



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Outer Banks Group:
· Cape Hatteras National Seashore
· Fort Raleigh National Historic Site
· Wright Brothers National Memorial

1401 National Park Road
Manteo, NC 27954

252-473-2111 phone
252-473-2595 fax

National Park Service News Release

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CONTACT: Cyndy Holda, 252-473-2111, ext. 148

Ramp 45 Closes Due to Vandalism to Shorebird Resource Protection Area

The second deliberate vandalism act of the 2010 season to a shorebird resource protection area has resulted in the closure to all public access to Ramp 45 area near Buxton, NC in Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Ramp 45 had been closed to ORV access on May 21 due to the hatching of piping plover chicks in the area but was still open to pedestrian access.

Investigation revealed that in the early morning hours of Monday, May 31, 2010, individuals entered the area on foot after tossing the vehicle barricades into the brush along the side of the sand route on the back side of the Cape Point Campground. The 202 campsite campground was full for the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Upon further investigation another vehicle barricade was found to be missing from the Interdunal Road and symbolic resource protection closure fencing was destroyed along the Ramp 45 route. Approximately 34 signs and sign posts were broken or pulled out. The remains of two beach fires were found near the shoreline. The two fires had been covered with sand but were still hot and smoldering. Evidence of the remains of sign posts and the vehicle barricade were found in the fire pits. There were numerous foot tracks found around the fire pits but no vehicle tire tracks were found in the area.

The court ordered consent decree mandates that if a confirmed deliberate act that disturbs or harasses wildlife or vandalizes fencing, nests, or plants occurs, the National Park Service (NPS) shall automatically expand the buffers. As a result of the violation, Ramp 45 is closed. The expansion will remain in effect until shorebirds have finished using the respective areas for breeding activities. Under consent decree modifications approved in June 2009, NPS is not required to expand the buffer if information from the public or developed by NPS leads to the apprehension of a violator. If a buffer has been expanded because of vandalism, as is the case here, and subsequent information leads to violator apprehension, NPS may retract the expansion.

NPS law enforcement personnel continue to investigate this incident. If anyone has information about this violation, please call Dare Community Crime Line at 252-473-3111. Destruction of government property and entering a resource closure are federal criminal violations, each subject up to a \$5,000.00 fine and up to six months imprisonment.

For up-to-date information on currently open or closed areas, check the Cape Hatteras National Seashore's Google Earth maps at: <http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/googleearthmap.htm>