



COUNTY OF DARE

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February 11, 2010

Mr. Mike Murray
Superintendent
Outer Banks Group
National Park Service
1401 National Park Road
Manteo, North Carolina 27954

CC: Jonathan Jarvis, Director, National Park Service
Dan Wenk, Deputy Director, National Park Service
Dr. Bert Frost, Associate Director of National Resource Stewardship and Science,
National Park Service
Will Shafroth, Deputy Assistant Director for Fish, Wildlife and Parks,
U.S. Department of Interior
Sandy Hamilton, National Park Service, Environmental Quality Division
David Vela, Southeast Regional Director, National Park Service

Dear Superintendent Murray,

This letter is in response to the one sent to you December 21, 2009 by Audubon North Carolina. After the Outer Banks Sentinel published a report of this letter, we requested and received a copy from your office.

We believe Audubon's letter was a desperate, last minute attempt to pressure the National Park Service prior to the anticipated release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area.

Audubon is urging the National Park Service to release a preferred alternative that would result in the "highest level of protection" which "would restrict all recreational activity year round."

This extreme approach recommended by Audubon would have horrific consequences. The consent decree closures have already had a devastating impact on families and businesses. People are suffering. To close the beaches even further would be a prescription for economic suicide for the hard-working Americans serving the visitors of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area.

Audubon cites protocols prepared years ago by USGS. When these were released, the National Park Service described them as *"a tool to assist in the development of park planning documents"* and added, *"In addition to science, many other factors such as federal laws and mandates, NPS policies, public input, practical field experience and other science are considered in the development of plans and strategies implemented at the Seashore."* In short, these were the opinions of those asked to make a technical recommendation on how to manage a specific resource, without regard to the full consideration of the law, the economy, and public use.

With their letter, Audubon includes the names of over fifty individuals, many of whom have had no direct connection with the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area, nor have they studied the complexities involved in the unique history and use of this seashore. In fact, a disclaimer reveals that their views *"are not the official position of their institutions, agencies, or organizations."*

In fact, one of the signatories to Audubon's letter has asked that their name and organization be removed. Heather Shaw, a Conservation Programs Biologist for Ducks Unlimited, has issued a statement claiming the Audubon letter *"is not reflective of my personal opinion regarding the issues at hand, nor does it coincide with my job duties and the mission and vision of Ducks Unlimited. She adds, "I have had no affiliation with North Carolina, nor shorebird matters in either job related or personal activities."* Shaw clarifies, *"I would greatly appreciate both my name and that of Ducks Unlimited removed from the letter."*

Now it is clear that Audubon was not negotiating in good faith in the past when claiming they wanted only to control access, not stop it. They have finally exposed their long intended goal of closing the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area to everyone forever.

We urge the National Park Service to release a preferred alternative that gives science-based protection for wildlife and provides reasonable access for recreation consistent with the enabling legislation.

Sincerely,



Warren C. Judge, III, Chairman
Dare County Board of Commissioners