



COUNTY OF DARE

Department of Public Relations

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Dare County Opposes Audubon's Call for Year Round Beach Closures

Dare County has opposed a request by Audubon North Carolina to restrict all recreational activity on a year round basis in the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area. In a letter dated Dec. 21, 2009, Audubon asked the National Park Service to include in their Draft Environment Impact Statement "the highest level of protection" which would prohibit year round recreational access for everyone. This would have a detrimental impact on more than 2.2 million yearly recreational visitors recorded by the National Park Service.

"This extreme approach recommended by Audubon would have horrific consequences" said Warren Judge, Chairman of the Dare County Board of Commissioners. He explained, "The consent decree closures have already had a devastating impact. 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's request purports to be based on protocols that were prepared in 2005 by the U.S. Geological Survey. However, in publishing their opinions USGS clearly stated, "These protocols do not attempt to balance the need for protection of these species with other activities that occur at Cape Hatteras National Seashore." The National Park Service has characterized these protocols as "a tool to assist in the development of park planning documents." The protocols cited by Audubon represent the opinions of those asked to make technical recommendations without regard to the full consideration of the law, the economy and public use.

Audubon's letter included the names of individuals and organizations as signatories. Many of these people have had no direct connection with 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 a troubling development related to the letter, one of those listed as a signatory has told Audubon to remove their name. Biologist Heather Shaw with Ducks Unlimited says in a published report, "I do not know how my name ended up on the letter, and I did not knowingly authorize the use of my name or that of Ducks

Unlimited.” She added, “I would greatly appreciate both my name and that of Ducks Unlimited be removed from the letter.”

“Audubon has gone too far,” said Judge. “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.”

Dare County has encouraged the National Park Service to give science-based protection for wildlife and provide reasonable access for recreation consistent with the enabling legislation.

Additional information including Audubon’s original letter to the National Park Service is available at www.PreserveBeachAccess.org

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