?! This is the property of every tax paying citizen to enjoy and it needs to be preserved for the public. Countless wildlife also use this space and the only changes that should be made are those that further protect them from harm. In this day and age we need to do everything to help our wildlife and learn to live in peace with it. Do the right thing. Don't be a cunt.

Correspondence ID: 588 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:17:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please continue the sea turtle program as it currently is. We need more turtles and more programs to protect them, not less.

Correspondence ID: 589 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:19:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: When I was young I had a dream of joining the forestry service to become a park ranger. After reading about the direction the Park Service has taken lately I'm glad I made a different career choice.

I do not envy the position you were in. However it appears a predetermined outcome as already been put in place and to park management. I feel these comments will fall upon deaf ears and will serve as just lip service to show you did your due diligence. Texas beaches are unique in all of the world. There's not much in Texas for the size. There is very little Bureau of Land Management Land and almost no open spaces. The Padre Island National

Seashore is a slice of Heaven. Do not take that away!

If you are allowed to close the beach it will be the start of something bad. A wise man once said "Most of today's problems were created by yesterday's solutions." I implore you to think of the consequences of your solution to the Riddle's Turtle Program and beach access. What and who will benefit from the beach closures? The answer is simple developers and special interest. Everything has to start at some place. Do not let the end of Texas open beaches start with the National Park Service.

Florida has some of the most beautiful beaches in the country. That is, If you could see them. As you drive through South Beach, Miami and up the coast It's nonstop condominiums and development. Why is that? Because Florida does not have open beach policy like Texas. The beach front property has been developed. Do you not think for one moment developers would not jump at the chance to develop coastal property? Of course they would.

I am sure I don't have to remind you that the Open Beach policy is written into the constitution of Texas. It covers the entire coast from Mexico to Louisiana including the boundaries your park. If this is your decision and you are somehow allowed to close PINS beaches it will open Pandora's box! Developers and special interest will move in and use your decision as policy and a foundation and begin the work to overturn the Texas open beach act. If that is allowed to happen future generations will be deprived of something special. There's nothing special it's about an all inclusive resort with private beaches. Do not be the one to open Pandora's box.

The National Park Service mission is to "preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations." Do you still believe that? I'm finding it hard to believe that today's Park Service believes in this motto anymore. Closure and restriction is not management. It is just that a closure or restriction. As earlier stated I do not envy your position. I do believe a management plan for PINS needs to be in place. Foremost you must allow free and unfettered access to the beach in your park management plan.

In closing I believe you can come up with a fair and balanced management program that benefits the sea turtle program and open access to the beaches at Padre Island National Seashore. One of my favorite movies is Dance with Wolves. Kevin Costner's character John Dunbar was asked why he wanted to go to the frontier? Without hesitation he answered I wanted to see it before it's gone.

This is the core mission of the park service to protect our valuable resources to keep them from being "all gone." This is your responsibility and duty.

By restricting or closing beach driving during the turtle nesting season are you helping? Or are you creating a problem as an end result of your solution? Find another way protect all parties and interests involved with your management plan.

Correspondence ID: 590 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:21:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We want to continue to be able to access our beaches by using our personal vehicles.

We enjoy camping and fishing on our county beaches as well as our National Seashores.

We have park rangers as well as volunteers who see to the welfare of the wild life we share our beaches with and want to keep it that way. We have lots of volunteers who have beach clean up efforts all year long to keep our beaches clean.

Correspondence ID: 591 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:22:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hello,

I am writing to voice my concerns regarding the proposed pre-NEPA beach plan for Padre Island National Seashore. Like many in the local community, I am not ignorant of the ongoings at the Seashore between the new superintendent and the Chief of the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery, and after the release of the public newsletter and attending the pre-NEPA open house meetings, it became abundantly clear that there is a negative bias towards the sea turtle program from the superintendent and other chiefs. No staff from the Sea Turtle Division was represented at the meeting and members of the public were told they were out of town when indeed they were there attending as members of the public. A representative of USFW here in Corpus Christi was told by an NPS Division chief, the reason the only animal management plan was on sea turtles was that there were already acts protecting birds and mammals, completely excluding the endangered species act with which all sea turtles are under. Truly unprofessional and concerning as a taxpayer who loves the National Parks System and the protection and recovery of sea turtles.

Additionally, I have been working with sea turtles in Texas for the last decade and my knowledge of sea turtle biology, local research, and regional conservation methods is greater than most. After reading the plan it seems everyone but NPS sea turtle biologists was consulted on these proposed pilot studies and management options. Potential pilot Studies 1 and 2 are completely absurd and from a basic understanding and love of nature, it is upsetting that the national seashore has suggested sacrificing nests of the most endangered sea turtle in the world, for studies that have already been conducted by the Sea turtle division and can be done without sacrificing sea turtle nests. The Kemp's ridley Bi-national Recovery Plan (2011) states, "the nesting and hatchling recruitment data are encouraging and indicate past and current conservation measures have been and are highly effective" and "the highest priority needs for Kemp's ridley recovery are to maintain and strengthen the conservation efforts that have proven successful". Proposed pilot study 3 is also an obvious jab to the turtle program and shows how out of touch the majority of the park leaders are with the public. For one this seems as though it would effectively end turtle patrol efforts as the UTVs used for turtle patrols use a road from park headquarters to the beach and are not street legal. Secondly, visitors and members of the public love to see the turtle patrollers drive by and we are proud there are turtles in Texas.

Furthermore, Pre-NEPA beach management plans also addressed alternative options for sea turtle recovery efforts, all of which are aimed at dismantling the current recovery program and are not realistic.

Vary sea turtle patrols, including the timing, frequency, and methods - Patrol efforts are used to monitor the recovery of the species by allowing biologists to accurately document the numbers of turtles nesting and protect nests to maximize hatchling survivability. Without patrols how would we maintain/ strengthen the monitoring program so that the species can be delisted?

Limit egg collections to within park boundary - This ignorantly suggests that other areas of Texas would 1) have funds to build and maintain a well-functioning corral or incubation room 2) a person with extensive knowledge of sea turtle egg incubation to run the corral or incubation room and 3) would be able to obtain the permits required to relocate and incubate sea turtle eggs.

Adaptively manage corral location to provide for hurricane resiliency - No eggs are relocated to a corral after a certain date to ensure no nests are in the corral by the start of hurricane season when the corral is deconstructed.

Hold fewer public hatchling releases and or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education - The NPS 2023 mission statement is to "preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations". From a logical standpoint; how would holding fewer public releases and or limiting crowd size benefit a focus on public education and inspire future generations? It is very unclear what the benefit of this proposed management plan is.

Adjust research operations (e.g. do not relocate every nest) - This is very vague and concerning and leaves me questioning what the point of this is. What are the intentions? This is not transparent at all.

Alternative incubation facility(s): in-park facility may not survive a direct hit from the hurricane - Again suggests that other areas of Texas would 1) have funds to build and maintain a well-functioning corral or incubation room 2) a person with extensive knowledge of sea turtle egg incubation to run the corral or incubation room and 3) would be able to obtain the permits required to relocate and incubate sea turtle eggs.

Stranding/ rehabilitation/ release of juvenile and adult rehabilitated turtles redefine the extent of Seashore involvement and release locations - As the stranding and nesting coordinator is part of the NPS and federal entity, the division financially supports and works closely with rehabilitation centers and recovery efforts related to nesting the stranded turtles across the state of Texas. Why reshape these great partnerships by removing NPS from the public eye and putting more strain on smaller partners?

To end I would again like to express my deep concerns for the proposed beach management plan and more specifically the proposed pilot studies and alternative options for sea turtle management that will greatly hinder turtle programs' ability to operate in a manner that is safe for their employees and protects sea turtles and their nests. Overall the pre-NEPA beach management plan seems focused on preventing the established and successful patrol and nest relocation efforts in Texas that aid in the recovery of sea turtles.

Thank you,

A concerned citizen

Correspondence ID: 592 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:28:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Turtles are some of the most commonly endangered species on earth, and protecting them is a responsibility we have to bear. They cannot advocate for themselves, so I will on their behalf. Theres nothing I'd hate to see more than a world where these wonderful creatures no longer exist. So please, I beg of you, maintain the program helping them. There's nothing I can do out here, in a sea of corn fields, but the peace of mind I would have would be incredible.

Correspondence ID: 593 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:29:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Keep North Padre Island in Nueces County open for driving.

Correspondence ID: 594 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:40:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: They already have enough to deal with between climate change, pollution, and rampant overfishing. Give them a fighting chance. If they go extinct it could have unintended consequences on the food web as their predators and prey, and those organisms predators and prey, change populations, which could even turn around and impact humans food supply.

Correspondence ID: 595 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:42:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please save the turtles we have been destroying their home, filling it with oil, warming it up and dumping plastic in it. Imagine if someone did that to you and then refused to help you out.

Correspondence ID: 596 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:42:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The beach should be open for all texas. Not for people who want to divide it for their own it for their desires

The city is corrupt in many ways

Taxpayers are paying for services that are not being provided where is Bob hall pier I have surfed and lived here for 30 years and am vehemently against any restrictionsy corporation who will ruin the beach .that being said i will not vote for anyone who supports ruining our beaches !

Correspondence ID: 597 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:48:53

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: What is happening to Dr. Shaver is awful. She is critical in the survival of these sea turtles. Texas and the treatment of its environment and (extremely limited) public lands is the main reason I'd never consider traveling or living there.

Correspondence ID: 598 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:54:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear Madams & Sirs,

What's precious to CC people is being able to drive on our beach!

---Revenue can be earned in different ways.

***However, we should definitely NOT ban beach driving!

Thanks so much for protecting our beach driving (very precious to CC people)!

Correspondence ID: 599 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:56:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear Madams & Sirs,

What's precious to CC people is being able to drive on our beach!

---Revenue can be earned in different ways.

***However, we should definitely NOT ban beach driving!

Thanks so much for protecting our beach driving (very precious to CC people), Madams & Sirs!

Correspondence ID: 600 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 20:58:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear Madams & Sirs,

What's precious to CC people is being able to drive on our beach!

---Revenue can be earned in different ways.

***However, we should definitely NOT ban beach driving!

Thanks so much for protecting our beach driving (very precious to CC people)!

May God bless you & your family, Madams & Sirs.

Correspondence ID: 601 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:00:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Regarding Padre Island National Seashore:

Do not limit access or shut down any portion of the National Seashore during any time period of the year.

Furthermore do not dismantle and defund the endangered sea turtle program.

Correspondence ID: 602 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:16:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: SAVE THE TURTLES YOU FUCKWADS. DON'T DEFUND THIS PROGRAM.

Correspondence ID: 603 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:17:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not defund or dismantle the sea turtle science and recovery program! We all love the sea turtles and are proud of how well the program has done in revitalizing the populations of these endangered species. They are so cute! We know what will happen if the program is dismantled: they will race back towards extinction. That would be a tragedy no one will forget.

Correspondence ID: 604 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:24:41

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Continue allowing driving on the beaches of PINS.

Do NOT defund the turtle program st PINS.

Correspondence ID: 605 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:28:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Save the Save the Sea turtles program! I can't believe it is in danger of being defunded! This is awful! Save the turtles!!!

Correspondence ID: 606 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:28:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please help keep our beaches safe and drivable. We have a unique ability to access parts of the beach and we all take care of it and love it. We are passionate about our beaches!! Our turtle programs and birding here is among the best in the world

Correspondence ID: 607 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:28:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please continue to allow driving on the beach.

Please continue funding the turtle program.

Correspondence ID: 608 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:29:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Do not defund please save the sea turtles.

Correspondence ID: 609 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 21:31:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: save the turtles program!

Correspondence ID: 610 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 21:34:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The National Park Service should create a beach management plan for the Padre Island National Seashore to ensure the sustainable use and preservation of this valuable natural resource. The beach and its associated ecosystems provide habitat for a diverse range of plant and animal species, including several endangered or threatened species. In addition, the beach is an important recreational resource, attracting millions of visitors each year.

However, uncontrolled visitation and development can lead to negative impacts on the beach and its ecosystem, including erosion, pollution, and damage to wildlife habitat. A beach management plan can help mitigate these impacts by providing guidelines for visitor use, beach maintenance, and ecosystem conservation.

According to a study by Sánchez-Moyano et al. (2019), the implementation of a beach management plan can improve the sustainability of beach tourism and ensure the conservation of natural resources. The study found that a well-designed beach management plan can effectively manage visitor use, reduce environmental impacts, and promote sustainable tourism practices.

Therefore, creating a beach management plan for the Padre Island National Seashore is essential for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of this valuable natural resource.

Reference:

Sánchez-Moyano, J. E., Martín-Consuegra, F., & Llopis-Albert, C. (2019). Sustainable management of beach tourism: Beach user profiles and preferences. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 27(9), 984-1003.

Correspondence ID: 611 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 21:37:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Do not dismantle the sea turtle program or driving on the beach in north padre island, please. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 612 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 21:38:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am writing in opposition to the closing of the beach to vehicle traffic and the changing of the turtle program.

1. Texas has very little public land, and this would remove access for most people to a large portion of public beach.

2. The turtle program has been very successful in south Texas for decades. It brings in tourism dollars and protects the turtles from predation while still allowing recreational use of the beach.

3. We have lived in Florida, and this is very different. Florida has made it very difficult for the average person to enjoy the beach. Public access is one of the treasures of the Texas coast.

Correspondence ID: 613 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:40:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Don't dismantle protectors for turtles! Why would you consider doing this!?!

Correspondence ID: 614 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:42:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: After reading through the pamphlet and attending the open house meeting it is clear the Pre-NEPA Beach Management Plan is being used as a front to minimize the turtle program. The pamphlet was riddled with errors and downplayed the stature of the sea turtle program. For example, Kemp's ridley restoration activities began over 40 years ago, not 30.

On the first page of the handout natural resources listed include protected birds, reptiles, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, but doesn't specifically mention sea turtles, yet two pages are then dedicated to these animals. And, where are the considerations for protected birds that utilize the park? I would expect a beach management plan proposing to limit access would have mentioned something about protecting its threatened birds. It's a "beach management plan" but at the meeting there were one, maybe two posters each for beach driving, marine debris, sand management, and hurricane recovery. Three posters were dedicated to sea turtles.

Sea Turtle Management-

The proposed method of nesting management would not protect nests from high tides, excessive temperatures, predators, people interfering, deep tire ruts, and beach traffic.

There is no need for an alternative incubation facility. The turtle lab staff have years of specialized experience, and the facility was built for a category 5 hurricane.

What is the point of holding fewer hatchling releases? Reducing hatchling releases would reduce public engagement, education, and economic opportunity for the community. People from all over the country come to the seashore to see hatchlings. Why would you want to limit this?

Pilot Studies-

It is impossible to stop intervening without endangering survival of nests and eggs unless all beach access is prohibited.

How would UTVs get on the beach to conduct patrols if driving was removed from closed beach? A patrol program just isn't feasible with walking/camping in a nesting area this size.

Drones? The nesting area is massive and using a drone on high wind days is difficult. Kemp's tracks can disappear within minutes. This is not a feasible option.

The pilot studies are unnecessary and will only lead to increased mortality of a critically endangered sea turtle.

Beach Driving-

Sea turtle patrols have protected turtles from vehicular traffic which has allowed the beach to stay open to driving.

Dr. Shaver built the turtle program from the ground up and she needs to continue leading the program that protects this critically endangered species. The Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program is 100% funded

through the efforts of Dr. Shaver and Cynthia Rubio. The intended use of those funds is very specific: protect the Kemp's ridley sea turtle.

Correspondence ID: 615 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:42:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not close access to the beach or stop the sea turtle program. We really appreciate the beach access on the National Seashore, particularly during the time period in question, April through July. The sea turtle program was so successful, so popular with tourists, and so popular with the locals. It makes me angry to know that the national park service wants to dismantle the sea turtle program and restrict beach access.

Correspondence ID: 616 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:44:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: This is a beautiful beach and wonderful to visit. I am opposed to any plan that would further restrict public access to it.

Correspondence ID: 617 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:46:32

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: While the long-term goal for the recovery of any species should be a return to natural state, this can only apply when the species has recovered enough to allow that action. While Kemp's ridley nesting has increased both internationally and in Texas, the species is far from that point today. Even at major nesting beaches in Mexico, eggs are collected and protected until hatched. If left unprotected in situ, many to the majority of clutches will be impacted by one of a number of threats. These include:

Predation - which occurs with high frequency on Padre Island National Seashore. Any suggestion to the contrary doesn't have accurate data nor personal experience with sea turtle nesting on the island.

Salt Water Inundation - with rising sea levels and increased tidal fluctuations, surges frequently reach the dunes posing catastrophic consequences to any in situ clutches.

Management strategies in place under the guidance of Dr. Donna Shaver should not only remain in place, but be further encouraged and supported. This includes protection and research not only surrounding Kemp's ridleys, but all species of sea turtle. Nesting of green sea turtles has greatly increased under Dr. Shaver's stewardship and changing this now could eliminate all gains in that increase. In addition, the first recorded successful clutch in Texas in greater than 50 years of a leatherback was recorded last year on neighboring S. Padre. Changes to sea turtle management plans on PINS could severely hinder a possibility of leatherback recovery.

These points are just a few of many which indicate radical change to sea turtle recovery strategies at PINS will negatively impact such recovery. This does take into account the negative impact to the local economy nor the devastating impact of reduced public access to public lands.

The manner in which recent changes have been enacted and veiled from public view with only cursory attempts at information sharing speak to a larger issue that warrants further investigation and demands honesty as to the motives behind them.

Correspondence ID: 618 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:49:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am deeply concerned about the proposed changes to the management of Kemp's ridley sea turtles at the Padre Island National Seashore. Put simply, these proposed changes are counter to what all best available science says we should be doing to manage Kemp's Ridley sea turtle nesting. Per the 2011 binational recovery plan: "The highest priority needs for Kemp's ridley recovery are to maintain and strengthen the conservation efforts that have proven successful. On the nesting beaches, this includes reinforcing habitat protection efforts, protecting nesting females and nests, and maintaining or increasing hatchling production levels." The activities taking place on Padre Island over the past decades to protect

Kemp's ridley nests have been immensely successful and there is simply no logical reason to change the practices that we know have worked given the conservation status of this species. The species has still not reached recovery goals as outlined in the binational recovery plan for downlisting, and given the ongoing questions about the population's status it seems like a horrible time to start tweaking their management in ways that could have deleterious effects.

Some of the proposed activities and pilot studies are particularly ridiculous and risky given the species' precarious status. We should not be altering patrols, egg collection activities, nor relocation activities in any way that may reduce the number of nests protected and hatchlings entering the ocean.

Pilot study 1: While the goal of leaving all nest in-situ is admirable, and is a clear long-term goal, we are well away from the point of this being an effective management strategy for Kemp's ridleys in Texas. The reason that hatcheries are so critical to this species' management is because it is the only way we can effectively maximize hatchling survival. There are so few sea turtles nesting in Texas that predators will have a very easy time finding and destroying nests. There is a wealth of research on this topics from all over the world. Initiating such a study at this time specific to Texas is redundant, misguided, and a waste of resources. We know in-situ nests (even those protected with cages) can have lower survival rates than well-managed hatcheries. The only hope for this species' long-term recovery and survival is to maximize survival at each life stage, and that cannot be achieved by transitioning to in-situ nest management.

Pilot study 2: Does moving nests protect them from inundation, or flooding? Yes. See the hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific articles on this topic. Again, redundant and a waste of resources.

Pilot study 3: This one seems to imply that NPS vehicles alter sea turtle behavior or their nests. At this point, best practices in the use of vehicles on nesting beaches are well-established and are being followed on Padre Island. Since Kemp's ridleys nest during the day, there's little risk in coming upon a nesting female unexpectedly, and its standard practice to drive near the water line to avoid running over in-situ nests during nest surveys around the world. Also, why does the visitor experience matter when we are talking about the management of endangered species?

Pilot study 4: Sure, UAVs would help monitoring nesting, but what is needed is nest protection. UAVs do not do that.

The Padre Island National Seashore has run an incredibly successful sea turtle nesting program over multiple decades. It is a model program in the U.S. and around the world. This is evidenced by the increasing number of Kemp's ridleys nesting on Texas beaches. However, we are still far from reaching the species' recovery goals, so any alteration to their management should be received with great skepticism. The proposed changes are more likely to have a negative effect on hatchling production than a positive one. There is simply no compelling scientific justification for altering the management of the sea turtle on Padre Island National Seashore.

Correspondence ID: 619 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 21:50:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Find an alternate funding source, get creative, but this project cannot be dismantled!

Correspondence ID: 620 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:06:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: In so far as the Turtle Rescue Program on N Padre Island, if funds appropriated to the program are not redistributed to other projects I believe that the Turtle Program can continue to be even more successful. The volunteer program is a great help and allowing beach access is also a plus. Locals n visitors prove to be beneficial if given information about contacting the right personnel when nests are found or when turtles are

sighted (alive injured or dead). Perhaps contact #s on signs posted along the beach can be helpful during turtle season. I am against restricting traffic on the beach during this time.

Correspondence ID: 621 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:22:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Briefly:

While I support the Turtle program described in pages 2 and 3, I would offer that option 3 is not supportive of the program as motorists on a number of occasions have provided invaluable sightings and assistance to nest locations over the years.

Sand Management (page 4) should be handled to allow access by visitors at all times. The balance of visitors and habitat can be managed together, but access should remain at all times.

Beach driving (page 4) should be allowed at all times and visitor capacity should be determined based on total area of the park and not limited to certain footages from the water.

I would agree that the first potential option for storm recovery turnaround (page 5) is best for continued visitation and participation. Access should be available as soon as an initial check is completed.

I believe continued access and participation amongst regular visitors will be beneficial to beach cleanup and increased organized activities in the park (page 6).

Ultimately, I believe beach access and driving is critical to assisting park staff with the turtle program, beach cleanliness, and success of the park. Any limitation of that will not only alienate regular visitors but will substantially impact future visitors as well.

A park without visitors is simply a vacant lot.

Correspondence ID: 622 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:22:20

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Save the Turtles

Correspondence ID: 623 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:25:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hey, we the people of Texas want you to leave our beaches alone. We like driving on them. It makes it unique compared to elsewhere. We like our turtle program. You bring outsiders to tell us Texans how to manage our beaches. Leave it alone! Go away! We want the Superintendent, the mendacious one, the one that gave back the monies for the turtle program (grant money) on North Padre Island to pound sand. Retire, go to another country! Leave our beaches on North Padre Island alone. You don't want your destructive input. You have proven not to be trusted. Please just go away!

The Superintendent is the problem!

Notice not one meeting was held on North Padre Island. Wonder why?

Correspondence ID: 624 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:30:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Sea turtles need habitat so they can repopulate and get off the endangered species list. The best way we can ensure this as Americans is utilize our public land and continue to implement programs like the

endangered turtle program on Padre Island National Seashore. Be a bro, not a foe. Turtles in the half shell, turtle power!

Correspondence ID: 625 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:35:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion. The Padre Island National Seashore is a special place to my family and I. We take day fishing trips down the shore, walk with parents on Malaquite Beach, and take morning coffee and burrito drives on North Beach. It is hard to think about changing it and I ask that the process be respectful and thoughtful. With the growth that we see occurring on the Island it is clear that there will be more congestion and pressure with regards to business and traffic.

BEACH DRIVING:

I support continued open beach travel on most of the available beach. I encourage you to keep the North Beach open and available to connect to Klieburg County beach. The 8-mile drive (natl.seasore, Kleburg, and Nueces beaches combined) is a beautiful regular experience for many who live close to the park.

I support creating a new bypass road for an additional 5 (or more miles) down the beach to avoid visitor congestion at the entrance of the beach access point.

SAND MANAGEMENT:

I support North Beach Access Improvements. The work to repave and recondition entry roads has been beneficial.

HURRICANE AND STORM RECOVER RELATED TO CLOSURES

I support reopening the Seashore after an initial safety and resource check.

DEBRIS:

I support use of all options identified in this effort.

I would also like more information regarding how to stay up with current issues of discussion related to park maintenance, access, and planning. I look forward to continuing to explore and grow from our visits. I also understand that supporting the park requires coordinated involvement from stakeholders who are willing to look hard find agreement for future use.

3//14/2023

Correspondence ID: 626 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:38:12

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Protect our access to public beaches, and protect our lands from being poached by private investors. I'm more against the proposed pipelines that will cross our vulnerable estuaries. We also need to reconsider approving projects that will further harm our beaches through erosion or oil spills. Please be responsible by instating rules that will promote conservation and help our beaches.

Correspondence ID: 627 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:46:25

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is unconcionable to define a program that saves hundreds of endangered and injured animals a year. Such an action is a disservice to the US and it's citizens. The deaths of hundreds of turtles is going to be in the hands of the parks service.

Correspondence ID: 628 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:47:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Don't end the sea turtle program. Sea turtles are awesome.

Correspondence ID: 629 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:48:30

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please don't mess with the turtles, keep the program going.

Correspondence ID: 630 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:51:18

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please do not dismantle the endangered sea turtle program! Endangered species like the Kemp's Ridley, loggerhead, green, hawksbill, and leatherback sea turtles are all dependent upon conservation to protect them from extinction! Please work to ensure the continued funding and functioning of the Padre Island National Seashore Endangered Sea Turtle Program.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 631 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,14 2023 22:51:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: A Beach Management Plan for Padre Island National Seashore (PINS) is likely necessary to protect resources as visitor numbers increase. Any management plan developed, however, should not reduce the efforts of the highly successful Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program established by Dr. Shaver who has expertly coordinated the program to conduct valuable research on Kemp's ridleys and other sea turtle species resulting in almost 200 scientific papers contributing to sea turtle recovery and conservation.

Kemp's ridleys currently remain critically endangered and all nests/eggs laid should be fully protected until criteria established for downlisting the population are met. Surveys to document nests should be conducted seven days a week over the entire area of PINS in order to locate and protect virtually all nests/eggs laid. Kemp's ridleys nest primarily on very windy days where their tracks are soon obscured by blowing sand so it is critical to locate nests quickly to prevent them from being damaged or destroyed. Alternative means to document nesting, such as using drones, would be problematic since there are issues flying drones when wind speeds are high which is preferred nesting weather for Kemp's ridleys. The relatively small, lightweight utility vehicles used to survey for nesting turtles have minimal impact on beach resources and the benefits for the species outweigh the impacts. The public understands the need and is supportive of nesting surveys being conducted.

The number of public hatchling releases should not be reduced. These events educate the public about sea turtle conservation and leave an impression on attendees that can have lifelong impacts for protection of turtles as well as other animal species. Seeing hatchling turtles being released is very impactful and the conservation message is spread to others as attendees share their experience with family and friends.

Stranding and salvage activities conducted by the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program, including transporting sick or injured animals to rehabilitation facilities, should be continued. All sea turtle species are either threatened or endangered so documenting the cause of stranding, human impacts and collecting basic biological information on each individual is very important. Conducting necropsies on a subset of strandings provides additional health status information which is valuable for conservation efforts.

Improving sand management activities and overlaying maps of sensitive habitats to minimize sand management impacts sound like good ideas.

Creating an inland road to facilitate down island access seems like it could be a viable alternative to reduce beach impacts and improve visitor experience in the heavily trafficked MM 0-5 area. Developing a program to educate

the public on how to minimize impacts on turtles, birds, plants, etc when driving on the beach should be considered. Often ignorance of impacts can be mitigated by basic education.

Beach cleanup activities should be increased with an emphasis on public education and documenting types and volumes of debris collected so that the source(s) of debris can be determined and steps can be taken to prevent future debris washing ashore.

After hurricanes / tropical storms, PINS should reopen after an initial safety and resource check and basic visitor safety is provided.

Correspondence ID: 632 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 22:57:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Protect the turtles!

Correspondence ID: 633 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 23:10:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: 1. I am concerned with any proposal that would lead to a reduction in access for visitors to the beach. Padre Island National Seashore is unique in being accessible by vehicle, yet remote enough to spread out away from other people. Closing more of the beach to driving would severely limit access, while turning the close parts of the beach into crowded tourist beaches just like most other beaches.

2. Concerning the use of drones to monitor for sea turtles: even if it could be done effectively, and more cost effectively than volunteers in vehicles, it would also have to be unobtrusive both to park visitors and to wildlife. PINS has many birds including rare species such as Aplomado Falcons that may be disturbed by drone flights. Further, use of drones by Park employees would probably lead to more use of drones by visitors, even if it remains prohibited.

3. Regarding the proposed cutbacks to turtle programs: while it may seem an obvious target for budget savings, the sea turtle program and especially the Kemps Ridley Sea Turtles are a major part of the Park, and all would suffer if those programs were cut back - visitors, the park itself, and especially the turtles. Just today I was in the Visitor Center and noticed that a significant portion of the items for sale included sea turtle images, from the collectible coins, magnets, and keychains by the register, to the drinkware, and even half the books for sale on the shelves were about sea turtles. The Park mascot, brought out for events, is a sea turtle. Seeing live turtles in the water, seeing the turtle releases either in person or reported on the local news, are important memories and connections that people make with the Padre Island National Seashore, and cutting those programs would damage the park's public image.

Correspondence ID: 634 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 23:10:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Do not do this. The habitat of endangered wildlife should be protected.

Correspondence ID: 635 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 23:17:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Save the turtles!!! I like turtles.

Correspondence ID: 636 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 23:41:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Padre Island National Seashore employees were invited to submit comments as citizens and I am submitting comments in that capacity for myself, Dr. Donna J. Shaver. The sea turtle program was begun by the NPS in the 1970s. The NPS requested that I lead the work at the National Seashore starting in the mid-1980s and I have represented the program since that time. I worked with many partners to develop the most effective program possible with the financial constraints that we had through the decades. We consistently worked to improve our methods through study of results from efforts and adaptive management to improve areas where we would enhance survival further.

The Kemp's Ridley Recovery Plan does not state that management should be hands off. It states that the goal of this work is to recover the species so that hopefully someday self-sustaining populations can thrive. Kemp's ridley is still critically depleted, and nowhere near the NPS being ready to take the exit strategy out of this work and claim victory or the work unnecessary because these turtles are inconsequential. The numbers nesting at PAIS have grown to numbers that could form the seed of a secondary nesting colony which indeed could provide the safeguard against extinction as the pioneers of this work envisioned. However, more decades of work is needed. The survival strategy of this species is predator swamping where hatchlings must emerge on the beach in such great numbers concentrated in space and time that they swamp or overwhelm the predators. Although nesting nest numbers in Texas have increased significantly, nests are not concentrated in space and time, sufficiently to swamp predators. More years of nesting and building of the secondary nesting colony are needed. However, the possibility is real that it could form based on observations of arribada behavior emerging. More years of patience and commitment to this work that the NPS committed to in the 1970s is necessary.

The numbers nesting in Texas, particularly at PAIS, are critical to providing the safeguard against extinction, that becomes increasingly a need that sadly may occur as cartels take over the nesting beaches in Mexico. The survival of this entire species may depend on this population of Kemp's ridleys nesting in south Texas, primarily at PAIS. Extinction of a species in the light of conservation programs signals a catastrophic failure of commitment. Now is not the time of walkway and betray the legacy that the NPS was trying to leave future generations for these turtles.

The research program largely stopped in mid-2019 must immediately be returned to full strength. I was told that BP settled the entire DWH case because of my Kemp's ridley data. Data collected from long term studies I began and lead, and papers I have published have been critical to increasing understanding of Kemp's ridleys and sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico. This research is vital but has been incredibly difficult to conduct with little funding available for this work in Texas. Our research program has been largely dismantled and I have been told by the NPS that nobody except a few academics would care if you ended your decades long, unique, data sets for this species. They have little value for the data or even the survival of the turtles, with one NPS employee suggesting that I let sea turtles be run over to obtain funding from a close project partner. I could not take that recommendation and was appalled at the devaluing of this endangered species.

The USFWS manages for the population of sea turtles that occur in the US. So, to them the turtles that nest in Texas are critically important to their conservation efforts for Kemp's ridley. Just thinking we are only a fraction of what occurs in Mexico clouds the critical value of those turtles that could hold the future for the species if climate change makes it too hot at Rancho Nuevo or cartels cut off access to the beaches in Mexico to biologists.

Turtle program must continue as it was through mid-2019.: PAIS is the most important Kemp's ridley nesting beach in the United States and a secondary nesting colony is becoming established. I must continue leading the Division I built with the funding I brought in and leading the program that I have built from the ground up. Actions to oust me must stop so that I can provide my expertise to help guide this critical program. The NPS took a detour listening to a contingent of individuals that were self-serving and not knowledgeable about Kemp's ridley or Texas. All partners have approved and loved participating in these efforts where we were making a difference. We must restore our robust education program that was slashed. Base and Early Restoration funding aimed for increase patrol efforts and base funding aimed for increased numbers of public releases, but these have been decreased instead. Survival of turtles will soon suffer as these turtles are put at increased risk. All species should

remain part of conservation efforts, as has always occurred in our program.

The entire program, including patrols north of the park on North Padre, must continue. Turtles regularly nest in PAIS and outside of PAIS on North Padre. It is essential that our data collection and protection processes include the nesting that occurs north of the park on North Padre too.

Funding for this work must be restored and this program must be returned as a priority to the NPS as it had been for decades.

Correspondence ID: 637 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 23:44:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Protect the PINS program in Corpus Christi, Texas

Correspondence ID: 638 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,14 2023 23:58:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please protect turtles! They deserve our attention and protection.

Correspondence ID: 639 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,15 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: You have many miles of national seashore. Please designate a few areas specifically for nude swimming and nude sunbathing.

Correspondence ID: 640 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,15 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: The Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Center of Excellence and Innovation (LSUASC) is a member of Texas A&M Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) and one of seven Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-designated UAS test sites (UASTS). As a UASTS, LSUASC focuses on research, development, testing, evaluation, and implementation of UAS technologies across academic, public, and commercial sectors. Since its inception in 2014, the center has conducted over 4,675 flights and logged over 1,250 flight hours across more than 60 different types of aircraft, sensors, and technologies, including UAS applications within the public safety realm. Since 2014, teams from TAMU-CC and LSUASC have supported disaster and emergency response efforts following the Wimberley floods in 2015, Hurricane Harvey in 2017, and most recently Hurricane Hanna in 2020.

As a part of TAMU-CC, LSUASC works closely with the Harte Research and Carl Blucher Institutes, as well as the Life Sciences and Coastal Studies departments. Since 2020, LSUASC has worked with the Life Sciences Department assisting in dolphin research in the Coastal Bend.

As a leader in drone technology, LSUASC wishes to help create an improved process for beach management at Padre Island National Seashore, using UAS to improve the management and research of sea turtles. UAS can be used to develop a beach monitoring process to locate and monitor sea turtles and their nests. This opportunity aligns with Potential Pilot Study 3: Remove or reduce NPS vehicles from Malaquite Beach, except for emergency use, and Potential Pilot Study 4: Would unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology be effective monitoring for nesting sea turtles. Frequent use of UAS for beach monitoring could reduce NPS vehicles and human presence at Malaquite Beach, while improving the efficiency and frequency of beach monitoring. LSUASC looks forward to discussions with the National Park Service in preserving the National Seashore.

Please feel free to contact Tye Payne, Assistant Director for Operations, Testing & Evaluation at or myself at if you have any questions.

Correspondence ID: 641 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,15 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program

- 1) The Sea Turtle Program at PINS has been developed by NPS to conserve a critically endangered turtle species, along with several other threatened species, and to provide a vehicle for public engagement and education along with outdoor recreation.
- 2) The Sea Turtle Program at PINS is one of the most famous and popular programs in the National Park Service.
- 3) Kemp's-Ridley is the most endangered species of sea turtle in the world. The other four species occurring on PTNS are also threatened, but not placed in the "critically endangered" category.
- 4) Public outreach and education are normally associated with park goals, however, a proposed Beach Management Plan Sea Turtle Program option is to "Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size" and to "focus releases on public education." Please define the issue. It can be argued that large turnout for public releases is good, and that the program should be expanded to engage even more of the public. It is also not clear how holding fewer public releases and limiting attendance when held would focus releases on public education.
- 5) The PINS request for comments on its pre-proposal observes that a goal of the Kemp's Ridley bi-national action plan is for sea turtles to exist without human assistance. This is of course the long-term goal, but it should not be implied that this point has been reached. No knowledgeable person is making such a claim. Some progress has been made in restoring populations, but reproductive readiness requires 10-15 years for Kemp's Ridley, and trawlers continue to take some toll, even with TED's. Can you support the suggestion that the time has come to drop human involvement in restoration and conservation of Kemp's Ridley and other species?

Regarding "Potential Pilot Study 1: In-Situ nesting- -can predation be reduced without moving eggs?"

Comments: This is a good question, and I believe it can be answered- -even without a study-by contacting (on the record) three to five top turtle researchers, especially in the western Gulf of Mexico, and asking them of their knowledge of, and estimate of, the success of various techniques used to date to fence/corral and protect turtle nests from predators until hatching and release. If there is already good information allowing a consensus, then by all means put this option on the table, so long as public beach access is respected.

Regarding "Potential Pilot Study 2: Does moving nests protect them from inundation, or flooding?"

Comments: The Park states that this technique has been successful in other places for other species is encouraging. If there is consensus among experts on this point, by all means it should be tried at PINS. One obvious caveat: well-documented rising sea level suggests this will become more of a factor in the future. both in frequency and length of time of possible inundation, as well as cutting steep embankments on foredunes in some places. This measure could work on PINS if it works elsewhere with similar beach structure, so long as public beach access is respected.

Regarding "Potential Pilot Study 3: Remove or reduce NPS vehicles from Malaquite Beach, except for emergency use" The stated goal is to determine whether removing NPS vehicles (the only vehicles allowed on the four miles of Malaquite Beach) would improve "visitor experience" and "better protect sea turtles."

Comments: This seems like a low research priority. How many transits of Malaquite Beach per day are conducted by NPS vehicles? There is no identified goal here for the described research program. Is there reason to believe visitors or sea turtles are being disrupted?

Regarding "Potential Pilot Study 4: Would unmanned aerial vehicles or other video technology be effective monitoring for nesting sea turtles?"

Comments: This seems like a very good question to answer. Is there any experience on this already available, i.e., have researchers already tested (for turtles or similar applications) drone types, height of surveillance, image definition needed, range, base station equipment, etc?

Undoubtedly permit exemptions could be obtained by NPS. It seems like this technology could be adapted for observing turtle tracks, which are quite visible. Limited use of drones for conservation objectives would seem to be relatively unobtrusive for both park users and wildlife.

Sand Management

"Potential Option: North Beach Access Improvements"

Comments: If it is not already PINS policy to monitor, on a daily basis, the blacktop road/sand junction at North Beach (and South Beach, too), with immediate maintenance response with necessary vehicles and supplies, to pack, grade, or otherwise repair an impassable soft sand area as needed, it should become standard procedure.

The beach is the reason for the Park's existence and creation, and if there is a bottleneck at these two points, public access to the Park is greatly limited. It should be noted that very soft sand at the entrance to South Beach has been observed for multiple days without maintenance attention.

Regarding "Potential Option: "Adjust current sand management to be more protective of sensitive habitats"

Comments: This proposed Beach Management Plan option is unclear. Has the public or Park staff raised concern about some habitat destruction from sand management which should be addressed? Developing integrated "maps of sand management activities" with "maps of sensitive habitats" would seem to be a low budget priority unless there is an identified issue.

Beach Driving

Texans have overwhelmingly supported, and codified into law, guaranteed public access to all beaches, in the Open Beaches Act. It should be the number one priority of PINS to facilitate and expand access to the Padre Island beaches. There is an ever-growing population to serve, and even though PINS is over 60 years old, there are still 55 miles of beach of South Beach mostly limited to 4-wheel drive access, and which access is slow even to those with 4-wheel drive vehicles. The Beach Management Plan should definitely include extending a behind-the-dunes road (blacktop preferred) to the 5mm, as commented below. Furthermore, the Plan should clearly state that in years to come the behind-the-dunes road will continue to be extended in 5 or 10 mile increments to the Mansfield jetty.

It should be noted that PINS currently prohibits beach driving on the approximately 4-mile stretch of Malaquite Beach, providing a non-beach driving experience to those who desire it. However, public access to this beach is limited to two points: 1) walk-in access from the Malaquite Visitor Center parking lot and 2) walk-in access from the behind-the-dunes campground. Additional access points may be needed at soon, if not now.

Proposed Beach Management Plan "Potential Option: Assess visitor capacity at the Seashore to determine the need for beach driving permits to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience."

Comments: I suggest that staff can review the visitor data for peak usage periods, generally summer weekend and holiday days, and estimate from ranger/park police/other employees the number of vehicles utilizing miles 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and see pretty well how heavy the vehicle per-mile of beach use is, and on how many weekends it occurs. The first five miles of South Beach beachgoers' vehicle-per-mile numbers are probably comparable to (if not less than) those occurring at Mustang Island beaches, at the north end near Port Aransas, and at the southern end of Mustang.

While the peak days' usage numbers, and frequency, should be known, it seems unnecessary to "assess visitor capacity" and divide beaches, issue, monitor, and enforce beach permits at the Seashore "to protect Seashore resources and visitor experience." I think the heavy-usage days on certain beaches, like the 0-5mm on South Beach, can be alleviated by providing access to more beaches, as proposed below: continuing the behind-the-dunes blacktop beyond the 0mm.

Proposed Beach Management Plan "Potential Option: Create a new road for thru traffic allowing a bypass of the first five miles (0mm-5mm) to improve visitor experience and reduce delays for vehicles traveling down island." Comments: Yes, do it immediately. What are we waiting for? The Park has been here over 60 years and there still is no road down the island. Proceed immediately with this road. This is absolutely the answer to periodic heavy usage of the first five miles of South Beach, and starts the opening of much-needed better public access to 60-mile long South Beach. This will be a popular, long-overdue improvement to the Seashore.

So, yes, as soon as humanly possible, extend a behind-the-dunes road to the 5mm, better, to the 10mm. And do that as the first increments in extending it all 60 miles to the Mansfield jetty, with five- or ten-mile beach access spurs, and one spur at Yarbrough Pass to the back side of the island. This should take care of immediate periodic high usage needs, and plan for the future. needs.

Increased beach access and use is a good thing, and the good news is we have plenty of beach to provide access to.

Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures

Regarding Proposed Beach Management Plan "Potential Option: Initial resource check and basic visitor safety only"

Comments:

Yes.

"Re-open the seashore after an initial safety and resource check and basic visitor safety is provided. Limited facilities would be available as repairs and cleanup continue."

There is no question this is the best plan; re-open as soon as possible. Facilitate public access by clearing debris from roadways if needed. Facilitate public beach access by pulling/pushing logs or other flotsam to side on beaches if beach passage is blocked in places; volunteers would undoubtedly offer a hand and/or vehicles/equipment; if Friends of Padre can get 2,500 people in a day-in February- -to come to a beach cleanup in February and remove 30 tons or more beach trash, it's pretty clear they (or other community groups) would help muster some manpower to get the beach accessible again.

Marine Debris

Comments:

Yes, of course PINS should continue to encourage beach clean-up activities. Furthermore, it would be educational to have fliers at the visitors center that explain what the beach trash consists of, and where it comes from.

And, yes, if major sources of beach trash can be dealt with at the source level, of course political solutions at state, national, and international level should be pursued.

Correspondence ID: 642 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,09 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Please note this is the final comment from the committee of Citizens for Access & Conservation

I previously posted on your comment page an earlier draft. Please ignore previous comments.
Respectfully submitted.

To whom it may concern:

This letter includes information and comments intended to assist the National Park Service (NPS or the Park) in responding to its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pre-NEPA comment request on various beach management matters at the Padre Island National Seashore (PINS).

Commencing in 2009 the NPS undertook significant changes to its management of PINS which resulted in a significant public outcry and ultimately the formation of Citizens for Access and Conservation (CAC) to interact with the NPS on behalf of the users of PINS. As a result of these past and subsequent actions by the NPS, considerable public distrust exists over concern that the NPS desires close public access to some or all of the beach at PINS (Beach) and dismantle the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program (STSR Program).

It is well established and known that the Texas Open Beaches Act (TOBA) guarantees that the public has the free and unrestricted right to access Texas beaches, including [according to letter dated July 25, 2011, from the Texas General Land Office (TGLO) to Superintendent Joe Escoto (the TGLO letter)] a Texas beach located within a national park. (See also Section 61.0211 of the Texas Natural Resources Code providing that the TOBA is applicable to the Beach.)

It should also be noted that the Congressional Act of September 28, 1962 (PL 87-712, 76 Stat. 650) providing for the establishment of PINS states that the acquisition is "in order to save and preserve, for purposes of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped". Any attempt to limit beach access at PINS for any period (except in the case of an emergency), no matter how logical the reason from the NPS and USFWS position, will be met with universal and unabated resistance by Texans and all other users of PINS. No legislator, whether in the Texas legislature or Congress, in Kleberg County, Nueces County or any other adjoining County, nor any other public official or business leader in the Coastal Bend area, nor the Texas Governor, Texas Attorney General nor Commissioner of the TGLO, nor any other governmental official who desires to be re-elected, will approve any such closure, but instead will vigorously oppose it.

Texans believe that if you let the NPS close any portion of the Beach for any period (e.g., from April 1st to July 15th), that later the NPS will attempt to extend the closure to include a larger portion of the Beach or for a longer period of time (such as, until all of the eggs in situ incubation on the Beach would have hatched), or will try to implement a different closure for a different species. NPS and the USFWS need to reach a solution for management of its turtle program and the Beach which does not involve limiting beach access or entry to any portion of the Beach for any period.

These comments are offered in hopes of enlightening the NPS so that by its actions it does not once again generate organized adverse publicity and legal advocacy in opposition to its policies with the resulting unnecessary expenditure of public funds and time.

Prior Beach Management Plans for PfNS

The NPS has requested comments on this proposed plan because they state that no beach management plan currently exists for PfNS. An examination of the NPS listing of "Management Plans" found at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/ManagementPlans.cfm> for PINS lists two studies:

(1) Beach Vehicle Environmental Assessment-June 2011 (EA) (download a pdf of the EA here

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=86&projectID=32158&documentID=41741>), and (2) Beach Vehicle EA FONSI- March 2012 (FONSI) (download a pdf of the FONSI here <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=86&projectID=32158&documentID=46093>).

The EA and FONSI completed in 2012 constitute a comprehensive and extensive analysis of beach management issues for PINS, with substantial public input, and establish a beach management plan for PINS, particularly with respect to its turtle recovery program and vehicles on the Beach. No material changes have occurred on PINS which justify a change to its current beach management plan with respect to its turtle program and vehicles on the beach. Internal politics and strife within the NPS do not constitute justification for a new beach management plan or NEPA study. Having a new NEPA study within approximately ten years when no material changes have occurred at PINS to justify such study is unwarranted and is an inappropriate use of public funding.

Discussion of Beach and Turtle Management Issues

Based upon examination of the Review of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program Padre Island National Seashore, amended 5/7/2021 (2021 Review) (See <https://www.nps.gov/pais/learn/management/upload/pais-stsr-review-report-20210507-final-amended-508.pdf>), and review of other material, we are aware that management of the Beach creates problems which are unique to NPS. Except on PINS, Kemp's ridley sea turtle (Turtle(s)) nests on coastal national parks are left in situ incubation (or placed in corrals) on the beach, and driving on the beach is prohibited to protect Turtles and their eggs.

When the Turtles were listed as endangered in the late 1970s, the 1978 interagency Kemp's action plan included a goal for establishment of a secondary Turtle nesting colony at PINS. Since the 1980's the PINS STSR Program has been actively contributing to global recovery of the species. The USFWS performs studies every five years on the Turtles (since they are endangered) determining measures needed to protect the species. The next five-year study (5- Year Study) should be released soon and offer guidance to the NPS on the future actions the NPS needs to implement on PINS to protect the Turtles. Hopefully, the 2020 Kemp's Bi-National Recovery Plan (2020 Plan), and 5-Year Study, when released, will address the issue of the importance of PINS to the recovery effort. Until the 2020 Plan and 5-Year Study are issued, the NPS should make no major changes to the management of the STSR Program at PINS.

The NPS has already started implementing the "Near-term" recommendations discussed on pages 15-17 of the 2021 Review (and may have started implementing some of the "Mid-term" recommendations), some of which may have required a NEPA study, without waiting for the results of the 2020 Plan or 5-Year Study. It is inappropriate to make significant changes to sea turtle management that was vetted through an extensive NEPA process and articulated in the 2012 FONSI, as the agency has done. These changes constitute a violation of NEPA.

The STSR Program's operating budget has increased substantially over the years, which should be seen as a commitment by the NPS and cooperators to the program and a testament of the success of the program. The 2021 Review states that a budget shortfall is anticipated within the next few years. The NPS has used this potential budget shortfall to justify some of its actions cutting the STSR Program. If the rumors circulating within the NPS and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are true that the NPS used its influence within the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to convince its leaders to not distribute any grants (even if won in a grant competition) to any Turtle recovery program in Texas because of the existence of the Texas Open Beach Act, then it is deceiving for the NPS to assert that the STSR Program needs to be downsized due to lack of funding.

Much pressure is applied within the NPS on management personnel at PINS because other Turtle recovery programs managed by the NPS outside of Texas (such as in Florida) leave a Turtle's eggs in situ at the beach and can close their beaches to public access. The conditions at PINS, research, and economic benefits of collecting eggs and releasing hatchlings are not comparable

to those areas outside Texas. NPS cannot close access to the Beach because the Texas Open Beach Act is applicable to PINS and because the reversionary language in the Deed might result in PINS reverting to State of Texas administration if it closes the Beach.

Further, we believe the Review conducted on the PINS STSR Program was a result of complaints by these programs outside of Texas. It was a biased process that resulted in a prejudiced document with pre-determined recommendations. Evidence of this is that the leader of STSR was not included in the review and was apparently not even asked for input. We know of no Texas partners of STSR that were involved. According to a professor at a Texas University who has been involved with the PINS program, he was asked to be involved but his involvement was limited to one phone call with one individual, and as he told the County Commissioners, that person did not seem particularly interested in what he had to say. Basing changes to the STSR Program on recommendations from this biased review is inappropriate. Once again, we must state that these issues were thoroughly examined in the 2012 NEPA review, an alternative was chosen and implemented, and there is no justification for making changes. Program managers are confronted with budget challenges almost daily, and the STSR Program should not be knee capped based on the beliefs of outside individuals. The budget should be addressed by the program manager, who has successfully built the program over 40 years. It is her challenge to continue to secure "soft" funds (short-term project funds). It is the superintendent's responsibility to ensure that the "base" funds (permanent annual funding to PIN's base budget) provided to the park from the NPS Washington Office in 2000 specifically to support the program continue to be allocated to the program.

Significant conditions exist on the Beach, which are uncommon on non-Texas beaches, which are discussed in considerable detail in the research paper entitled "Threats to Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii* Garman, 1810) nests incubation in situ on the Texas coast" (the in situ Research Paper) (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346428950> Threats to Kemp's ridley sea turtle *Lepidochelys kempii* Garman 1880 nests incubating in situ on the Texas coast). In the interest of brevity, we will only discuss a few of the major points supported by the objective and independent data presented in the in situ Research Paper, and make recommendations based upon such data.

Because of the confluence of currents affecting Texas beaches, they experience significantly higher loads of marine debris (estimated to be ten times higher) than on beaches of other states. As a result, marine debris and sargassum accumulates on Texas beaches which can interfere with nesting Turtles and trap or impede hatchlings. This can result in a high percentage of hatchlings perishing because of predators and heat and/or desiccation. Plant root penetration and growth can decrease moisture for developing eggs and trap hatchlings.

PINS has 61 miles of beach with a substantial number of predators of all life stages of turtles, such as, ghost crabs, coyotes, hogs, skunks, raccoons, badgers, gray foxes, snakes, fire ants and birds (collectively, predators). The study of 155 marked nest sites on the Beach from 2005-2007 is summarized on Table 4 in the in situ Research Paper. Of the 155 nests, 96.8% were damaged or impacted by ghost crabs, 56.8% by coyotes, 40% by tidal inundations, 30.3% by human tampering, 12.3% by plant roots, 10.3% by vehicle drive-overs and 3.9% by racoons. The study suggests that the actual emergence success of in situ incubation in the study were likely greatly inflated as additional undocumented mortality from predators and human interaction likely occurred before the nests were found or that the evidence of tracks of predators was washed away by rain or tides. The study also noted that increased food resources available from discarded food scraps increase high densities of ghost crabs and coyotes in that area. It is unlikely that the prevention of humans from visiting such areas for a few months a year would substantially diminish the presence of such predators during such period of human absence in such areas. And more eyes on the beach means more nests are likely to be found and eggs collected for incubation.

Another major problem is that high tides flood portions of the Beach all the way to the dune line multiple times a year, which could wash away or uncover in situ incubating eggs thereby exposing them to predators or risk of desiccation from the sun. A study by Sweet et al., 2019 (referenced in the in situ Research Paper) states that coastal flooding is an increasing threat at PINS. Warming environmental conditions caused by climate change are

expected to result in more heat related deaths of hatchlings and possibly 100% female hatchlings by 2070 (see Fuentes et al., 2011 referenced in the in situ Research Paper).

The following observations and recommendations are offered after examination of the data and discussions in the in situ Research Paper:

- As a result of the debris on the Beach, the large number of predators on the Beach, an increasing number of high tides on the Beach, the warming of the environment because of climate change and the length of the Beach, the in situ incubation of Turtle eggs on the Beach will result in a much higher mortality than will result from eggs incubated at the facility or in corrals.
- Because of the greater prospect of human tampering of nests marked by stakes or otherwise (or of being walked over if unmarked) in high use areas, leaving nests in situ incubation in those areas will result in a high likelihood of substantial nest damage.
- Because of the high number of predators on the Beach, leaving nests in situ incubation will result in a high likelihood of substantial nest damage.
- Since, as the in situ Research Paper clearly indicates, any eggs left on the Beach are at a very high mortality risk from the factors above discussed, the likelihood of a vehicle drive-over is a lesser risk than the predator and environmental risks to the eggs and should be deemed acceptable if it occurs.
- If, as a result of climate change, the species are in danger because of the lack of male hatchlings, then the NPS needs to be prepared to increase use of the incubation equipment at the facility, which can create primarily males, if desired, and use of corrals which can create more males if needed by using a cover over the enclosure and watering the eggs.
- The Comment Request mentions that the facility may not survive a direct hit from a hurricane. The fact that the facility might not survive a hurricane is a very distressing fact. As discussed above, the facility will be needed to incubate eggs, the NPS should consider moving all the equipment in the facility to higher ground and into a more protected and secure building, not getting rid of it all together.

Although the 2021 Report treats the existence of beach visitors driving on the Beach as a negative, the NPS should not lose sight of the many benefits that having volunteer turtle patrollers, beach comers, fisherpersons, surfers, bird watchers and other observers on the beach offer. Turtle patrollers offer considerable assistance to the STSR Program. Beach visitors assist in cleaning up the Beach. Not only are turtle and other wildlife problems routinely reported by beach visitors, but illegal activities also (such as drugs and illegal immigrants) and other problems are often reported. Beach visitors often find turtle nests or injured or dead turtles and other dead wildlife and report them to the NPS or other appropriate organization. Recently on February 20, 2023, a beach visitor found two turtles dead on the Beach, one of whom was apparently killed by a coyote. Such deaths were reported to the NPS along with their location and pictures. Bird watchers routinely do wildlife counts and advise the NPS or others of wildlife issues on the Beach. Shark fishermen assist government agencies and others with DNA sampling, tagging, measurement and other data on sharks that they catch and release, which efforts benefit worldwide shark study and management. Beach visitors routinely assist other visitors needing assistance and occasionally are requested by a Ranger for assistance. Beach visitors also provide other useful information to wildlife management and rehabilitation organizations. For example, the beach visitor who found the dead turtles also found five dead pelicans on the Beach the same day, which was reported. Since Park Rangers often do not drive past the MM 5, it is often up to beach visitors to provide information and assistance on beach problems occurring down the Beach. Having fewer beach visitors (or alienating such visitors so they cease visiting the Beach) is not a positive move for the NPS, and negatively impacts the Coastal Bend economy.

Economic Benefit of PINS to the Coastal Bend Community

It is important that PINS have an amicable and mutually beneficial working relationship with cities and communities in the Coastal Bend and its business leaders. The NPS should consult with such leaders before making management decisions with respect to PINS which might economically impact such cities, communities, and businesses (such as, curtailing the number of viewing events of hatchling releases or any attempt to close the Beach).

On April 24, 2017, the Corpus Christi Business News stated that the 643,013 visitors to PINS last year spent \$27 million in the cities and communities in the Coastal Bend. According to an NPS report, that spending supported 406 local jobs and boosted the economy by \$31 million. It contained the following quote from then Superintendent Mark Spier, "Padre Island National Seashore welcomes visitors from across the country and around the world. National Park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning more than \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it's a big factor in our local economy as well."

The NPS has substantially reduced the of number public hatchling release viewing events at the Beach. For many years pre-Covid, the NPS held between 20 and 27 hatchling release viewing events annually. No events were held in 2020, and the release events in 2021 were substantially reduced from before. Only seven release events were held in 2022. The Comment Request states that the NPS intends to "Hold fewer public hatchling releases and/or limit crowd size; focus releases on public education". An obvious question to be answered is "What were the public releases over the years if not opportunities for educating the public about endangered turtles and the effort it takes to recovery their populations?" The public hatchling release events are a significant attraction for Texas families and a major reason that they visit PINS and the Coastal Bend. The NPS should hold more public release viewing events instead of reducing the events further. It is in the interest of the NPS to instill at a young age a desire in children to protect endangered species. No better method of doing so exists than letting a child see an endangered species crawl to the ocean.

A study by George R. Parsons and Ami Kang, entitled "Valuing Beach Closures on the Padre Island Seashore" concluded based upon a study performed in 2001 that the cost of closing PINS for a weekday in July was \$53,000 (assuming 1,802 visitors) and \$86,000 for a weekend day (assuming 5,755 visitors). The daily loss in 2023 would, of course, be considerably greater. (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46535587> Valuing Beach Closures on the Padre Island Seashore, ppl 7). Obviously, the city, community and business leaders in the Coastal Bend affected by any such proposed closure would vigorously oppose any such action.

Comments to Pilot Studies

The proposed Pilot Studies are too statistically insignificant, controlled and biased to deliver objective or reliable data and should not be conducted. The in situ Research Paper has already fully presented objective and independent data on the in situ incubation of Turtle eggs on the Beach. It would be easy to implement and manipulate these proposed Pilot Studies to deliver the desired result.

We are strongly opposed to Pilot Study 3. The compatibility of vehicles on the Beach with the STSR Program has been thoroughly and favorably addressed in the FONSI. Not only will the data secured by such study be totally unreliable and unscientific, but it will also be viewed by the public and others as a scheme to develop manufactured and sham data to ultimately limit driving on the Beach. Because of the distrust which already exists, as discussed above and below, implementation of such Study (or a study on beach driving permits) will be viewed by the public and others as a signal that the NPS is intent on finding some pretense to justify closing off beach access to the public during Turtle nesting season or hurricane season, and that they should commence defensive actions.

Furthermore, in 40 years of involvement in the PINS sea turtle program Dr. Shaver has published several papers in peer-reviewed publications and completed several reports summarizing activities and findings in the program. Others have also conducted research and published

papers. We find it difficult to believe that PINS management does not have sufficient information to provide a continued basis for the program. It seems far more likely that, like the Review, these pilot studies are intended to support changes in turtle management already being instigated. Such corruption of science is antithetical to sound scientific management.

Comments to Sand Management

We appreciate that because of the reoccurring storms, high tides and strong winds in the area beach erosion and shifting sands is a continuing problem. To facilitate use of PINS as a park and recreation area, the entrance to the Beach should be better maintained, especially around holidays. The NPS previously maintained the first 5-miles of the Beach so that it was accessible by 2-wheel drive vehicles. It should do so again, and if needed apply for a Section I 0/404 permit for the maintenance. If the first 5-miles becomes too crowded, then maintenance of an additional portion of the Beach should be performed, not reduce the amount of visitors allowed in PINS.

If a road behind the dunes is constructed, its entrance to the Beach should be similarly maintained. In addition, the entrance to Yarboro Pass should be maintained and kept open.

Comments to Beach Driving Permits or Limits on Capacity

PINS has 61 miles of Beach so ample beach exists for everyone. The 2021 Review on page 26 discussed essentially closing the Beach between April I-July 15. The NPS proposed to do so by using the technique of requiring vehicle driving permits for each vehicle with the fees charged for such permits to be commensurate with the cost of the NPS operating the STSR Program.

Since the STSR Program has nearly a \$2M annual operating budget, such fee could be enormous. It is indisputable that the imposing of a permit and/or charging a fee to access the Beach between April I and July 15th is designed to limit beach access during such period.

Comments to Creation of New Road to Bypass the First Five Miles

A paved road behind the dunes to bypass the first 5-miles of the Beach is a good idea if the construction and maintenance costs are not too high and the project is reviewed under a separate NEPA analysis. If such road is constructed, the end should contain a tum-around so that vehicles can easily turn around if the entrance to the Beach appears to be too dangerous to access. The TGLO letter suggested that a road behind the dunes be considered.

While doing an NEPA study on the road, we suggest that the NPS also consider the addition of a walking/biking trail beside such road together with an adjacent parking area and vehicle-free walking paths from such parking area through the wetlands to bird and wildlife viewing areas.

Comments to Creation of Additional Vehicle-Free Areas

In addition to the above discussed parking area, vehicle-free walking paths and viewing areas, the NPS should consider constructing a parking area off the Yarboro Pass Road with vehicle-free trails to wetland and wildlife viewing areas. The walk-area at Malaquite Beach is not fully utilized and needs additional improvements to increase its utilization. Additional parking areas and dune walkovers that are handicap accessible need to be constructed towards the ends of Malaquite Beach to enhance the full utilization of the walk-area.

Comments on Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related Closures

During the most recent hurricane beach closure, the NPS response and reopening of the Beach was much too slow. Hurricanes and violent storms have occurred frequently over the years. In the past the Beach was not closed for weeks to search for possible newly unearthed artifacts, as occurred recently. This beach closing to search for

artifacts was totally unwarranted. Has the NPS conducted a cost analysis to determine if the cost of searching for artifacts and loss in revenue from the beach closure was offset by the value of the artifacts found? The value of such artifacts certainly did not exceed the economic loss that the Coastal Bend area suffered because of such closure.

In the future, the Beach should be opened for access as soon as possible. Buildings should be opened on an individual basis so long as such building is safe for occupancy.

Concluding Comments

In 2012, the NPS completed the EA and FONSI and established a beach management plan for PINS. No material changes have occurred on PINS in the last ten years which necessitates a change to its current beach management plan. Internal politics and strife within the NPS are not justification for a another NEPA study. Having another study now is an abuse of NEPA.

The TOBA [and the reversionary rights that the State of Texas has retained through the reverter clause found in Senate Bill 6 (Acts 1963, 58th Leg., ch.38, eff. April 4, 1963) authorizing the transfer resulting in the creation of PINS and incorporated into the Deed] prevents the NPS from closing beach access (except for emergencies). The NPS has been warned by the TGLO that any closure of the Beach to vehicular access or any prevention of the public's use and enjoyment of the Beach will be in violation of the TOBA and may subject the property to the reversion.

The personnel within the NPS responsible for dictating policy on PINS are generally non-Texans and may not appreciate our culture and are disturbed by the existence of the TOBA. Texans will not willingly accept the closing of a Texas beach, especially by a federal agency. The visitors to the Beach regularly assist the NPS with its management of PINS (including, its STSR Program, its beach clean-up, the reporting of wildlife problems and in other areas) and should not be alienated. The NPS and the USFWS need to reach a solution for management of the STSR Program which does not involve limiting beach access to any portion of the Beach.

The NPS should endeavor to be a better community partner. Instead of reducing turtle hatchling viewing events (as occurred in 2022) or less (as is proposed in the Comment Request), the NPS should have more viewing events annually, as it did pre-Covid. Visitors to PINS (and particularly visitors wanting to view the turtle hatchling release events) spend many millions of dollars in the Coastal Bend. Limiting the number of viewing events or closing the Beach negatively impacts the Coastal Bend and its businesses economically.

It is a shame that the NPS with its previous and recent actions has generated so much public distrust. We recognize that some of this distrust has arisen because of misunderstandings or misinformation, but, unfortunately, some is justified. Hopefully, this Comment Request will be handled in a manner which partially alleviates this distrust. The findings issued in connection with the Comment Request should acknowledge that the Beach is subject to the TOBA, and that the NPS will not close the Beach in connection with its management of the STSR Program. The NPS doesn't want the next State slogan to be "Don't Mess With Texans' Beach Access Rights"!

Correspondence ID: 643 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,13 2023

Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: I have heard there are plans on closing the beach. I am one of the many fishermen that enjoy driving along the beach respecting all signs and picking up plastics and trash when visiting.

Going to the beach is a way for many people to relax and connect with nature. Please understand my petition to keep it open, as many people like myself.

Received: Mar,14 2023

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) received a February 10, 2023, email, and civic engagement newsletter from Padre Island National Seashore (Seashore) inviting comments on beach management to help inform the development of a Beach Management Plan. FWS staff also attended the Seashore's February 21 and 22, 2023, open house meetings in Corpus Christi, Texas. We reviewed the newsletter and open house meeting information and are providing comments and recommendations related to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.) and to recovery of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) that occur on or near Seashore beaches, including the West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), two species of shorebirds: piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) and red knot (*Calidris canutus ssp. rufa*), and five species of sea turtle: Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

The Seashore is inviting public input on five topics related to beach management: Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program, Sand Management, Beach Driving, Hurricane and Storm Recovery Related to Closures, and Marine Debris. The FWS is providing comments and recommendations below for three of the five topics: Sand Management and Marine Debris and Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program.

Sand Management and Marine Debris

Piping plovers and red knots occur throughout coastal Texas during their non-breeding periods, on beaches, sandflats, tidal flats, algal flats, and dunes. Beaches provide foraging and roosting habitat and are especially vital to these species during periods of extreme high tides that cover the flats. Piping plovers and red knots are potentially present at the Seashore year-round. West Indian manatees occur occasionally in Texas coastal waters and could be present in nearshore waters of the Gulf and Laguna Madre year-round. Sea turtle nesting season at Padre Island extends from March 15 through October 1. During nesting season, increased numbers of sea turtles are present in the nearshore areas, and adult females crawl onto beaches to dig nests in the sand and lay their eggs.

The Seashore should assume the presence of threatened or endangered species on the beaches year-round. Most of these species have site fidelity to relatively small areas. For example, piping plovers exhibit strong site fidelity during their non-breeding seasons and utilize core areas of about 2.9 square kilometers (717 acres) within their home ranges (Drake et al. 2001).

Kemp's ridley sea turtles have inter-nesting site fidelity distances ranging from 0.3 to 77.3 kilometers (330 yards to 48 miles) (Shaver et al. 2017).

Because some beach management activities, such as moving large quantities of sand or marine debris, may temporarily render a beach unusable to shorebirds and nesting sea turtles, the FWS recommends that proposed management activities be restricted to pre-determined maximum lengths of beach at any given time, and that a minimum period of time pass between successive events. These restrictions to the footprint and frequency of events would minimize the amount of unusable beach at any given time and allow newly nourished, scraped, or otherwise impacted beaches to recover the physical and biological characteristics needed to support listed species. These characteristics include appropriate slopes, elevations, and sand grain size for nesting sea turtles (Culver et al. 2020) and the establishment of benthic prey items such as marine worms, small clams, and other invertebrates for shorebirds (FWS 2020a and 2020b).

Studies from other U.S. states suggest that the recovery of benthic fauna after beach nourishment or sediment placement can take six months to two years, and possibly longer in some cases (FWS 2012). Therefore, the FWS recommends sampling and monitoring to determine the minimum period needed for intertidal benthic fauna to recover. Baseline data are available for beaches within the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge on South Padre Island (Withers 2016). Post-construction monitoring is an essential component of species-specific conservation measures because piping plovers will remain at their preferred wintering sites despite disturbance or low prey availability, resulting in lower survival (Gibson et al. 2018). Therefore, the frequency and size of

management events should be orchestrated in a way that does not harm threatened and endangered species utilizing beach habitats.

Tropical storms can create washover passes, channels, and wind-tidal flats through Gulf beaches. These habitats are used by piping plovers and red knots as well as many other bird species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Washover passes and flats provide nesting habitat for shorebirds such as snowy plovers (*Charadrius nivosus*) and Wilson's plovers (*Charadrius wilsonia*) and provide stopover habitat for many additional species of migratory shorebirds. The FWS recommends avoiding or minimizing impacts to washover passes, channels, and wind-tidal flats when sand management or other beach maintenance is necessary.

Because Kemp's ridley sea turtles have been shown to exhibit site fidelity to Texas beaches by returning to nesting locations within as little as 0.3 kilometers (330 yards) (Shaver et al. 2017), the FWS recommends using 330 yards as the maximum linear footprint size and the minimum spacing distance for management events that cannot avoid nesting season. The FWS also recommends restoring impacted beaches to profiles that provide good nesting habitat for Kemp's ridley and other sea turtles. Culver et al. (2020) evaluated nine geomorphology characteristics and found that elevation and distance from the shoreline had the greatest influence on Kemp's ridley nest-site selection on beaches in Texas. A median elevation of 1.04 meters (3.4 feet) and a median distance from the shoreline of 12.79 meters (42 feet) was selected; this corresponds to the area near the potential vegetation line, or the lowest elevation that dune vegetation may thrive along the Texas Gulf shore (Culver et al. 2020). Sand compaction can inhibit nest construction or increase the amount of time it takes for turtles to construct nests. Escarpments often result in turtles returning to the surf without nesting or placing nests where they are more likely to be inundated for prolonged periods and fail (National Marine Fisheries Service and FWS 2007).

Ruts and ridges in the sand can hinder or trap nesting turtles and emerging hatchlings (National Marine Fisheries Service et al. 2011). High silt and clay content on nesting beaches can also disrupt embryonic development and increase mortality of incubating sea turtle eggs (Marco et al. 2017). This is partially due to the very high capacity for silt and clay to retain water, preventing embryos from getting the hydration inside the eggs needed for development.

The FWS recommends the following conservation measures to avoid or minimize impacts to listed species occurring on or near the beach.

All species

- Biological monitors, with work-stop authority, should receive FWS-approved training prior to the initiation of, or their participation in, beach management activities. Qualified biologist(s) should also conduct training for all crew members before work begins. The training should include (1) visual recognition of listed species, their habitats, and tracks; (2) avoidance and minimization measures; (3) reporting criteria, and (4) contact information for rescue agencies in the area.

Piping plover and red knot

- Biological monitors should be on-site to ensure piping plovers and red knots are not affected during beach activities. The monitors should inspect the active work areas prior to the start of work and continuously throughout the day. They should look under equipment for shorebirds, before moving equipment. Prior to moving parked vehicles, heavy equipment, and dredge pipes on the beach, vehicles should be walked around, and the ground searched to avoid crushing shorebirds that may shelter under vehicles and equipment.
- If a piping plover or red knot is found in the active work area, work should be stopped until the birds leave the construction site. A 75-foot avoidance buffer should be implemented for any piping plover or red knot observed in and around the active work area for the duration of the bird's presence in that area.
- Avoid working in shorebird habitats when winter winds that exceed 20 miles per hour co-occur with temperatures below 40 degrees. These conditions cause the birds to roost, often in vehicle ruts or next to debris, to conserve energy. Birds are difficult to see when roosting and are more susceptible to injury or disease during

inclement winter weather.

- Report sick or injured piping plovers and red knots to the FWS at 361-533-6765.
- The Seashore is located within proposed red knot critical habitat unit TX-6. Material placed on the beach should meet the specifications of local beach quality sand (e.g., grain size, color, composition, and mineralogy) and maintain its physical and biological features.
- Materials and vehicles required for any work project should be staged in upland areas and transported as needed to the proposed work site. Equipment should be driven above the "wet line" on the beach to minimize disturbance to piping plovers and red knots.
- Disturbed areas of the beach (e.g., ruts, tread marks, etc.) should be smoothed out and loosened upon the completion of each workday.

Sea turtles

- During sea turtle nesting season (March 15 through October 1), biological monitors should search the beach each day before equipment is moved onsite and before work begins. The monitor should search the beach for turtles, nests, and turtle tracks. No equipment should enter a work area until after an initial sea turtle survey is conducted and the biological monitor notifies equipment operators that they are clear to proceed. Kemp's ridley sea turtles nest any time of the day or night, so monitors should be present throughout the day and not restrict their searches to only early morning.
- If sea turtles or sea turtle tracks are located on the beach, activity should cease immediately within 30 meters (100 feet) of the turtle or nest site. Immediately contact the Seashore's Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery at 361-949-8173 ext. 226, or the after-hours number at 361-876-8462. Remain at the site until an authorized individual arrives, but do not disturb the sea turtle or tracks. Never walk on or disturb nesting sites. After the turtle has finished laying her eggs, she must be safeguarded from vehicles and disturbance and allowed to enter the surf. If a representative cannot stay until authorized personnel arrive, please carefully mark the site by laying pieces of beach debris, such as pieces of wood or other debris, in a large circle around the nest area, not on top of the nest, so biologists will be able to find the nest when they arrive. Never insert flagging or sticks into the sand around a nest as this could damage the eggs.
- If project plans include lighting, lights should be minimized, down-shielded, and of a low wavelength (e.g., green or blue) to avoid disorientation of night-nesting sea turtles and emerging hatchlings making their way to the surf.
- Biological monitors and patrollers should receive training from the Seashore's Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery or other approved sources. Biological monitors must be able to recognize sea turtle tracks in the sand.
- The Seashore should recognize the potential for sea turtles to be present in the water and to contact the National Marine Fisheries Service for best management practices and/or consultation. If dead, injured, or cold-stunned sea turtles are encountered in the project area, immediately report them to one of the phone numbers listed above.

West Indian manatee

- If a manatee is observed, contact the FWS at 361-533-6765 and the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network hotline at 800-962-6625.
- Siltation barriers and other structures must be made of material that will not entangle manatees, be properly secured, and are regularly monitored during construction to avoid entrapment.
- If a manatee is seen within 90 meters (100 yards) of the active work zone or vessel movements, all appropriate precautions shall be implemented to ensure protection of the manatee. These precautions include no operation of any moving equipment within 15 meters (50 feet) of a manatee. Operation of any equipment closer than 50 feet to a manatee shall necessitate immediate shutdown of that equipment. Activities will not resume until the manatee(s) has departed the project areas of its own volition.
- Do not feed or water the manatee. Keep the public away from the manatee.

Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Program

Due to its 61 miles of protected and remote beaches, the Seashore has the greatest concentration of sea turtle nesting in Texas. Based upon the last four years of data (2019-2022), 52 percent of all Kemp's ridley, 70 percent

of all green, and 47 percent of all loggerhead nests in Texas were found at the Seashore (Shaver 2019 - 2022). Therefore, any changes to the sea turtle program at the Seashore will affect all species of sea turtles.

Dr. Donna Shaver, Chief of the Seashore's Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery, has served as the Texas Coordinator of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network and the Texas Sea Turtle Nesting Coordinator for several decades. These roles enable Dr. Shaver and her staff to coordinate extensively with partners and agencies outside of the Seashore's boundaries, to educate the public on sea turtle conservation (ESA Section 7(a)(1)), and to provide FWS-approved training to Texas municipalities or other entities that conduct federally permitted or funded beach projects. Additionally, the Seashore's Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery operates the sea turtle incubation facility and conducts hatchling releases for all sea turtle nests found in Texas except South Padre Island.

Dr. Shaver and the Seashore's Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery staff conduct sea turtle research and monitoring on all species of sea turtles. This research and monitoring informs the FWS in conducting 5-year status reviews, proposing critical habitat, consulting on federally funded or permitted projects, and tracking progress on species recovery. The FWS depends upon sea turtle data collected and published by Dr. Shaver and her staff related to stranding, nesting, movements (via attachment of satellite transmitters or other tracking devices), habitat use, and genetic markers (via tissue sampling). The importance of the Seashore's Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery's research to Kemp's ridley recovery cannot be overemphasized, because few sea turtle researchers work in the western Gulf of Mexico, including Tamaulipas, where the species' primary nesting beach is located.

The Kemp's ridley sea turtle is the most endangered of all sea turtle species, and the recovery program in Texas provides a second nesting colony in case the nesting colony in Mexico should fall due to hurricanes, tsunamis, civil unrest, cartel violence, or other threats. The Texas Open Beaches Act (State of Texas 1977) allows vehicle access to Texas beaches, and approximately 100 eggs and hatchlings from each of at least 100 nests (10,000 individuals) found annually on the Seashore (Shaver 2019-2022) risk exposure to take associated with driving on the beaches (National Marine Fisheries Service et al. 2011, page 1-40; National Park Service 2011, page 87). Kemp's ridley sea turtles are especially vulnerable because they nest during the day, when vehicle traffic and recreational use of beaches is the highest. They also prefer to nest on high wind days, which causes their tracks to disappear quickly. The sea turtle nest detection and protection program has served as the primary mitigation for vehicles on most Texas beaches.

Decreasing nest patrols and protecting fewer nests could result in sea turtle egg and hatchling mortalities. To be exempt for incidental take on Park Service lands, the Seashore may initiate ESA section 7 consultation with the FWS and receive incidental take authorization.

The civic engagement newsletter (Padre Island National Seashore 2023, page 3) incorrectly states that a goal of the Kemp's Ridley Bi-national Action Plan (National Park Service et al. 1978) is for "sea turtles to exist without human assistance." However, page I of the Action Plan states that the purpose of the plan is to provide guidelines for the restoration of Kemp's ridley sea turtles through "enhancement of nesting success and survival" at Rancho Nuevo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and to re-establish a breeding colony at Padre Island National Seashore, Texas. Likewise, the goal of the 2011 bi-national recovery plan is to "conserve and protect the Kemp's ridley sea turtle so that protections under the ESA are no longer necessary and the species can be removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife" (National Marine Fisheries Service et al. 2011, page vi). Both guidance documents call for nest management to recover the Kemp's ridley. Because the Seashore is the most important Kemp's ridley nesting beach in the U.S., ceasing nest management before the nesting colony is self-sustaining could be detrimental to recovery and to maintaining the secondary nesting colony in Texas. The FWS supports Seashore management that follows sea turtle recovery plan parameters.

In partnership with the Seashore, the FWS is currently modeling the Kemp's ridley's Texas nesting colony using an integrated population model. A synopsis of the findings along with recommendations based upon the model results is currently under development. FWS will provide this modeling synopsis and recommendations to the

Seashore upon completion.

The FWS appreciates Padre Island National Seashore's efforts to balance recovery activities of the many threatened and endangered species within its borders and we look forward to continuing the partnership and inter-agency coordination with the National Park Service in the recovery and conservation of protected species in Texas. Please contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Charles Ardizzone Field Supervisor

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Correspondence ID: 645 Project: 114475 Document: 125939
Received: Mar,21 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent,

We've been fans and supporters of PINS for a long time. It was our spot for vacations and long and short weekends for our whole adult-hood as we grew our family in Austin. camping has been our way of enjoying the Park. Now we are mostly day-visitors. We consider time spent there one of the biggest privileges and joys of our lives.

We so love PINS that we chose to retire here in Flour Bluff so could be as close as possible without buying into neighborhood- development on the island. We feel that housing developments are the biggest threat to PINS in the big picture.

We are writing because of our deep concern that recent beach management considerations make us feel that we might lose our ability to keep enjoying our beach recreations. Suggestions regarding restriction of public vehicles on the beach are our main concern. If a paved road is introduced farther into the beach and dune landscape, it will pave the way to more and more development. It is such a bad idea in general, we are imagining the line of idling vehicles for five miles waiting for beach access parking. Services to accommodate the vehicles will be soon called-for. And what about the way the dunes and grasslands would be impacted by additional pavement? Won't it impede the natural migration of the sand and grasses? And all the wildlife environments that inhabit those areas?

Please leave the current policies in place regarding citizens' driving on the beach. Our barrier island is eroding by natural forces and won't be navigable for much longer anyway. Let's not hasten the process with more pavement! People are coming in droves to our beautiful beach no matter what. Perhaps the best (cheapest, easiest, sane) answer is a permitting-process for camp and day use to control the flow and density of the visitor population.

Thanks for your service to our treasured beach, Thanks for reading our comments.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 646 Project: 114475 Document: 125939

Received: Mar,24 2023

Correspondence Type: Other

Correspondence: I came to an event at the Texas State Aquarium in February and tried to get around to writing my comments via the PINS website before March 14 but didn't make the deadline, so I'm hoping you can add these comments to them.

1) Kiteboarding should be allowed at PIN

a) Airboats and other motor boats are allowed to launch at Bird Island Basin and plow through the waters of the Laguna Madre.

They are MUCH more disruptive to shore birds and nesting birds than kiteboarding would be.

b) Kiteboarding has evolved over the years and is now a safe and organized sport with certified instructional programs and new and improved equipment with a variety of safety features.

c) Windsurfing and kiteboarding are very similar. Yet, PINS embraces windsurfing but bans kiteboarding. That does not make sense. If you are concerned about user conflict, create a kiteboarding section at Bird Island downwind of the windsurfing section. With the growth of kiteboarding, I think the owner of Worldwinds would be interested in expanding his vendor business to include kiteboarding in addition to windsurfing.

d) It also does not make sense to not allow kiteboarding on the Gulf of Mexico at PINS. People kiteboard safely all along the Gulf of Mexico to the north of PINS.

2) Create a kayak / kiteboarding access point to the Laguna Madre farther south from Bird Island Basin.

a) Part of your beach management proposal is to extend the paved Park Road 22 farther to the south. I like that idea.

In addition, I suggest that where Park Road 22 ends and turns east towards the beach, that a road to the Laguna Madre also be created, making a "T" intersection at the end of Park Road 22 instead of an "L" intersection.

b) Kayaking is very limited at PINS with the only road leading to the Laguna being at Bird Island Basin. You could create more access for kayaking - - and for kiteboarding - - at this new Laguna Access Point.