

Cape Hatteras Access Preservation Alliance
Cape Hatteras Anglers Club
P.O. Box 145
Buxton, NC 27920

March 5, 2015

Mr. David Hallac
Superintendent, Cape Hatteras National Seashore
1401 National Park Drive
Manteo, North Carolina 27954

Subject: ORV Related Infrastructure Projects at Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Dear Mr. Hallac:

We appreciate the time you have given us in recent weeks to discuss the process that NPS will use to fulfill the requirements of the recent legislation. We are preparing written recommendations on a number of topics which will be forthcoming.

We read the NPS web page devoted to the project and, of course, it was largely the information you had previously shared with us. We also read Irene Nolan's article in the Island Free Press on Friday, February 27 where she reviewed the recent media roundtable meeting. We took particular interest in the discussion about the possible near-term reprioritization of ORV access related infrastructure projects, or item number three in the four-step approach presented on the website. We welcome the opportunity to provide input to your process to review and possibly reprioritize projects that provide vehicle access points in compliance with the recently passed legislation.

You are probably aware that the North Carolina Beach Buggy Association and the Outer Banks Preservation Association submitted comments regarding the original list of 29 projects back in July of 2013. Those comments remain germane to the current discussions and copies of those comments have been forwarded to you in recent days to provide background.

The document attached to this letter is intended to focus specifically on the relevance of those 29 projects to the NPS effort to comply with paragraph (d) CONSTRUCTION OF NEW VEHICLE ACCESS POINTS.

To facilitate our recommendations for consideration, we have compiled four worksheets into the attached Excel workbook. These worksheets are as follows:

- NPS 29 Projects – ORV Focused -CHAPA Endorsed for ORV Fee Funding – Priority Order

This worksheet itemizes in order of priority eight ORV focused projects we believe should be funded by ORV fees and implemented as possible.

- NPS 29 Projects –New Projects - CHAPA Endorsed ORV Fee Funding

This worksheet lists four access related projects which were not in the original list of 29, but which we believe should be seriously considered.

- NPS 29 Projects – Pedestrian Focused – CHAPA Endorsed for General Funding

While the law addresses only projects which provide for new vehicle access points, the original NPS project list included 18 projects which are pedestrian focused. We believe these projects bring value to beach access and should be implemented, but should not be funded by ORV fees since they do not directly benefit ORV access.

- NPS 29 Projects – Not Endorsed by CHAPA

This worksheet lists three projects which we believe would be a poor use of financial resources with no benefit to the public. It also lists parts of two other projects which we believe add no value and should be eliminated.

Please notice our comments for project #4 on the Not Endorsed by CHAPA worksheet. Our position is that project #4 should be redefined to reopen ramp 2 obviating the need for a new ramp at 2.5. The redefined project is described on the New Projects worksheet as Phase 1 of project A. We believe this approach offers a better access solution at a much lower cost at this location.

We look forward to our meeting with you scheduled on March 12, to convey our suggestions for steps that should be taken for compliance with paragraph (b) REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENT OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION BUFFERS. We would also like to discuss the ORV related infrastructure projects (as outlined in the attached document) at that meeting and will be glad to answer any questions you have about our recommendations at that time.

Sincerely,

Larry Hardham
President, Cape Hatteras Anglers Club

cc: Warren Judge
Allen Burris
John Couch
Jim Keene
Larry Hardham
David Scarborough
Harry Nash
Frank Folb

NPS 29 Projects - ORV Focused - CHAPA Endorsed for ORV Fee Funding - Priority Order

Project Description	Comment
#20 An unpaved IDR between Ramp 45 and 49 with new ORV Ramp 48 to the beach	The interdunal road will allow ORV users to move between Ramp 44 and Ramp 48 without having to drive miles to get back on highway 12 and down to ramp 49. This is an important project.
#10 ORV Ramp 32.5 with a 10-car parking area and foot trail to the beach	This project will benefit ORV access but it should be done at a much lower cost than the \$600,000. spent on unfinished Ramp 25.5 even without the boardwalk.
#25 An ORV Ramp 59.5 at north Ocracoke	This project will benefit ORV access but it should be done at a much lower cost than the \$600,000. spent on unfinished Ramp 25.5 even without the boardwalk.
#19 An elevated section of Lighthouse Road at ramps 43 and 44	The NPS should reconsider the possibility of opening the drainage systems that were successfully used for decades in this area. The NPS created this problem when they failed to maintain the existing drainage systems. Drains need to be cleared first and then the roadway surveyed. This area of Lighthouse Road also services the Cape Point Campground and a parking lot so the benefit is not just the approach to the ORV Ramps. Costs should be shared by ORV fees and campground fees.
#27 An ORV Ramp 63 across from Scrag Cedar Road	This project will benefit ORV access but it should be done at a much lower cost than the \$600,000. spent on unfinished Ramp 25.5 even without the boardwalk.
#5 A 10-car parking area at Ramp 4	10 car parking area would be good to allow groups arriving in multiple vehicles to consolidate since many ORV drivers will not pay the \$50/100 ORV permit fee. A shared expense would be appropriate.
foot-trail to beach	A foot-trail through this wetland would be an unusual trail to nowhere. ORV permit fees should not be expended for pedestrian assess to VFA's therefore we do not endorse this portion of Project #5 (see last spreadsheet).
#8 An ORV Ramp 25.5 with foot trail or boardwalk to the beach	Construct the parking lot
#23 An unimproved 20-car parking area near the Pole Road/Spur Road	With the beach at Hatteras Inlet closed and subject to sever erosion this very popular site can use more that 20 parking spaces and should be increased to 40 spaces. However, The The stated "purpose" for this project says to "improve pedestrian access but it takes an ORV with a permit to get to the site so the listed purpose is wrong. The surface of Pole Road and and the parking lot should be clay and shell with the entire length of Pole Road being two lanes wide for safety and made of clay and shell.

NPS 29 Projects - New Projects - CHAPA Endorsed ORV Fee Funding

- A** **Phase 1** Reopening of Ramp #2 will negate the need for Ramp #2.5 until and/or unless the construction of the replacement for the Bonner Bridge necessitates the relocation of the existing Ramp #4. If relocation of ramp #4 is necessary, Ramp #2 should remain open and construction of any new, replacement ramp must be as far south as geographically possible to minimize the size of closures due to changes in beach terrain. There must be multiple access/egress points to this popular beach.
- Phase 2** Reopen ramp 1, if not totally, at least seasonally (no cost)
- B** Make a bypass behind the dune line from ramp 44 to Cape Point.
- C** Build ADA ramp north of ramp 2 (middle of parking lot) to eliminate perceived conflicts at Ramp 2. Place a sign at Ramp 2 directing pedestrians to use the walkway and not the ramp for beach access.
- D** Institute a parking fee to pay for improvements to Coquina Beach showers, bathrooms, parking, ADA access and pay for additional lifeguards. (Vehicles with ORV permits in place should not have to pay the parking fee in order to use the restrooms.)

NPS 29 Projects - Pedestrian Focused - CHAPA Endorsed for General Funding

#2 ADA boardwalk at Coquina Beach	The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus should not be considered for funding with ORV permit money. Funding should come from another source.
#6 A 20-car parking area and ADA boardwalk at Ramp 23	The ADA boardwalk (an admirable project) and parking lot have no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus should not be considered for funding with ORV permit money. Funding should come from another source.
#7 A 10-car parking about 1.0 mile south of Ramp 23 with a foot-trail to the beach	Access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.
#8 Boardwalk to the beach at Ramp 25.5	Should have been paid for with non ORV Permit money
#9 An A 5-car parking area (beachside) at sound side Ramp 48	Should be paid for with non ORV Permit money
#11 ADA boardwalk at Ramp 34	The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.
#12 A handicap accessible boardwalk to sound at Haulover Beach Parking Area	The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.
#13 A 15-car parking area west side of highway at/near Kite Point	This parking lot will be used by those not purchasing an ORV permit and thus should not be funded with permit money.
#14 15-car parking area at sound side access #59 with foot-trail from highway to beach	This parking lot will be used by those not purchasing an ORV permit and thus should not be funded with permit money.
#15 A 5-car parking area west side of highway at/near sound side access 60	This parking lot will be used by those not purchasing an ORV permit and thus should not be funded with permit money.
#17 A handicap accessible boardwalk at Lighthouse Beach	The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.
#18 3-car parking area at Loran Road and ADA boardwalk to the beach	This is an admirable project but has absolutely no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus

NPS 29 Projects - Pedestrian Focused - CHAPA Endorsed for General Funding

	<p>should not even be considered for funding with ORV permit money. Funding should come from another source. Without the projected cost of this project it is hard to say but it sure seems that for just three cars it will be hard to justify the cost. Just as a side note the "Loran Road" is known as cottonmouth ally due to the number of snakes in the area. The "Purpose" column for this project says "facilitate pedestrian access to areas of the Seashore closed to ORVs". This statement is absolutely incorrect as the area where the proposed boardwalk reaches the beach is within the ORV area north of ramp 43.</p>
#21 Widen Ramp 49 with connector ramp and 5 car parking places	<p>Figure 2-21 shows a new connector road when a route already exists in this area. A boardwalk for existing parking spaces is needed so pedestrians do not walk to the beach using this very busy ramp. This project has no linkage to ORV use at CHNSRA and thus funding should not come from ORV permit money.</p>
#22 ADA accessible boardwalk at the Ramp 55 parking area on Hatteras Island	<p>The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.</p>
#24 ADA boardwalk at/near north ferry terminal parking area on Ocracoke	<p>The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.</p>
#26 A 5-car parking area at west side of highway entrance of Borrow Pit Road	<p>This parking lot will be used by those not purchasing an ORV permit and thus should not be funded with permit money.</p>
#28 ADA boardwalk at the Ocracoke Pony Pens	<p>The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.</p>
#29 ADA boardwalk at the Ocracoke Day Use Area	<p>The ADA boardwalk is an admirable project but has no linkage to ORV use at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area and thus access to VFA beaches should not be paid for with ORV fees. User fees should not be spent in areas not accessible to those paying the fees.</p>

NPS 29 Projects - Not Endorsed by CHAPA

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| #1 A 10-car parking area at the former U.S. Coast Guard Station on Bodie Island | The proximity of this project to the parking facilities already available at Coquina Beach should be considered. This project has the potential to add to traffic congestion in the area due to additional intersections. Perhaps visitor access should be provided via a trail or boardwalk from the Coquina Parking area to avoid additional intersections on the highway. |
| #3 Additional access road at Coquina Beach | Should not further congest traffic in this area. Permits should be available on line at reduced cost to NPS & issued for a 12 month period. A fee station should be located at the visitor center at the park entrance. Additional parking could be provided at far less cost and with better traffic control than this proposed access road. Undocumented visitor conflicts are an excuse, not a documented reality.
NPS personnel have often made this remark but presented no documentation. With 2 million plus visitors you will always have a few conflicts to resolve. |
| #4 An ORV ramp and 10-car parking area 0.5 miles south of Coquina Beach | Reopening of Ramp #2 will negate the need for Ramp #2.5 until and/or unless the construction of the replacement for the Bonner Bridge necessitates the relocation of the existing Ramp #4. If relocation of ramp #4 is necessary, Ramp #2 should remain open and construction of any new, replacement ramp must be as far south as geographically possible to minimize the size of closures due to changes in beach terrain. There must be multiple access/egress points to this popular beach. |
| Part of: | |
| #5 Foot-trail to beach at Ramp 4 | ORV funds should not be used for foot trails to VFAs |
| #16 A 50-car parking area at Buxton Coast Guard Station and ADA boardwalk | Access to the proposed parking lot should be via park service road at the old light house site from the south and not through the residential area on the north. This would have the added advantage of providing overflow parking for the new light house site should it be needed. |