



COUNTY OF DARE

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The federal judge who issued the consent decree for the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area convened a special hearing today. Judge Terrence W. Boyle called all parties together for an unexpected meeting March 5, 2009 in United States District Court in Elizabeth City.

In April 2008, Judge Boyle issued the Consent Decree as the result of a lawsuit filed against the National Park Service by the Audubon Society and Defenders of Wildlife represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center. Dare and Hyde Counties stepped forward and became Intervenor in that lawsuit, to preserve beach access and best represent the interests of its residents and visitors.

In his remarks, Judge Boyle said today's hearing was an informational update and the proceeding would be non-adversarial with no cross-examination. The only testimony given was by Park Service Superintendent Mike Murray. He explained the Park Service's perspective on last year's closures and reported on pre-nesting closures scheduled to begin next week.

At the conclusion of today's hearing, Warren Judge, Chairman of the Dare County Board of Commissioners said, "As we look to the beginning of another summer season, we are reminded of the fact that beach closures, under the consent decree, have hurt local business." Judge explained, "We always need to remember the people being hurt by efforts to restrict beach access."

The Consent Decree remains in effect until 2011 when the long-term management plan of the National Park Service becomes effective, unless legislation introduced in Congress returns control of the area to the Park Service's Interim Management Plan (House Bill 718)

Information about beach access in the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area is available at www.PreserveBeachAccess.org

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