



Assateague Island National Seashore News Release

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For Immediate Release
Contact: Regina Jones-Brake (410) 629-6061

New Course Selected for the Feral Horses of Assateague Island National Seashore

Berlin, Maryland – Acting Superintendent Carl Zimmerman announced the availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the *Environmental Assessment of Alternatives for Managing the Feral Horses of Assateague Island National Seashore*. On February 19, 2009, the Northeast Regional Director of the National Park Service approved the FONSI for the project, the final step in a two year planning process to improve management and protection of the Assateague horses. With the decision, the park will now begin implementation of the Selected Alternative.

The Selected Alternative (modified Alt. D) will gradually reduce the NPS-owned horse population inhabiting Assateague Island from its current size of approximately 130 to a more sustainable population of 80-100. The target size reflects a compromise between the competing objectives of reducing the adverse effects of the horses while protecting the long-term health and viability of the population. The Selected Alternative also includes long-term monitoring, public outreach and education, and mitigation to protect the horse population from potential inbreeding effects. The reduction will be accomplished over a 5-8 year period through the intensive use of contraceptives, acting in concert with natural mortality. No NPS-owned horses will be removed from Assateague Island.

The FONSI is available on-line at the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) web site located at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Select 'Assateague Island National Seashore' and then "Development of Alternatives for Managing Feral Horses". Follow



the links to the “Document List” and select “FONSI”. Please note that the FONSI also contains an errata sheet describing changes made to the Environment Assessment. Because the changes were minimal, the Environmental Assessment will not be reprinted.

For more information on Assateague Island National Seashore visit www.nps.gov/asis/.

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