

Principles and Criteria
ORV Routes and Areas, Pedestrian Areas, and Resource Areas
Pedestrian and Environmental Proposal
(8/24/08)

I. Framework

A. The ORV Management Plan shall establish ORV Routes and Areas, Pedestrian Areas, and Resource Areas.

B. Pedestrian areas under section III can overlap with resource areas under section V. However, for an area to qualify as both a pedestrian area and a resource area, the principles and criteria for both areas must be met. For example, while a ½ mile area may meet the principles and criteria for designation as a resource area under sections V and VI, it cannot, standing alone, also be counted as a pedestrian area under sections III and IV, as it is not two miles in length. However, if a ½ mile resource area were next to a 1.5 mile pedestrian area, the area could be counted as both a pedestrian area and a resource area.

II. ORV Routes and Areas

A. There will be routes and areas of the Seashore that are designated in the Plan for ORV use where appropriate on Bodie Island, Hatteras Island, and Ocracoke Island.

B. Each ORV route and area shall have at least one designated beach dune crossing ramp. The ramp shall be the only area for entering the beach in an ORV.

C. Each beach dune crossing ramp should be designed with universal access principles, and should provide parking, directional/educational/rules signage, and a pedestrian walkover. At the discretion of the NPS, ramps may also have restroom facilities, water, and an air pump, but at least one ramp on Bodie Island, Hatteras Island, and Ocracoke Island shall have these facilities.

D. Sound-side ramps will have varying levels of development. Some ramps on the sound shall remain undeveloped, with only the ORV route leading to the sound.

III. Pedestrian Areas Principles

A. There will be year-round pedestrian only areas (no ORV route) where appropriate on Bodie Island, Hatteras Island, and Ocracoke Island.

B. A diverse range of pedestrian recreational opportunities will be available. Beaches in front of villages will typically be expected to have higher pedestrian densities, while no-route beaches away from villages will provide a recreational experience that may have lower pedestrian densities.

C. There will be six or more areas of ocean beach at least two miles long that are outside of the villages that are pedestrian only areas year-round.

D. In addition to the six areas in III(C), the NPS can establish additional pedestrian only areas less than two miles in length where appropriate.

E. There will be at least one wilderness study area in the Seashore; this area may overlap with one of the pedestrian only areas mentioned in III(C). We encourage the National Park Service to have additional wilderness study areas, consistent with the enabling legislation that areas of the Seashore be managed as a “primitive wilderness.”

F. Pedestrian areas shall not be reduced in size as “mitigation” for a temporary seasonal, safety, or resource management closures of an ORV route.

IV. Pedestrian Areas Criteria

Each of the pedestrian-only areas outside of the villages shall:

A. begin at either a parking area or a designated beach ramp and extend in one direction from it, with ORV use provided in the other direction, unless the area is selected as a pedestrian area under sections V and VII, in which case the area may be located away from a ramp if appropriate;

B. be a beach that is at least 100 feet wide between the toe of the dune and the high tide line for most of beach length, as wide, flat beaches are easier for pedestrians to walk on than steep, narrow beaches;

C. be, for the wilderness study area, an area where people can have a wilderness type recreational experience. It should be an area that is representative of a natural, unstabilized barrier island beach and should not be located where pedestrians can hear noise from vehicle traffic on a paved road.

V. Resource Areas Principles

A. Areas may be designated as pedestrian only areas (no ORV route) because of their particular ecological value and the adverse impacts that ORV use may pose to those values.

B. There are seven areas of particularly high ecological value in the Seashore: Bodie Island Spit (Ramp 4 to Oregon Inlet); Ramp 27- Ramp 30; Cape Point (Ramp 43 to Ramp 45); South Beach (Ramp 45 – 1/10 mile east of Ramp 49); Hatteras Inlet Spit on Hatteras (Ramp 55 to Hatteras Inlet); the inlet spit on the east end of Ocracoke (Ramp 59 to Hatteras Inlet), and Ocracoke Inlet Spit (Ramp 72 to Ocracoke Inlet). Four or more of these seven areas shall be pedestrian only year-round and one of these seven areas may be an ORV route for part of the area and a pedestrian only area for at least the ½ mile of ocean beach closest to the inlet.

C. Because of the high ecological values associated with dynamic inlet spit areas, in the event a new inlet opens up, at least one side of the inlet shall be a pedestrian only area.

VI. Resource Areas Criteria

A. High numbers of breeding, migrating, or wintering birds; areas with high numbers are favored over areas with lower numbers;

B. An evaluation of the functions and values of habitats including ocean and sound intertidal areas, ocean backshore, sand flats, washover fans, and natural (unstabilized) dunes; areas of high habitat quality are favored over areas with lower quality habitats;

C. The spatial relationship of ORV routes and areas and areas that are pedestrian only areas, so that there is a mosaic of pedestrian only areas throughout the Seashore.

D. If a new inlet opens up, the side of the inlet with the higher habitat quality shall be pedestrian only.

VII. General Principles for ORV Routes and Areas, Resource Areas, and Pedestrian Areas

A. All ORV routes and areas, pedestrian areas, and resource areas are subject to closure to protect breeding and non-breeding birds, sea turtles, seabeach amaranth and other sensitive resources or to protect safety of ORV users or pedestrians (standards to be developed by appropriate subcommittee or NPS).

B. All ORV routes and areas, pedestrian areas, and resource areas are open to essential vehicles.

C. On an annual basis, based on on-the-ground conditions, NPS may adjust the boundaries of ORV routes and areas, pedestrian areas, and resource areas, so long as NPS complies with all the principles and criteria above. In making the adjustments, NPS may not reduce the overall size of the pedestrian areas and resource areas on Bodie Island, Hatteras Island, and Ocracoke Island.

D. Aside from resource or safety closures, which can arise at any time depending on conditions, or seasonal closures (dates to be determined by appropriate subcommittee or NPS), the NPS must make any other annual adjustments under VII(C) prior to March 15 of each year. This deadline for modifications ensures that changes will occur prior to the breeding season, and the NPS will have adequate time to properly disseminate public information.

VIII. Application of Principles and Criteria

A. RAMP 1 TO OREGON INLET

Ramp 1 to ¼ mile east of Coquina Beach

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs
- Open Ramp 1 to ORVs

Coquina Beach to south ¾ mile

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)
- Move Ramp 2 to south end of pedestrian area

Ramp 2 to Ramp 4

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

Ramp 4 to Oregon Inlet

- Open to Pedestrians (no ORV route)
- If consistent with existing environmental laws and NPS policies, add parking lot at Ramp 4 east of Highway 12

Bodie Island, Sound:

- No change from existing status

B. OREGON INLET TO SOUTH BOUNDARY, AVON

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge: FWS Jurisdiction

Rodanthe, Waves, and Salvo to Ramp 23

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs in the off-season (dates to be decided by Villages Subcommittee or NPS)
- Expand parking lot at Ramp 23
- Construct pedestrian boardwalk just north of Ramp 23 so that pedestrians do not have to walk out ORV ramp to get to the beach

Ramp 23 – Ramp 27

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

Ramp 27 – Ramp 30

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)
- Construct pedestrian boardwalk at Ramp 30 north of ORV Ramp so that pedestrians do not have to walk out ORV ramp to get to the beach

Ramp 30 – Ramp 34

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

Ramp 34 to Avon Pier

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)

Avon Pier to South Boundary, Avon

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs in the off-season (dates to be decided by Villages Subcommittee or NPS)

Sound, South end of Salvo to North end of Avon

- Status quo between Salvo Day Use Area and first ramp north of Avon (no increase in intensity, no new spaces or shell/clay, etc.) to protect traditional waterfowl hunting area and cultural values

C. SOUND BOUNDARY, AVON, TO NORTH BOUNDARY, BUXTON

South Boundary, Avon to Ramp 38

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs in the off-season (dates to be decided by Villages Subcommittee or NPS)
- Add additional parking to existing lot
- Construct a boardwalk parallel to HWY 12 from the parking lot to existing pedestrian boardwalk just south of Avon boundary

Ramp 38 to ½ mile north of Haulover Day Use Area

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

½ mile north of Haulover Day Use Area to ½ mile south

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)

½ mile south of Haulover Day Use Area to north boundary, Buxton

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs
- Construct ramp south of Haulover Day Use Area to allow for ORV use south of Haulover

D. NORTH BOUNDARY, BUXTON, TO EAST (NORTH) BOUNDARY, FRISCO

North Boundary, Buxton, to north groin, Buxton

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

North groin, Buxton to Ramp 43

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)

Ramp 43 to Ramp 45, including Cape Point

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

Ramp 45 to 1/10 mile east of Ramp 49

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)
- Increase existing parking at Ramp 45
- Increase parking at Ramp 49

1/10 mile east of Ramp 49 to 200 yards east of Frisco Village

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

200 yards east of Frisco Village to East Boundary, Frisco Village

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)

E. EAST (NORTH) BOUNDARY, FRISCO, TO HATTERAS INLET

East boundary, Frisco Village to west boundary, Frisco

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)

Frisco Village, west boundary, to Hatteras Village, east boundary

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs in off-season (dates to be decided by Villages Subcommittee or NPS)
- Construct new ramp to allow ORV use between Frisco Village and Hatteras Village

Hatteras Village, east boundary to Ramp 55

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)

Ramp 55 to Hatteras Inlet

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs from Ramp 55 to ½ mile east of inlet
- Expand existing parking lot at Ramp 55

F. OCRACOKE ISLAND

Hatteras Inlet to Ramp 59

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs
- Move ramp west to east end of existing parking area
- Expand existing parking area

Ramp 59 to 1.3 miles east of Ramp 67

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)
- Add additional parking to existing lot on ocean side at Pony Pens

1.3 miles east of Ramp 67 to .75 miles west of Ramp 67

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

.75 miles west of Ramp 67 to 1/10 mile west of Ocracoke Day Use Area

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)
- Add parking on west side of Ocracoke Campground for public (people not camping)

1/10 mile west of Ocracoke Day Use Area to Ramp 72

- Open to pedestrians
- Open to ORVs

Ramp 72 to Ocracoke Inlet

- Open to pedestrians (no ORV route)
- Wilderness Study Area

Ocracoke Island, Sound

- Status quo.

IX. ADDITIONAL NOTES

A. In VII(C) above, a procedure is established to modify the boundaries of ORV routes and areas, pedestrian areas, and resource areas. One possible procedure for this modification process would be a standing committee of diverse interests that periodically evaluates the existing ORV regulation. In order to have “diverse interests,” the committee should include regional and national environmental groups and groups that focus on pedestrian access issues.

B. We encourage NPS to work with Dare County, and state and federal agencies to create convenient beach access locations with parking in each of Hatteras Island’s villages.