



# TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE, INC.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

October 19, 2011

Louis S. Hinds, III, Refuge Manager  
Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge  
P.O. Box 62  
Chincoteague Island, Virginia 23336

RE: CNWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Dear Mr. Hinds:

The Town of Chincoteague has submitted a variety of comments, concerns and ideas regarding the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, our Advisory Committee and Town Council have endorsed a preferred alternative that would adapt the existing 1992 Master Plan for the next 15 years. The 1-2-3 Common Sense Plan for Storm Damage Reduction at Toms Cove is attached.

A Town alternative is offered as a responsible and sustainable solution that will maintain existing facilities, continue to permit compatible uses, and provide hurricane/erosion control protection for the Seashore and our community on Chincoteague Island. We request again that the 1992 Refuge Master Plan and the future CCP document should not recommend federal agency control, through purchase, lease or regulation, of any new area within the Town corporate limits.

Representatives of the USACE Norfolk District have been invited to meet with the Town of Chincoteague to discuss the Town alternative plan for land base nourishment and maintenance. This action will allow an important CCP issue to be considered and further developed to inform the planning process.

I appreciate your commitment toward creating the best plan for the future with compatible uses from the 1992 Refuge Master Plan permitted to continue (such as 961 parking spaces, 150 Chincoteague ponies, horseback riding, and OSV use of Toms Cove Hook).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John H. Tarr". The signature is stylized and fluid.

John H. Tarr  
Mayor

Attachment

cc. Trish Kicklighter, NPS  
Elected Representatives



## Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague Island National Seashore

US Fish and Wildlife Service-National Park Service-US Army Corps of Engineers-FEMA-Town of Chincoteague

The unique shared landscape at the south end of Assateague Island has an exceptional record of success with productive wildlife species, family oriented beach recreation, and a wealth of cultural history. In August 2011, the USFWS issued a newsletter describing four alternative management strategies<sup>1</sup> for the future Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge *Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan*. The Town of Chincoteague believes that there should be a fifth alternative...the '1-2-3 Common Sense Plan'.



### Step 1 (Immediate Action to protect existing infrastructure)

- Repair parking areas, construct and maintain low berm to provide winter protection from high tides
- Install snow fence from Parking Lot 1 to the USCG to capture wind blown sand and begin to rebuild a natural barrier island cross section that includes a dune system
- Move sand from Chincoteague Inlet vicinity to repair and stabilize breached or severe over washed areas
- Complete USACE Storm Damage Reduction Study for Toms Cove and the recreational beach area, permitting and project design

### Step 2 (2 to 3 year Action Plan)

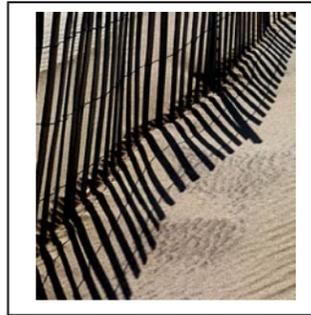
- Transport and place inlet dredge material to expand or repair the land base necessary to support hurricane protection measures and to protect the health safety and welfare of Chincoteague Island residents.
- Provide long term protection measures for existing visitor use infrastructure (parking areas, berm, nourishment of cove-side shoreline, raise parking area elevation)



### Step 3 (3 to 5 year Action Plan)

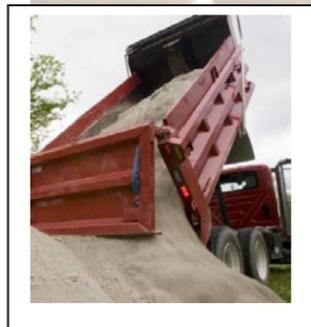
- Align beach nourishment project with 5 year Wallops Island program to save mobilization costs
- Complete barrier island restoration project with expanded land base in Toms Cove/Little Toms Cove/Swanns Cove
- Re-establish island cross section including a low dune system from the Coast Guard Station to north of Swann's Cove Pool
- Balance good stewardship of public lands with creative management of natural processes

<sup>1</sup> USFWS alternatives did not include the entire Wildlife Refuge boundary and concentrated primarily on public uses rather than wildlife management strategies. The Town alternative is also targeted toward finding a responsible and sustainable solution that will maintain existing facilities, continue to permit compatible uses, and provide hurricane/erosion control protection for the Seashore.



### STEP 1

- Repair Parking Areas, Maintain low berm for winter storm protection, Install Snow Fence
- Stabilize breached or over washed areas
- Complete USACE Storm Damage Reduction Study



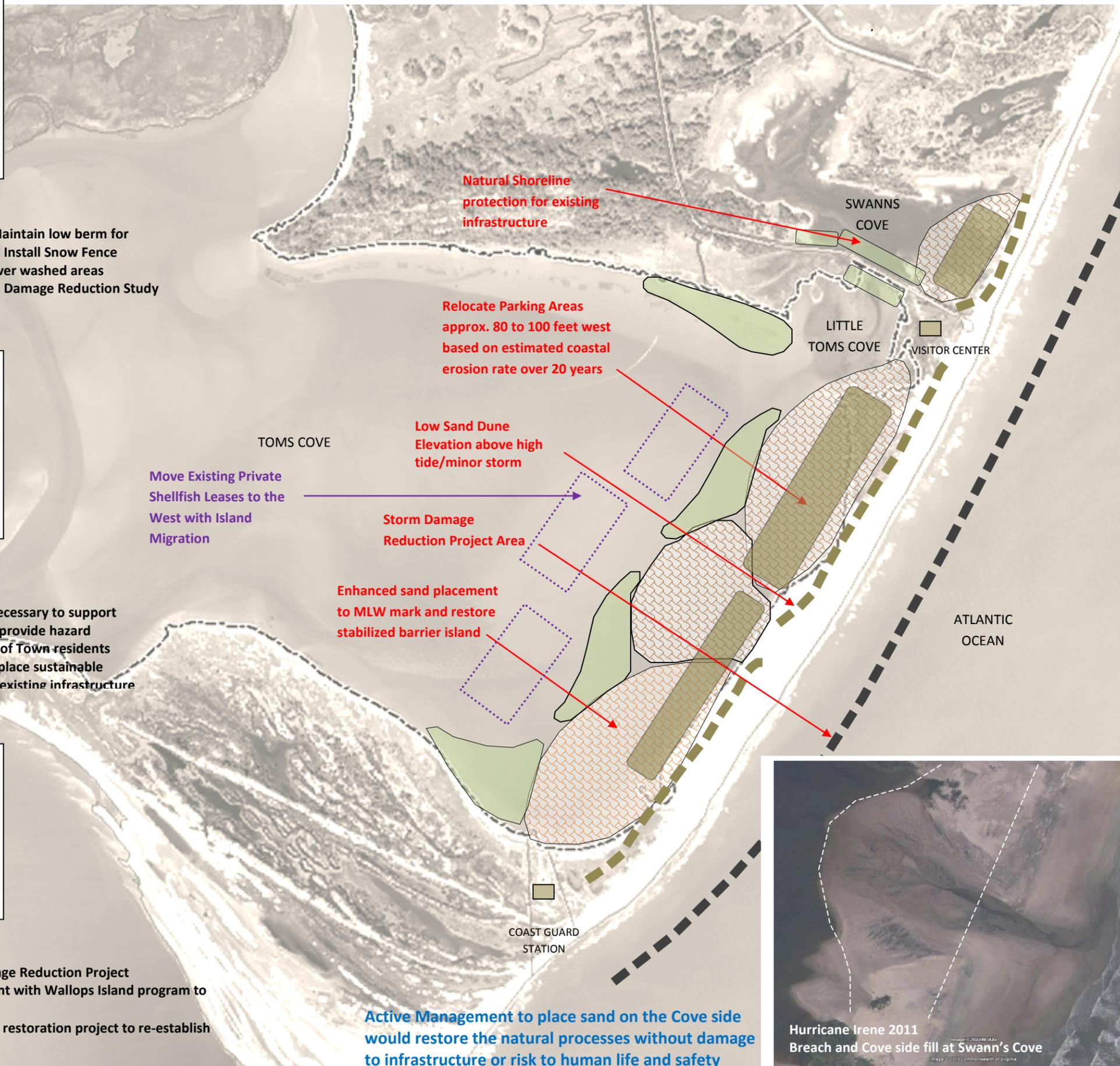
### STEP 2

- Expand the land base necessary to support recreational uses and to provide hazard mitigation for the safety of Town residents
- Install, maintain and replace sustainable protection measures for existing infrastructure



### STEP 3

- Implement Storm Damage Reduction Project
- Align Beach Nourishment with Wallops Island program to save costs
- Complete barrier island restoration project to re-establish stable cross section



Active Management to place sand on the Cove side would restore the natural processes without damage to infrastructure or risk to human life and safety

### Anatomy of an Island

Sculpted by wind and waves, barrier islands along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the U.S. are made of sand—mostly grains of quartz, feldspar, and other minerals eroded from inland mountains and deposited offshore by rivers. When left in their natural state, Atlantic coast islands such as Assateague (left) tend to lengthen with prevailing currents and to migrate toward land, rolling over themselves like sand in a barrel. Human development may impede this migration but can never bring it to a halt.

Copied from National Geographic Article – date unknown

Active management based on natural processes would re-establish a low dune system and shift parking areas to the west in the next 15 year CCP



## 1-2-3 Common Sense Plan for Storm Damage Reduction at Toms Cove Town of Chincoteague

October 2011  
Not to Scale