PLAN SUMMARY

This General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan for Cape Lookout National Seashore (see the Vicinity map) is the result of a comprehensive process of planning, including widespread public involvement, which began formally in 1976. The plan was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of National Park Service (NPS) employees. Briefly stated, this plan perpetuates the present level of use and development of Core Banks/Portsmouth Island and establishes gateway port facilities at the east end of Harkers Island. More specifically, the plan calls for the following actions.

Ferryboat service will be provided to south Core Banks and Shackleford Banks from a marina at the gateway port. Here, also, there will be a visitor contact/administrative/maintenance facility. On the barrier islands themselves, development will be minimal to maintain the present rustic, natural character of the environment.

At the Cape Lookout Point area on Core Banks north of the lighthouse, there will be a passenger ferryboat dock with associated visitor orientation, a sun/rain shelter, drinking water, and a comfort station. South of the lighthouse, there will be an NPS boat dock, a visitor contact station with drinking water and comfort facilities, a ranger station and residence, and maintenance and garage facilities. There will be an on-island transportation system to Cape Lookout Point, a distance of 3 miles.

Development similar to that at the Cape Lookout Point area will occur at Portsmouth Village, but there will be no on-island public transportation. Passenger ferryboats will connect Portsmouth Village to Ocracoke. There the facilities of Cape Hatteras National Seashore will be used to introduce the history of Portsmouth Village. Information will also be available there on how to prepare for a visit to Portsmouth and the north end of Cape Lookout National Seashore.

There will be no development on Shackleford Banks, after acquisition, except for a ferryboat dock and orientation sign at the east end landing point. Shackleford will be devoted to primitive, backcountry-type use without motorized vehicles.

There will be ferryboat service for pedestrians and vehicles to Shingle Point on Core Banks from Davis and to North New Drum Inlet on Core Banks from Atlantic. At each of these places on Core Banks, there will be a ferryboat dock, dockside shelter, orientation, comfort station, and enclosed camping shelters rented out by a concessioner.

Visitor activities will be primarily beach-oriented and can take place anywhere along the 55 miles of ocean shoreline and along much of the sound shoreline. Those recreational activities that are compatible with the fragile and dynamic barrier-island environment will be encouraged. Among these are fishing, hunting, sightseeing, swimming, sunbathing, surfing, beachcombing, hiking, and backpacking.

People began to ferry private vehicles to Core Banks/Portsmouth Island in the 1940s and used them mostly for fishing, hunting, and sightseeing. Use of private vehicles on Core Banks and Portsmouth Island will be allowed to continue. Drivers will be directed, through appropriate regulations, to avoid dunes, vegetation, loggerhead turtle and shorebird nesting areas, and conflicts with other visitor activities. As in the past, ferryboats will follow "natural" channels, but maintenance dredging to the minimum extent possible will be required at turning basins and at Harkers Island. The NPS will apply for the necessary permits. Ferryboat services will be operated under concession contracts.

The basic objectives of this plan are two-fold (see legislation in appendix C):

to "administer the Cape Lookout National Seashore for the general purposes of public outdoor recreation, including conservation of natural features contributing to public enjoyment" (PL 89-366), and

to provide "the facilities needed to accommodate the health, safety and recreation needs of the visiting public" (PL 93-477).

The NPS perceives the following as its underlying philosophy for the management of Cape Lookout National Seashore:

The sea produced these islands, and the plants and animals that live here have adjusted themselves to the harsh environment. The islands and the life thereon will maintain themselves best if man interferes least. For the most part, man is a visitor who does not remain. Thus, the seashore will be mainly a natural area, some of it having a wildland character. Therefore, development will be minimal and recreational uses will be compatible with the natural setting. This setting is also quite appropriate to the drama of the seashore's human story, which is best represented at the lighthouse area and Portsmouth Village, where the NPS will perpetuate the historic integrity, as feasible.

This General Management Plan/ Development Concept Plan is to guide management and use of Cape Lookout National Seashore for the next 8-10 years.

CONTENTS

I. BASIS FOR THE PLAN 1
- A. Cape Lookout National Seashore--An Undeveloped Link in America's Barrier-Island System . . . 1
- B. Significance of the Seashore 1
- C. Establishment of the Seashore 3
- D. Management Objectives 3
- E. Context of This Plan 5

II. THE ENVIRONMENT OF CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE 9
- A. Natural Conditions and Values 9
  - 1. Overview 9
  - 2. Geomorphology 9
  - 3. Climate and Air Quality 10
  - 4. Vegetation and Ecological Zones . . . 10
  - 5. Animal Life 13
  - 6. Soils and Minerals 15
  - 7. Freshwater Resources 17
  - 8. Scenic Quality 19
- B. History and Cultural Resources 19
- C. Existing Seashore Use and Development . . . 22
  - 1. Visitor Experience 22
  - 2. Visitor Use Data 25
  - 3. Existing Development 28
- D. Private Rights, Interagency Agreements, and Permits 30
- E. The Region 31
  - 1. Overview 31
  - 2. Access 31
  - 3. Socioeconomic Environment 32
  - 4. Recreational Opportunities 32

III. THE PLAN 34
- A. Management Zoning 34
  - 1. Natural Zone 34
  - 2. Historic Zone--Preservation/Adaptive Use . 35
  - 3. Park Development Zone--Facilities . . . 35
  - 4. Special Use Zone 39
- B. Resources Management 39
  - 1. Natural Resources Management . . . 39
    - a. Overview 39
    - b. Geomorphic Processes 40
    - c. Vegetation 40
    - d. Animal Life 40
    - e. Fishing and Hunting 41
    - f. Vehicle Use 41
    - g. Junk and Abandoned Structures and Vehicles 41
    - h. Water Resources and Sanitation . . 42
  - 2. Cultural Resources Management . . . 42

C. Interpretation and Visitor Use 43
1. Interpretive Themes 43
2. Orientation to the Seashore Islands . . 44
3. Visitor Experiences on the Seashore Islands . 45
D. Seashore Carrying Capacity and Visitation . . 47
1. Carrying Capacity 47
2. Visitation 48
E. General Development 49
1. Overview 49
2. Access to the Islands 50
3. On-Island Circulation 50
4. Administrative Site on East Harkers Island . 53
5. Seashore in General 57
6. Development on the Seashore Islands . . 58
a. Cape Lookout Point Area 58
b. Shackleford Banks 59
c. Portsmouth Village 59
d. Shingle Point 64
e. North New Drum Inlet 64
7. Dredging Requirements 65

APPENDIXES
A: Summary of Proposed Development and Staffing . 67
Development Costs 67
Annual Staffing and Operating Costs . . . 70
B: Public Involvement and Consultation . . . 71
Public Involvement 71
Consultation 71
C: Legislation 74

BIBLIOGRAPHY 79

PLANNING TEAM 87

ILLUSTRATIONS

National Seashores of the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts . . viii
The Region and Developed Zones of North Carolina's Outer Banks 2
Existing Conditions 7
Cross Section of Barrier-Island Ecological Zones . . . 12
Interpretation of Cape Lookout Ecosystems/Suitability for Recreational Use 14
Characteristic Soil Types 16
Geological/Groundwater Section 18
Cape Lookout Lighthouse Complex (photographs) . . . 20
Portsmouth Village (photographs) 21
Core Banks (photographs) 23
Shackleford Banks (photographs) 24
Recreational Uses (photographs) 26
Shacks and Vehicles (photographs) 29
Management Zoning 37
General Development Plan 51
Administrative Site: Site Analysis/Existing Conditions . . 54
Administrative Site: Development Concept Plan . . . 55
Cape Lookout Point Area: Site Analysis/Existing Conditions . 60
Cape Lookout Point Area: Development Concept Plan . . 61
Portsmouth Village: Site Analysis/Existing Conditions . . 62
Portsmouth Village: Development Concept Plan . . . 63

TABLES

1. Visitor Use Statistics 25
2. Ranking of Activities by Their Popularity . . . 27
3. Summary of Management Zones 36

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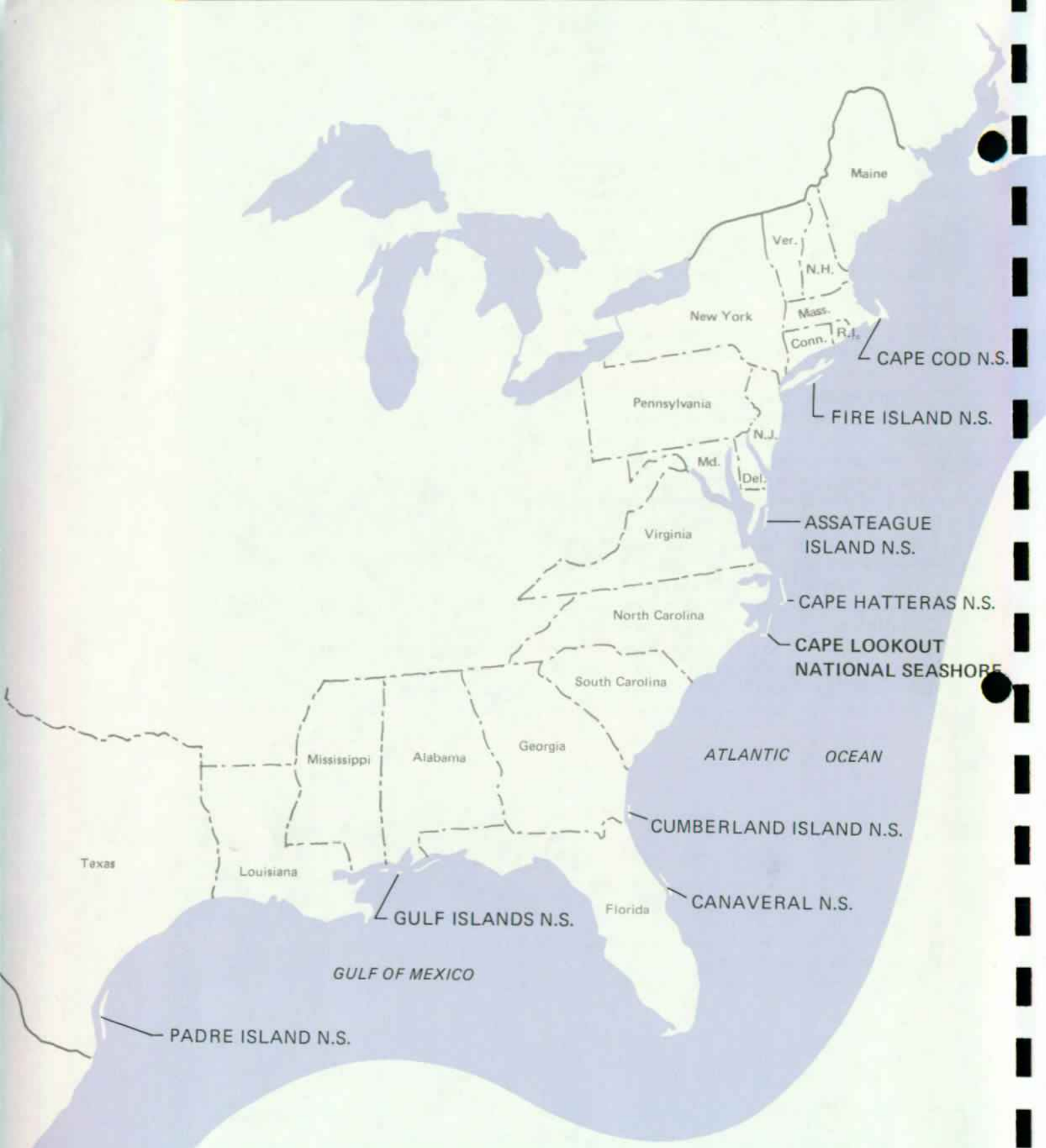

NATIONAL SEASHORES OF GULF & ATLANTIC COASTS

CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE
NORTH CAROLINA

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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