

## **CHAPA Offers \$1,000.00 Reward for Information about Sea Turtle Fatality on Ocracoke**

CHAPA (NCBBA, OBPA & CHAC)) are offering this reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the death of a nesting female loggerhead turtle that was struck and killed by an off-road vehicle (ORV) during the night-time hours between 10:00 PM, June 23 and 6:00 AM, June 24. The turtle had crawled out of the ocean and attempted to lay a nest between Ramps 70 and 72 on Ocracoke Island. The turtle was hit by an ORV and dragged approximately 12 feet, causing fatal injuries to the turtle. The animal was found dead by NPS turtle patrol at 6:10 a.m. on June 24. It is the first ever documented incident of a nesting sea turtle being killed by an ORV at the Seashore. Loggerhead turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. If anyone has any information about this incident, please call the Dare Community Crime Line at 252-473-3111.

### **NCBBA's Reaction to Sea Turtle Fatality on Ocracoke**

NCBBA is outraged by this deliberate act and urges NPS law enforcement rangers to use all available resources to find, apprehend and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law the person or persons responsible.

The environmentalists (DOW, SELC & Audubon) who want to close our beaches have responded to this incident by calling for a lock down of the seashore from sunset to sundown. Instead of offering a reward of their own or condemning this deliberate act of vandalism, they use this terrible tragedy as another way to further their agenda of turning Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area into a gated community to which we the taxpaying public have no access. Common sense not irrational reactions should prevail. Installing barriers will not stop those intent on breaking the law and this might just force lawbreakers to drive around the barrier doing more damage to the dunes themselves. Locks only keep honest folks honest; those intent on breaking the law will do so. NCBBA has always encouraged NPS to enforce those regulations they have, not make more they are unwilling to enforce. I question where was NPS enforcement during the nighttime hours during which this incident occurred? Under the terms of the court ordered consent decree the only vehicles allowed on the Seashore during those hours are NPS. This should have been enforced. Do not punish the general law abiding public for the unlawful action of one or two individuals. Until an arrest and conviction have occurred, no one knows who committed the crime and to blame, try, convict and punish the Access Community is premature. During Reg/Neg the Access Community continually requested that parked vehicles be allowed on the beach during the night time driving ban hours and we were refused. If this had been allowed, surely someone would have been on the beach to witness this unlawful act if it would have even occurred. NCBBA and other like minded organizations and individuals continue to advocate for reasonable and responsible ORV use, not the restrictive use now in effect.