

# **A G E N D A**

## **TOWN OF CHINCOTEAGUE**

Chincoteague to Assateague Beach Access Committee

**December 3, 2010 - 9:00 AM**

Town Hall Council Chamber

1. Call to Order
2. Review of draft CCP public scoping comment submission #1 from Town of Chincoteague
3. Strategies for outreach, political consultant, economic impact study
4. Other discussion items or future committee agenda items



## STAFF REPORT

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To: Mayor Tarr and Members of the Town Council

From: Bill Neville  
Planning Director

Date: December 1, 2010

Subject: Beach Access Committee Report

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The Chincoteague to Assateague Beach Access Committee has concluded the Questionnaire and recommends that the attached packet of information should be officially submitted as public comment from the Town of Chincoteague.

US Fish and Wildlife Service has advertised a comment period ending January 18, 2011 for public input on early scoping of issues to be considered during the Refuge planning process. The next opportunity to provide comment will be in July 2011 when preliminary alternatives for the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) are presented.

With Town Council approval, this packet will also provide information for elected representatives at the County, State and National levels. Issues have been highlighted that may require political support over the next year. Our new Town lobbyist can direct this effort for maximum benefit to the community.

Refuge planning staff has indicated that the NEPA Environmental Impact Statement process will be used to organize the preparation of the CCP. Since the first step requires identification of polarizing 'issues of concern', 'endangered resources' and 'consideration of alternatives', the comments provided by the Town may be viewed as negative or critical. This should not be misunderstood.

Support of the current Refuge management strategies will be continued throughout the planning process. These have led to making Chincoteague the #1 Beach Town in America, and the CNWR as one of the most visited 'flagship' refuges in the nation.

### Recommended Action:

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Approve the recommendation of the Beach Access Committee to send the attached packet (letter with attachments, summary of the Questionnaire, Public Comments) to the USFWS in conformance with Federal Register Notice dated September 17, 2010

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December 7, 2010

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

Thomas Bonetti, Refuge Planner  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 5  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

RE: Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge  
Comprehensive Conservation Plan  
Public Scoping Comments

Dear Mr. Hinds and Mr. Bonetti:

On behalf of the Town of Chincoteague, I am submitting for the public record the following comments in conformance with the Federal Register notice dated September 17, 2010. The issues, concerns and ideas that are contained in this letter have been considered by the Town's appointed **Chincoteague to Assateague Beach Access Committee** and have been approved by the Town Council at its regular meeting on December 6, 2010.

In addition to this letter, a **Town of Chincoteague Questionnaire** has produced 1,281 comments in response to the refuge planning issues that you presented at several public meetings this year. These comments are attached as unfiltered data and will also be forwarded to you by email for consolidation into common issues. We hope you will recognize that each comment represents an average family/group size of 6 persons identified in a current year survey of over 13,000 visitors from across the country.

Our community of residents, business owners and seasonal visitors has expressed concern over potential changes to the Refuge CCP. At the same time, the Town Questionnaire has documented strong support for the Refuge and Seashore under current operational plans. We appreciate the opportunity to participate and provide meaningful input in this planning process.

## Public Scoping Comments

1. Maintain and Restore the existing recreational beach access at Tom's Cove, with 961 automobile parking spaces, as a community resource that honors over 40 years of negotiated management decisions. The 'no-action' alternative should be considered as a

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viable and mandated option. Take immediate/short term actions to protect public investment at the beach (see issue paper #1).

2. Manage the recreational beach area as a significant cultural and economic resource that is closely connected to the Town's economy. Include techniques such as beach replenishment, construction and maintenance of dunes, and installation of snow fence to protect the beach and parking areas from storm damage. This alternative would propose to update and enhance the current management plan as the baseline with new projects and goals.
3. A 'shoreline management' alternative is requested to include a deliberate review of the coastal geomorphology of Assateague Island and the cumulative effects of beach nourishment plans to the north in Delaware and Maryland, and to the south at Wallops Island/NASA and Virginia Beach. The impact of a policy to allow barrier island migration should be compared to recreational beach nourishment by expansion of the Wallops Island project.
4. Include a viable option for long term reserve areas to relocate the recreational beach and direct access parking for 961 spaces to the north approximately 1 mile with access from the 'Wildlife Loop'. Any acceptable alternative to relocate the recreational beach use and private vehicle parking must include direct beach access for a minimum of 961 parking spaces.
5. Do not limit or reduce the grazing permit for up to 150 Chincoteague Ponies. Include public viewing as a priority along with other management considerations.
6. An Emergency Plan for the short term management of public beach access during a post-storm restoration period is necessary, including options for interim use of Refuge land areas for parking. Large remote parking areas within Town limits are not a reasonable or cost effective solution.
7. Use of transit (trolley/bus/shuttle systems) to access the beach is not a decision that supports the family values of, or meets the needs of, visitors to the Refuge. This does not seem to be a financially responsible option. The Alternative Transportation Study prepared by the Volpe Center has not been accepted or approved by the Town of Chincoteague and should not be used to guide the CCP process.
8. All alternatives must be evaluated for their socio-economic impact on the local economy, cultural heritage and regional tourism with recommendations to minimize or mitigate impacts to the human environment.
9. Continue the current OSV/ORV access to Tom's Cove Hook. Access has already been limited in the past from March 15<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup> which has had an economic impact to the Town. Further reduction is not necessary based on the success of this shared use plan.

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10. The Town of Chincoteague Questionnaire has provided useful information about visitors to the Refuge and the recreational beach area. The exceptional value placed on the current balance of wildlife/natural land management and recreational beach use is documented in the attached comments.

Each of these comments is described in more detail on the attached issue papers #1 through #10. Thank you for your consideration of these important issues for both the Town of Chincoteague and the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely,

John H. Tarr  
Mayor

cc. Chincoteague Beach Access Committee  
Elected Representatives  
National Park Service

# Public Scoping Issue #1 'No-Action' Alternative

December 2010

## Issue

- The Town of Chincoteague supports the continuation of existing management practices over significant changes that would limit the visitor experience or resident quality of life

## NEPA/EIS Review

- Process should not be biased against the extension of existing operational plans for another 15 year period
- CCP should include Joint Management Agreement with NPS for recreational beach area
- CCP should be built upon prior negotiated decisions

## Legislative History/Highlights

- 1943 Chincoteague NWR
- 1956/62 Chincoteague Assateague Bridge and Beach Authority constructs public access
- 1965 Assateague Island National Seashore includes CNWR
- 1976/79 Memorandum of Understanding/Tom's Cove Hook Area
- 1982 ASIS General Management Plan
- 1992 CNWR EIS/Conservation Plan

## 1992 EIS Proposed Alternative/Public Use Management

- Selected criteria include: Beach recreation zone 5,500 foot long x 100 foot wide from parking lot 1 to parking lot 4. 961 parking spaces with maximum beach use capacity of 4,400 visitors at one time. Seasonal closure of Toms Cove Hook from March 15 through August 31 to avoid piping plover nesting activity. Wildlife oriented recreation north of current public use beach. Traffic management measures during high use summer season. Continue private vehicle beach access ... and allow NPS to maintain the existing number of parking spaces (961)...and plan for off-site parking with shuttle system.

## Exceptional Visitor Experience/Resident Quality of Life

- The current location of the beach recreation zone is exceptional with water views in all directions. Access is direct, individualized and unique to this particular combination of Seashore



*Seasonal Shared Use of Beach*



and Refuge. The balance of essential services with a priority on wildlife/environmental management is highly valued by visitors and residents alike.

- A Comprehensive Conservation Plan that works to maintain the best qualities and accomplishments of the last 60 years is needed.
- A balance or equilibrium has been achieved over the last planning period between the capacity of the Town infrastructure and Refuge resources to accommodate both visitor and resident needs. Why change?

## Recommendations

- Take immediate/short term actions to protect the existing recreational beach area during the current winter season such as:
  - o NPS efforts to mound sand to protect parking areas from high tide overwash
  - o Placement of recycled Christmas trees on the beach to assist with sand retention
  - o Initiate a community project to place biodegradable sand bags as a protection measure
  - o Partner with NPS, NASA, Accomack County and the Town of Chincoteague to amend the Wallops Island EIS for the addition of a beach replenishment demonstration project along the recreational use area.
- Do not allow areas of common interest and responsibility between USFWS and NPS to 'fall between the cracks' of the two separate planning efforts. Include the Memorandum of Understanding in the planning documents or re-approve it concurrently.
- Policy driven changes must reflect the unique characteristics of this place (and legislative history) and not become a CCP 'rubber stamp'
- Proposed actions that have not been implemented such as removal of the former visitor center complex and implementation of a shuttle system should be deleted or modified for the next planning period.
- Complete economic impact study of baseline conditions.

# Public Scoping Issue #2

## Enhanced Baseline Alternative

December 2010

### Issue

- More effective planning and community support will be accomplished by proposing alternatives based on incremental change to the current, successful conservation plan

### NEPA/EIS Review

- Sea Level Rise discussion should move beyond alarmist 'education' to positive adaptation responses based on 15 year planning projections
- SLAMM analysis should be updated with new LiDAR elevation data for best available information
- USFWS abandonment of a 60 year investment and public trust to allow unmitigated natural forces to erode the beach is not acceptable
- Do not base mitigation or improved environmental management on a reduction of private vehicles or the addition of transit



### Manage Natural Processes

- Refuge Manager Hinds has stated that 'sea level rise has framed our view of the CCP'
- Adopt management actions that work with natural processes to support program goals (such as the freshwater impoundments). Actions should protect the public investment in direct beach access/parking lots and recreational use rather than abandon it.
- Specific projects such as raising the parking area elevation, dune construction, sand fences, or other beach erosion controls should be added to the existing management plan as a way to mitigate the potential effects of sea level rise
- Recreational beach areas have been reduced by erosion with a loss of 56 acres (5,500lf x 150yds). Wildlife management areas have been increased by accretion with a gain of 600 acres (measurement from 2009 aerial photo)

### Recommendations

- Net gain of over 500 acres of prime shorebird habitat should be offset with increased effort to maintain recreation beach use areas (see above).

- Separate new issues and long term trends (barrier island migration, sea level rise) from incremental management actions/programs that may reasonably continue for another human generation
- Do not limit site specific solutions based on broad policy issues
- Identify steps to protect and expand the shell fish industry in Toms Cove and waters surrounding the Refuge
- Limit impacts to the tourism based economy of the Town of Chincoteague (don't addle the goose's golden egg)
- Consider a modified approach to alternative transportation issues that maintains 961 parking spaces and proposes the incremental addition of shuttle, bicycle and electric vehicle options
- Do not limit options for public access, beach replenishment, recreation, OSV use or other active management tools if the required 'wildlife purposes' of the Refuge are adequately met on the other 14,000 acres of the Refuge, the other 120,000 acres of the Virginia Coast Reserve, or the significant areas recently mapped as blue/green infrastructure on the Eastern Shore mainland.

# Public Scoping Issue #3

## Shoreline Management Alternative

December 2010

### Issue

- As described at public meetings, the federal agency policy to allow unconstrained barrier island migration landward conflicts with community goals to maintain a recreational beach area with direct parking, and creates long term concerns for the protection of Chincoteague Island from major storm damage and high tides.

### NEPA/EIS Review

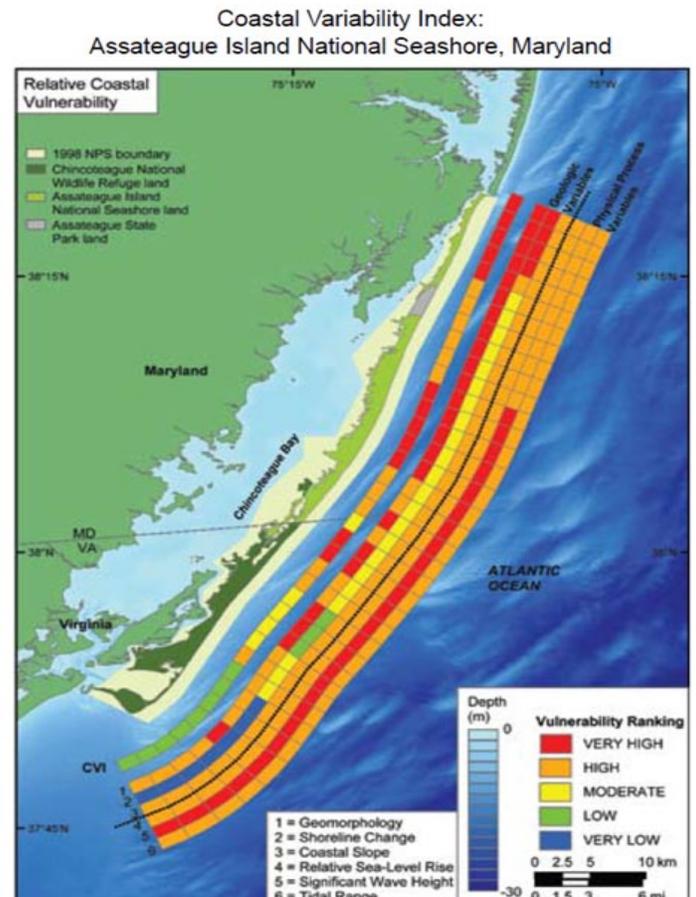
- Beach nourishment must be considered as an alternative so that the policy of island migration can be evaluated
- The EIS for Wallops Island/NASA should inform and provide opportunities for the consideration of beach replenishment and protective measures for areas of significant investment and value
- Chincoteague Island is at risk from the creation of new inlets, obstructed channel access, loss of tourism economy, and storm damage as the result of the island migration policy

### Concerns

- The Sediment Management Plan prepared and funded for the Ocean City, MD Inlet has approved active shoreline management of the north end of Assateague Island
- The NASA/Wallops Island EIS has proposed active shoreline management that includes other portions of the Wildlife Refuge and will also impact the Chincoteague Channel access for the commercial fishing fleet.
- Other Mid Atlantic beach communities have active shoreline management programs in DE, MD, VA and NC.
- A decision to allow the specific small portion of Refuge shoreline that is currently providing public recreational beach access to erode while other areas are accreting and being replenished is an abandonment of the public trust.

### Recommendations

- Prepare a 20 year shoreline change projection similar to the one completed in 1981, Atlas of Environmental Dynamics, Dolan/Hayden/Haywood, University of Virginia.



- Add Toms Cove recreational beach to the proposed NASA Wallops Island replenishment and shoreline stabilization project.
- SLAMM Analysis, or other sea level rise inundation model, should be updated with new LiDAR elevation data to provide best available information to the planning process. It is important to model the effect of protection measures even though current USFWS policies promote unmitigated island migration.
- Continue to allow public use/water access to 'Little Beach' and other shoreline perimeter areas of the Refuge. This is a community resource and has been included in the Virginia Seaside Water Trail system for kayak ecotourism.

# Public Scoping Issue #4

## Wildlife Loop Alternative

December 2010

### Issue

- An alternate location to provide public recreational beach access should be reserved for future use in the event of significant storm damage to the existing beach area that cannot be repaired within a single year timeframe.

### NEPA/EIS Review

- Preliminary ideas/alternatives for beach access (1-4 ) have been proposed by FWS staff. Elements such as elimination of 50% of the individual vehicle parking, development of a trolley/bus system, and reconstruction of parking areas that are remotely located from the beach have been identified as 'un-reasonable' by a current visitor use questionnaire and are not supported by the community.
- Ideas identified during the scoping process that are deemed un-reasonable may not be evaluated during the EIS process



Exhibit III illustrating Chincoteague to Assateague Beach Access Alternative

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### Site Selection Criteria

- Subject to additional analysis and review of studies, the shoreline to the north of Toms Cove beach may be identified as an area less subject to erosion, over wash, and associated with an existing ridge/dune that provides higher elevation for site infrastructure
- The existing 'wildlife loop' road provides access to this location, is currently used for public access, and would reduce peak summer vehicle traffic impacts to forest habitat
- Increased land area behind the inter tidal zone would allow for reconstruction of a dune system, direct access parking areas, and relocation of the NPS visitor center with essential services
- This location provides a significantly diminished visitor experience and would require sustained investment of physical site improvements and interpretive programming to offset the unique qualities of Toms Cove
- Based on a review of shoreline change projections, the north beach location should also be considered for potential beach replenishment, sand fill of areas between the Wildlife Loop and the beach to raise elevation, and protection measures for any public investment in recreational use facilities

## Recommendations

- This alternative should be fully examined for implementation in response to a catastrophic weather event, and only if direct access parking for a minimum of 961 spaces is provided along with a shoreline/land management program that adds equivalent value to this site.
- Long term planning for a national quality recreational use area should employ creative design by a team that includes environmental planners and landscape architects who are trying to identify a balanced solution. Please do not allow your transportation engineering consultant to use Federal transit policy as a substitute for good environmental design.

# Public Scoping Issue #5

## Wild Pony Management

December 2010

### Issue

- Chincoteague wild ponies and the cooperative management agreements between the Wildlife Refuge and the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) are highly valued by the community

### NEPA/EIS Review

- Proposed reduction in the permitted 150 ponies in the Chincoteague herd would have a direct impact on the Refuge visitor experience
- There is a strong link between this wildlife population and the economic impact to the tourism economy/CVFD financial resources



### Cultural/Economic Importance

- The tourism based economy of Chincoteague Island peaks during the summer months centered on Pony Penning Week. This event supports social, cultural and economic systems of the Town.
- Misty of Chincoteague has become an iconic symbol for families with children. Refuge actions that impact the wild pony population will be taken personally, for either good or bad, by generations of visitors and supporters of the Wildlife Refuge.
- The annual CVFD budget is supported in large part by the annual auction of wild ponies

### Environmental Constraints

- The Refuge Conservation Plan has previously achieved goals for the support of multiple wildlife populations by keeping the Chincoteague herd fenced/penned versus the free range herd in Maryland.
- Refuge staff has indicated that high tides in the south meadow will require long term management changes in support of the existing Chincoteague herd.
- A continued effort to support the herd size at a maximum of 150 ponies through adaptive management strategies is consistent with other efforts for selective wildlife species management on the Refuge.

### Recommendations

- Approve current year grazing permit with no reduction
- Prepare cooperative agreement and management plan with CVFD
- Incorporate by reference in the CCP
- Maintain current permitted size of herd to allow for genetic diversity, flexibility to accept ponies from the north herd

# Public Scoping Issue #6

## Post-Storm Beach Access

December 2010

### Issue

- The CCP should include a cooperative agreement with the Town of Chincoteague to limit periods of beach closure due to storm events and to agree on a short term response plan.

### NEPA/EIS Review

- Any proposals for transit use during peak periods should also be evaluated as the means to provide post-storm interim beach access
- Town Questionnaire comment responses listed a common concern regarding transit options that suggest only short term options would be viable



### Short term response

- The community's willingness to coordinate short term, interim means of providing public beach access following a major storm event must not be considered acceptance of the current FWS proposals for elimination of individual vehicle parking in favor of transit use.

### Recommendations

- Shared responsibility to provide interim solutions must also include options for use of Refuge land areas for temporary parking based on time of year and other compatible use issues.
- Existing parking lots near the Bateman Visitor Center, areas surrounding the Lighthouse, and parallel parking along the beach access road have been suggested for interim parking use while beach parking areas are restored.

# Public Scoping Issue #7

## Alternative Transportation

December 2010

### Issue

- Volpe Center proposals for alternative transportation include large urban-scale solutions that would lead to economic ruin for the Refuge and the Community

### NEPA/EIS Review

- Consultant preparing the EIS and CCP has a conflict of interest to promote the use of transit at the Refuge
- A policy driven mandate for transit should not be implemented if it does not have community support and is not financially sustainable



### Alternative Transportation Plan

- The Alternative Transportation Plan prepared by the Volpe Center is not a completed document. Public comment following its release and the necessary selection of a preferred alternative with the Community has not informed a final revision to the study.
- Options for individual access to the Refuge and Seashore such as automobile, bicycle, boat or scooter/scooter coupe are supported by the Community
- Options for limited group access to the Refuge and Seashore such as a shuttle bus or tram are not supported by the Community
- The recommendations of the Alternative Transportation Plan should be tested against the proposed Economic Impact Model and options compared such as cost of transit versus cost to replenish beach and/or restore parking lots each year.

## Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program

*Congestion in and around popular national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, and other federal lands causes traffic delays and noise and air pollution that substantially detract from the visitor's experience and the protection of natural resources. Congress established the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program, formerly Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands (ATPPL) Program, to enhance the protection of national parks and federal lands and increase the enjoyment of those visiting them. Administered by the Federal Transit Administration in partnership with the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service, the program funds capital and planning expenses for alternative transportation systems such as shuttle buses and bicycle trails in national parks and public lands. The goals of the program are*

*to conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources; reduce congestion and pollution; improve visitor mobility and accessibility; enhance visitor experience; and ensure access to all, including persons with disabilities. In accordance with SAFETEA-LU, areas eligible for funding include any federally owned or managed park, refuge, or recreational area that is open to the general public, including: National Wildlife Refuge System units; Bureau of Land Management recreational areas; Bureau of Reclamation recreational areas; and National Forest System units*

- A well considered application for program funding to extend and improve bicycle access from the Town of Chincoteague into the National Wildlife Refuge has carried with it an obligation to promote shuttle bus transit solutions that do not respect the unique characteristics of this place
- The consultant responsible for implementing 'Transit in Parks' is now in charge of the NEPA/EIS review and preparing the CCP for the Refuge
- The Alternative Transportation Plan has been used to limit the scope and number of options to be considered during the CCP process to only those that lead to reduction of direct beach access and implementation of transit solutions

## Questionnaire Results

- The ideas and options presented by the Alternative Transportation Plan were tested by the Town of Chincoteague through a Questionnaire that was administered from July 4, 2010 to November 15, 2010.
- 2,854 questionnaires were returned, representing over 13,000 visitors to Chincoteague and the Refuge/Seashore. 91% believe that beach access from a bus or trolley does not make sense and that direct beach parking is important to their family vacation experience.

## Recommendations

- Allow the CCP process to grow from the current operational plan and the unique characteristics of Refuge/Seashore/BeachTown, not a national policy driven transportation program that provides funding opportunities.
- Do not limit the current public recreational beach use (961 spaces with direct access) to only the baseline (no-action alternative) in order to exclude it from other preferred alternatives.

# Public Scoping Issue #8

## Economic Impact

December 2010

### Issue

- The Town of Chincoteague, Accomack County and the Commonwealth of Virginia have a significant investment in the tourism based economy linked to public beach access and wildlife dependent recreation at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge/ Assateague National Seashore at Toms Cove



### NEPA/EIS Review

- CCP actions that change the current management plan will have a significant Economic Impact on the Human Environment
- CCP strategies for providing access and interpretation of Assateague Island Cultural History will have an impact on the Town Economy
- CCP recommendations for acquisition of property within the Town limits will have a significant impact on land ownership/tax base for the Town government



### Town Economy

- Real Estate Tax Base of Chincoteague Island equals \$1 billion
- Local Tax income equals over 60% of the annual Town of Chincoteague budget, and provides a significant stability to the Accomack County annual budget.
- The tourism based economy of Chincoteague Island supports over 1500 small businesses, and provides the main source of employment for the Town's LMI population.

### Economic Impact Model

- The preparation of an economic impact model as proposed by Refuge Staff is a good idea
- The model should be used to evaluate any proposed change in the current conservation plan management strategies and answer the question: at what cost?
- The consideration of alternatives must also address the current visitor fee structure, consistency of collection methods, and the need to create a year over year reserve fund for beach repairs as promised in several Refuge news releases.

## Recommendations

- Raise gate/entrance fees if necessary to address cost considerations of beach and recreational facilities restoration.
- Include Year to year budget planning for beach access repairs
- Any analysis should recognize that the existing conservation management plan has provided both the Refuge and the Community with superior results
- Any analysis should recognize that this location is unique. The CCP should not be a rubber stamp of uniform policy for all Refuges in the Mid Atlantic Region.
- Allow participation by Town/County in preparation of the Economic Impact Study

# Public Scoping Issue #9

## ORV Access to Toms Cove Hook

December 2010

### Issue

- Off Road Vehicle access to Toms Cove Hook is a valuable part of the local quality of life and the exceptional visitor experience that sustains the tourism based economy in the 'shoulder' seasons

### NEPA/EIS Review

- Review of the baseline (no-action alternative) must recognize previous management actions that have already limited recreational opportunities in favor of wildlife management goals
- No further limitation of access is warranted due to successful seasonal 'shared use' of the beach areas at Toms Cove Hook



### Concerns

- Toms Cove Hook is a unique location that should continue to be accessible for recreation
- Limitation or reduction of shared use in one location, such as Toms Cove Hook, should not be considered when other areas of the Refuge will meet wildlife management objectives.
- Fishing/Aquaculture at this location is a unique/high value resource that supports local industry
- Adaptive reuse of the Coast Guard Station should continue to be included in the CCP and GMP for the National Seashore with a plan for access and long term protection

### Recommendations

- The current conservation plan that allows seasonal ORV access to Toms Cove Hook and the Coast Guard Station should be continued for the next planning period.

# Public Scoping Issue #10 Beach Access Questionnaire

December 2010

## Issue

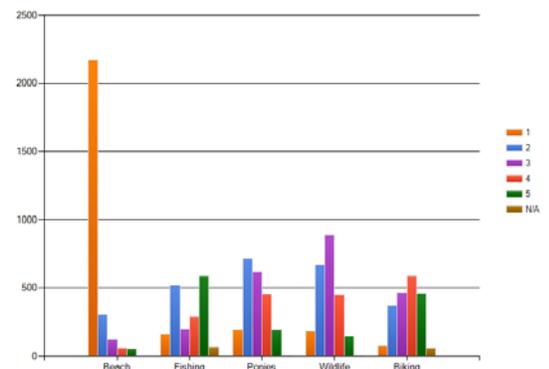
- The public, represented by the Town Questionnaire results, places a high value on current management actions and recreational opportunities and wishes to keep Assateague Island National Seashore 'AS IS'



## NEPA/EIS Review

- USFWS administration of the NEPA process should not be biased against the baseline or no-action alternative that would continue the current, successful management actions
- Public recreational use opportunities should not be reduced in order for the Refuge Manager to meet expectations of improved metrics for all wildlife management objectives.

What activities are most important to you? (Number all reasons that apply in order of importance)



## Summary of Visitor Questionnaires

- 80% of Chincoteague visitors make Assateague Beach their top destination
- Current Refuge management plans that restore direct beach access and automobile parking for 961 spaces after a storm is supported by 97%
- 91% believe that beach access from a bus or trolley does not make sense and that direct beach parking is important to their family vacation experience
- If transit from a remote parking lot to the beach was provided, 82% would not return for another visit.

## Recommendations

- Accept over 1,200 comments received by the Town of Chincoteague as individual public scoping comments
- Consider options/alternatives for the CCP that continue the current conservation management practices and unique balance of wildlife dependent recreation, cooperative management of the National Seashore resource and interdependent community.
- Select a preferred alternative that supports the unique equilibrium that has been achieved with the Town of Chincoteague's cultural and economic resources
- Select a preferred alternative that supports multi-generational family values, freedom of personal vehicle use, and senior/handicap access to the seashore

# Beach Access Questionnaire

1. Do you come to Chincoteague primarily to go to Assateague Beach?			Response Percent	Response Count
Yes			82.0%	2,317
No			18.0%	510
<b>answered question</b>				<b>2,827</b>
<b>skipped question</b>				<b>27</b>

2. What activities are most important to you? (Number all reasons that apply in order of importance)								
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Beach	<b>80.0%</b> (2,171)	11.2% (304)	4.5% (123)	2.2% (60)	2.1% (56)	0.0% (0)	1.35	2,714
Fishing	8.9% (162)	28.4% (516)	10.9% (198)	15.9% (288)	<b>32.4%</b> (587)	3.5% (63)	3.36	1,814
Ponies	8.8% (193)	<b>32.7%</b> (715)	28.4% (622)	20.9% (456)	8.9% (194)	0.3% (7)	2.88	2,187
Wildlife	7.8% (182)	28.6% (668)	<b>38.0%</b> (887)	19.2% (448)	6.2% (145)	0.1% (2)	2.87	2,332
Biking	3.8% (76)	18.3% (370)	23.0% (465)	<b>29.1%</b> (588)	22.8% (460)	3.0% (61)	3.50	2,020
<b>answered question</b>								<b>2,819</b>
<b>skipped question</b>								<b>35</b>

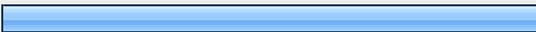
**3. Do you think that public beach access and automobile parking on Assateague Beach should be restored after major storm damage?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	96.9%	2,729
No 	3.1%	88
<i>answered question</i>		2,817
<i>skipped question</i>		37

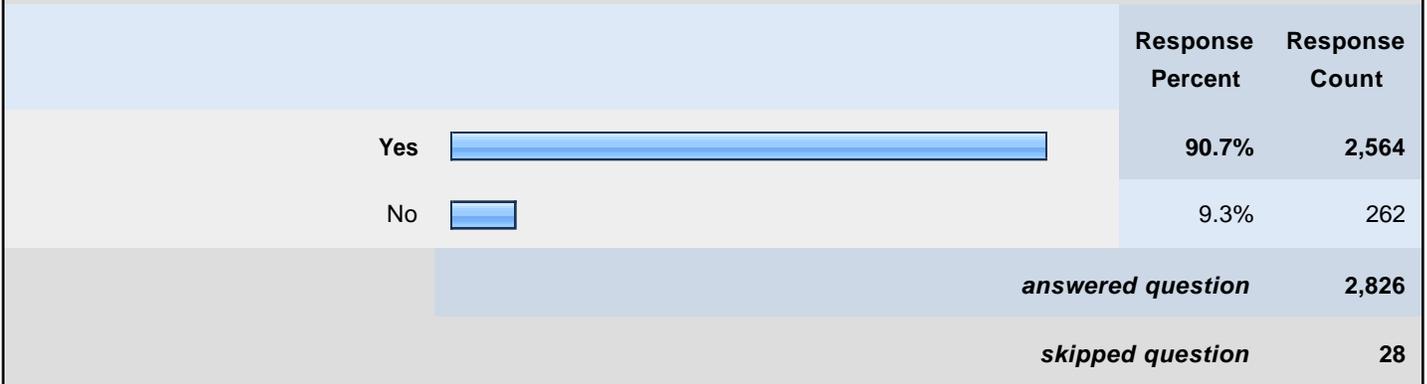
**4. A more stable, natural beach with room for parking lies north of the current recreational beach. Would you support relocation of the recreational beach to this alternate site with additional parking?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	74.5%	1,993
No 	25.5%	683
<i>answered question</i>		2,676
<i>skipped question</i>		178

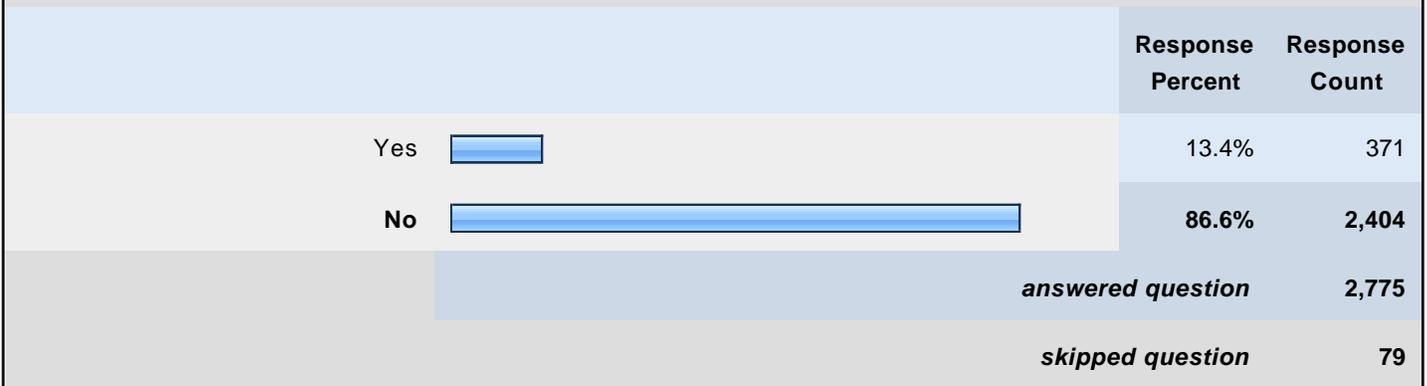
**5. Would you return to visit Assateague Beach if direct beach parking was not available and a trolley/bus from a remote parking lot in Chincoteague was available instead?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	18.0%	501
No 	82.0%	2,289
<i>answered question</i>		2,790
<i>skipped question</i>		64

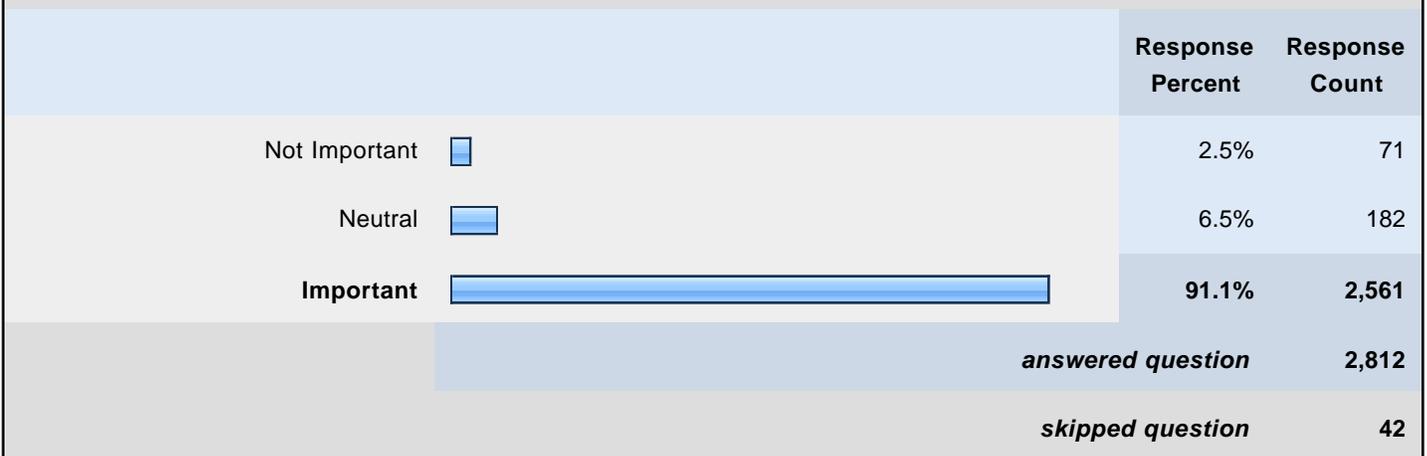
**6. If Assateague Beach parking was replaced by a trolley/bus system, do you believe it would have a negative impact on local business or the length of your vacation in Chincoteague?**



**7. If a fast-moving thunderstorm hit the beach, would you feel safe in a temporary shelter while you wait for a trolley or bus?**



**8. How important is direct beach parking at Assateague Beach?**



### 9. How many people are in your Group?

	Response Average	Response Total	Response Count
Adults	3.33	9,194	2,763
Children	2.75	4,412	1,607
	<i>answered question</i>		<b>2,766</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>		<b>88</b>

### 10. What is your home zip code?

	Response Count	
	2,820	
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>2,820</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>34</b>

### 11. Optional email address information may be provided for future participation and updates

	Response Count	
	1,431	
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>1,431</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>1,423</b>

**12. Please provide any suggestions you have about improving Assateague Beach access and parking, or any other comments:**

	Response Count
	1,289
<i>answered question</i>	1,289
<i>skipped question</i>	1,565