

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: CAHA

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Cape Hatteras National Seashore is a fascinating combination of natural and cultural resources, and provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Once dubbed the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" for its treacherous currents, shoals, and storms, Cape Hatteras has a wealth of history relating to shipwrecks, lighthouses, and the U.S. Lifesaving Service. These dynamic islands provide a variety of habitats and are a valuable nesting and wintering area for waterbirds. The park's fishing and surfing are considered the best on the east coast.

Containing more than 30,000 acres, the Seashore was the first in a series of areas established to preserve significant segments of barrier islands along the coasts of the United States. Located on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Cape Hatteras NS stretches over 74 miles of coast and includes Bodie, Hatteras, and Ocracoke Islands. The Seashore abuts, and/or surrounds eight unincorporated villages. Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge (5,834 acres), located on park lands, is managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service through agreement with the NPS.

The Centennial Vision for the park is to improve the park management strategy for the use and preservation of park resources by completing the Off Road Vehicle Management Plan and the General Management Plan by 2016. By using negotiated rulemaking procedures the park will enlist its partners and other community interest groups to develop operating measures that will both protect park resources and provide quality recreational opportunities.

We will improve the care of natural resources by developing baseline data for the highest priority resources including the threatened piping plover, Seabeach Amaranth and Sea Turtles; determining the desired condition for these species and developing plans to achieve those conditions. The park will also create an inventory of other high priority resources, determining the desired condition for these resources, developing plans to achieve those conditions and implementing the plans as soon as feasible.

The park's historic structures and landscapes will be revitalized through several related projects that will include the rehabilitation of the lighthouses and their auxiliary structures and will also develop and implement comprehensive interpretive plans that will integrate the surrounding historic districts into the interpretation of the Lighthouse story.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Michael B. Murray

Site: CAHA

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cape Hatteras proposes to create partnerships to develop and implement an accessibility plan for the use and enjoyment of special populations of NPS visitors. The plan will be based on an Accessibility Assessment of deficiencies, specifically targeting beach access in the park. The plan would identify each eligible site, develop conceptual designs, cost estimates, and list necessary compliance actions. Upon completion of the Plan the park will develop an Implementation Plan to phase in the recommendations as funding becomes available.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Cape Hatteras proposes to partner with the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society to improve the condition of the park's three lighthouses and make these more accessible to the public.

Over the next six years the park will be rehabilitating the Cape Hatteras, Bodie Island and Ocracoke Lighthouses and the auxiliary structures within the historic areas surrounding the lighthouses. According to the FCI scale, all of these structures are in poor condition and will be restored to good condition when these projects are completed.

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Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Cape Hatteras will develop a Predator Management Plan for the Outer Banks Group. The three parks of the Outer Banks Group (Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial) each have issues relating to negative predator impacts on the natural resources. The majority of these negative impacts may have been brought about by increased development on the Outer Banks over the past twenty years. The park will develop a plan for sustained reduction of predator species. This plan is primarily to assist in the protection of endangered species breeding and germination. It will enhance survival of the young and protect vegetation to allow growth through the seed production stage.

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Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

Cape Hatteras will complete and implement a comprehensive Sign Replacement Plan. Signs installed along the Outer Banks are exposed to extreme ultraviolet conditions, almost constant blasting with sand and hurricane force winds, all of which reduce the life expectancy of the signs. These signs are well past their useful life, most needing replacement several years ago. These signs provide information to the 2.2 million visitors to the seashore annually. Deteriorated signs have resulted in visitors entering areas closed for resource protection, inadvertently breaking rules and regulations and missing turns or otherwise unable to locate facilities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

A GIS specialist will be contracted to set up a GIS program and centralized database for threatened and endangered species occurring in the park including loggerhead, green, and leatherback sea turtles, piping plovers and seabeach amaranth. The GIS specialist will train staff locally on GIS capabilities and database management and will establish protocols to shift the park data collection program to a computerized one. By creating a centralized database, upper management will be able to make better management decisions as they will be able to easily access sea turtle nesting locations and false crawls. Upper management will also be able to look at mapped resource closure areas to determine if the size of a closure is adequate to protect nesting piping plovers.

Once this project is completed, park staff will begin a comprehensive inventory of its natural resources, beginning with wetlands and uplands; determine the preferred condition of these resources and restore the resources to preferred conditions where feasible. This effort may then be used to springboard to an ongoing GIS program for the park that will also enhance the management of park cultural resources and facilities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Cape Hatteras will complete an Historic Structures report for the Ocracoke and Cape Hatteras Light Stations. The Ocracoke HSR will include Ocracoke Lighthouse, (LCS#CAHA07236), Ocracoke Double Keepers Quarters (LCS#CAHA07237), Shed (LCS#CAHA91907), Tool Shed (LCS#CAHA91908), Oil House (LCS#CAHA91909) the Privy (LCS#CAHA91910) and Cistern (2)(LCS#CAHA91911).

The Cape Hatteras HSR will include Cape Hatteras Lighthouse (LCS#CAHA00113), Oil House (LCS#CAHA07241) Double Keepers Quarters (LCS#CAHA07251), and the Principal Keepers Quarters (LCS#CAHA00112).

These Reports will include a management summary, developmental history, treatment and use, record of treatment, and an appendix. The HSR will follow guidance in NPS-28, Chapter 8. The Cape Hatteras Light Station is listed as a National Historic Landmark.

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Site: CAHA

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cape Hatteras plans to develop a Self-Sustaining program for the Ocracoke ponies. With an estimated \$10,000 annual donations income a term employee will create a volunteer program and develop partnerships with the local populace on Ocracoke Island to not only support the pony herd, but to improve available time and resources to better nurture the herd. Additionally this program would reduce ONPS operational funds currently needed to keep the herd.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Outer Banks Group, in collaboration with scientists in the Southeast Coastal Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU), proposes to assess impacts of global warming, specifically impacts of sea level rise and storm pattern changes on the barrier island geology and ecology. The study will then develop a program for continued monitoring of ecological processes (geological, biological, and botanical) needed to preserve and protect the park's diverse barrier island natural resources. A Study Coordinator will be hired for three Fiscal Years to identify the ecological processes to be studied, and develop and implement a monitoring program relating specifically to these impacts on the Outer Banks Group. State and regional academic institutions will be solicited for researchers and research topics that complement similar current research. Public education and a cooperative effort with area constituents will also be developed to ensure the area understands barrier island natural processes relating to these events and the management actions the park takes to preserve natural resources affected by global warming changes.

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Site: CAHA

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cape Hatteras will implement a Junior Lifeguard Program through the Youth Conservation Corp Program. Under this program the park will hire 10 youths between the ages of 15 - 18 from the seven local communities. This will provide for a cadre of future senior lifeguards to protect the three guarded beach areas (Buxton, Ocracoke, and Coquina) in the park. Junior lifeguards will be trained in CPR, First Aid, AED, and Advanced Lifesaving certifications. They will provide preventative lifesaving messages to the public on rip tides and other beach hazards and be trained by senior lifeguards. The enrollees will assist in beach clean-up as assigned. This YCC program will meet the environmental education component through instructions of weather effects on the beach, water and hurricane conditions, along with other educational information of the park's natural and cultural resources.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Cape Hatteras will develop a water quality monitoring program in the seashore that will provide water quality data in a representative sample of fresh, brackish, and salt water habitats in the seashore. Cape Hatteras National Seashore is part of the east coast barrier island system. The Seashore contains 30,000 acres of land and 140 miles of beach and soundside shorelines. Seashore vegetation is adapted to varying degrees of ocean overwash, fresh water availability, salt spray, and windblown sand. The monitoring program and protocols will be established based on current available research developed for the park in the last few years.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore will complete a new General Management Plan. Since completion of the 1984 GMP, the population of surrounding park communities has increased 30%, subsequently increasing pressure to use parklands in non-conforming ways. An 87% increase in park visitation has also placed increased impacts on existing visitor use facilities and the park's infrastructure to respond to visitor service needs. Continued high rates of coastal erosion threaten existing park facilities including park and state transportation corridors, a historical Coast Guard Station at Coquina Beach, parking facilities up and down the seashore, and two of five campgrounds. Adverse impacts from off-road vehicle use may already be occurring on more than 50% of park-lands. The park legislation calls for the protection of a primitive park environment and for the accommodation of certain recreational uses; at the same time, today's social and economic environment is demanding a more recreational-friendly approach in resource management style. General Management Plan will provide the park with a guidebook to improve park resource management and reduce harmful environmental impacts.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

Cape Hatteras proposes to develop a partnership with Dare County to create an Environmental Education Center. The local Cape Hatteras Secondary School has recently been designated as a School of Coastal Studies through a grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation and within this is a coastal studies magnet school.

This program would provide for partners to construct a jointly-established over-night coastal environmental education center on park property which would include a dorm and combined kitchen/dining room/classroom facility. A partner coalition would complete an educational assessment to define potentials and identify goals that could be reached through this facility. Working together partners and educational professionals could develop a series of curriculum based lesson plans and activities specifically designed for use at the Center.

Educational thematic areas could include coastal geology, shoreline change, protected species, coastal ecological communities, wetlands, oceans emphasis, maritime history and culture, recreational fishing and boating.

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Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Cape Hatteras will replace all existing shower structures in its four campgrounds with new solar hot water shower systems and structures. The existing structures were built in the 1980s and require extensive refinishing of building surfaces. This project will provide new structures with easy to maintain surfaces and showers upgraded with solar heated hot water to meet visitor demand.

New shower structures will have an extended useful life and reduced maintenance costs. Expensive refurbishing would not be required. The hot water would provide an increase in visitor comfort and satisfaction. The solar technology would reduce the additional cost normally associated with producing hot water and would educate the public in this alternative technology.

This project is in support of the Department of Energy FEMP Energy Audit Program and provides sustainable, energy conservation measures identified in the Green Energy Parks Program.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cape Hatteras plans to partner with the Town of Nags Head to replace water lines and move them out of resource sensitive areas. This project will replace 11,750 linear feet of asbestos-cement pipe which was constructed in 1960 to supply the Bodie Island Maintenance Facility, housing, and Lighthouse. The new piping will be modern 6" PVC. The work includes all hydrants, valves and appurtenances. Much of the installation will be rerouting to remove the system from sensitive wetlands. Maintenance of the system was assumed by the Town of Nags Head in an agreement in 1981. This is a 20% cost share project with the Town.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

The park will construct a Bike Path on Bodie Island. This project will provide an 8 foot wide asphalt-paved, marked bike path on North Carolina (NC) Highway 12 from the southern end of the South Nags Head Bike Path to the Oregon Inlet Bridge through the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The length of the path will be 4 miles and it will be constructed in accordance with ASSHTO recommendations. It will be separated from the existing highway pavement for safety.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

RECREATION

- Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.
- Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore has two projects in place to increase its' volunteer hours. The Ocracoke Pony Pen Program on Ocracoke Island will specifically target developing a cadre of volunteers to protect and care for the ponies on Ocracoke Island. The park also plans to develop and/or upgrade its trailer pads for Campground Hosts which will include installing hookups. These improvements will greatly enhance the opportunities for recruiting campground hosts who could then be available throughout the summer season.

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Site: CAHA

EDUCATION

- Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.
- Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cape Hatteras proposes to develop a partnership with Dare County to create an Environmental Education Center. The local Cape Hatteras Secondary School has recently been designated as a School of Coastal Studies through a grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation and within this is a coastal studies magnet school. This program would provide for partners to construct a jointly-established over-night coastal environmental education center on park property which would include a dorm and combined kitchen/dining room/classroom facility. A partner coalition would complete an educational assessment to define potentials and identify goals that could be reached through this facility. Working together partners and educational professionals could develop a series of curriculum based lesson plans and activities specifically designed for use at the Center. Educational thematic areas could include coastal geology, shoreline change, protected species, coastal ecological communities, wetlands, oceans emphasis, maritime history and culture, recreational fishing and boating.

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Site: CAHA

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The Outer Banks Group began a publicity campaign to encourage Junior Rangers with a kick-off press release on Junior Ranger Day, April 23, 2007. Children can actually become three different kinds of junior rangers: a Seashore Ranger at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, a Flight Ranger at Wright Brothers National Memorial, and a Roanoke Ranger at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. These program are provided in partnership with The North Carolina Beach Buggy Association, the First Flight Society and Eastern National Parks Association.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Although the Outer Banks Group reflects many of the faces of America at this time, it wants to increase the diversity of its employees. In order to do so the park will create a recruitment committee to develop a Recruitment Strategy for the three park areas. Action items for the plan might include recruitment trips to traditionally Black colleges and universities and to typically Hispanic colleges and Universities, holding open house/recruiting sessions in various locations throughout the community, more structured education for supervisors, and researching the use of recruitment incentives and educational payback incentives. Once the plan has been developed the park will identify funding needs and funding sources and implement the plan.

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Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.

Cape Hatteras will develop a Task Force to create a parkwide Awards program that will both standardize award requirements and encourage all employees to participate in the program. The task force will be made up of a complement of employees from different divisions, different park areas and diverse grade levels and the ultimate goal of the task force will be to develop a Standard Operating Procedure for encouraging Awards within the Outer Banks Group.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

PROFESSIONALISM

Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore will develop a internal park training program to target and train mid-level managerial employees. This program will include the development of an annual selection procedure which will allow employees in the targeted group to compete for the opportunity. Approximately \$5,000 annually will be reserved for this program and the selected employee will be assigned a manager mentor who will help develop a curriculum of training courses which best prepare the employees for upper management positions based upon their planned career goals.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Cape Hatteras plans to develop partnerships with local communities to provide an enhanced educational program on preventative lifesaving which will educate the visiting public on hazardous beach conditions. The preventative lifesaving program will help to educate visitors of these hazardous beach conditions through community interface with Dare County and private and community partnerships. This program will provide funds to hire a temporary coordinator position; provide roving beach ambassadors and add life guarded beach areas in partnership with neighboring villages. This project will also fund posters, site bulletins, hand outs and wayside exhibits at key beach sites, communication software for terminals to communicate with surrounding emergency services agencies and provide for local program opportunities to provide preventative lifesaving message.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CAHA

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park plans to partner with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and Hyde County to develop a shuttle/trolley system within the village of Ocracoke. NCDOT funded a feasibility study in 2005. This shuttle system will assist in relieving traffic congestion at several NPS sites located within the Village of Ocracoke.

In conjunction with the initiation of shuttle service on Ocracoke, the park hopes to expand usage of the Ocracoke lighthouse site to include the addition of a gift/book store within the keepers quarters structure and pedestrian access throughout the site. Currently, visitors are restricted to using only a pedestrian walkway located outside of the original lighthouse yard area. Expanding the visitor use of this developed area will require that numerous deferred maintenance projects be completed in order to make this area safe for visitor access.

In addition, in order to provide expanded access to the lighthouse and other NPS sites on Ocracoke, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility compliance improvements will need to be implemented.

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