

I. BASIS FOR THE PLAN

A. Cape Lookout National Seashore--An Undeveloped Link in America's Barrier-Island System

The barrier islands of Cape Lookout National Seashore are a few of many that stand offshore from the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the United States. Barrier islands are known for their natural, scenic, and recreational values as well as their fragile and hazardous nature.

Some barrier islands have been set aside as preserves and outdoor use areas. Those administered by the NPS are shown on the map, National Seashores of the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts. Most of these have substantial development for visitors.

Most of the 308-mile ocean shoreline in North Carolina (see the map, The Region and Developed Zones of North Carolina's Outer Banks) is developed or road accessible. The 55-mile segment of barrier islands in Cape Lookout National Seashore is "unique and represents the only significant continuation of roadless and undeveloped seashore remaining" (state of North Carolina position paper, 1978).

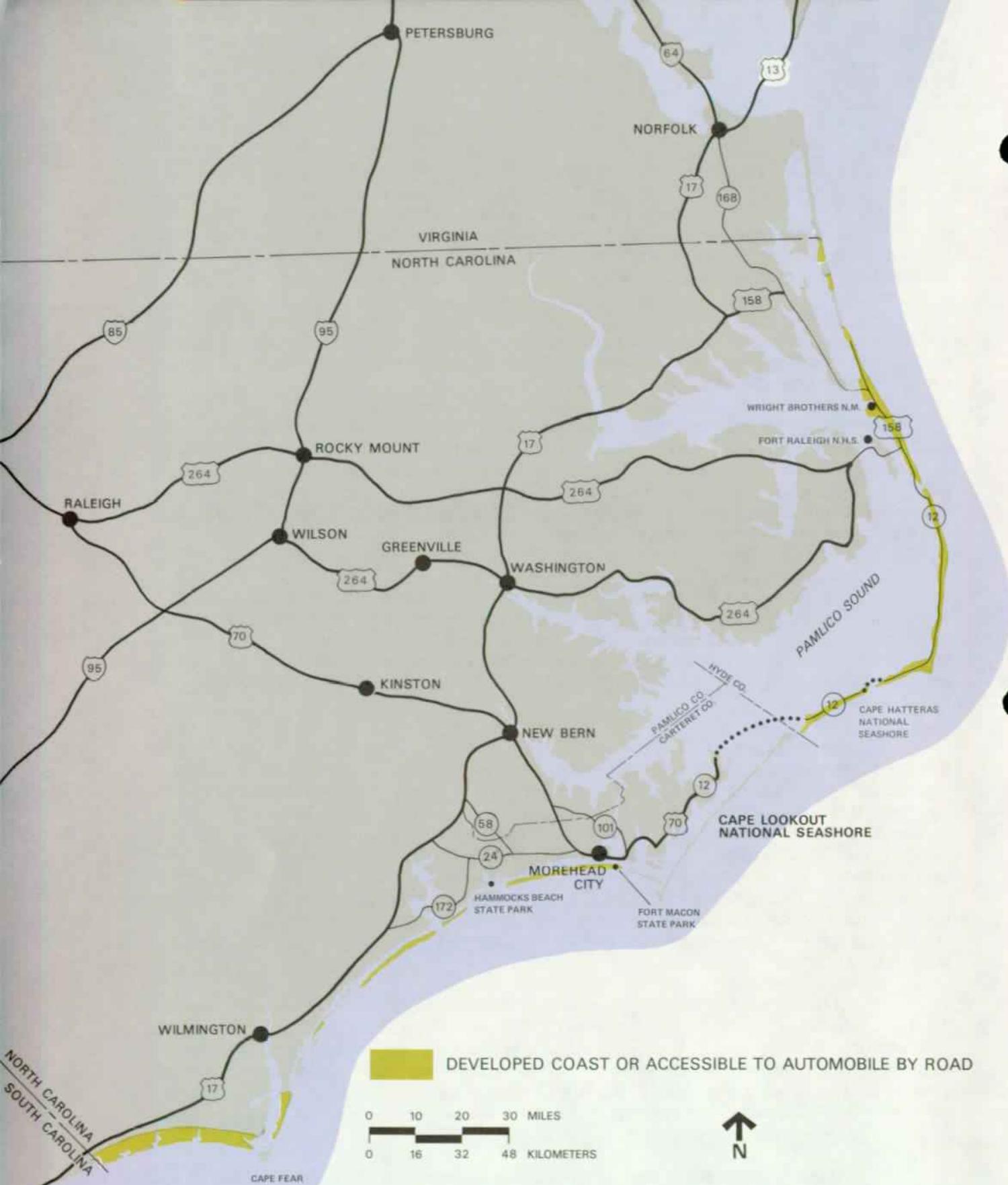
B. Significance of the Seashore

Cape Lookout National Seashore contributes to the goal of the National Park System Plan to provide representative samples of major American natural systems and of broad themes of American history. The significance of this national seashore in these terms is highlighted below and is further discussed in the section of this document describing the environment.

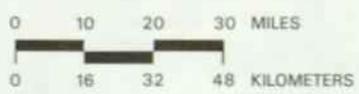
In the broad natural region of the Atlantic Coastal Plain, Cape Lookout National Seashore represents the category of seashores and islands. The islands of the seashore are among the most dynamic of barrier islands. Storm waves, through the process of overwash, carry water and sand across the islands. Overwash is dominant in shaping the islands and in maintaining their low profiles. Here the diversity of plants and animals is arranged in different communities, but all within close association. The grasslands are among those on barrier islands which are unique as the only natural grasslands in the eastern United States, and there has been less alteration of the grasslands at Cape Lookout than on most of the other islands.

The broad history theme of "America at Work," subtheme of "Water Transportation," is represented by the Cape Lookout lighthouse. Portsmouth Village, of the 1800-1900 period, falls within the theme of "Society and Social Conscience." The subtheme of "American Ways of Life"--ethnic and religious minorities, occupational groups, and economic classes--is illustrated by the story of the Outer Bankers. This subtheme is not represented as well in any other NPS area.

Cape Lookout National Seashore also provides for recreational uses--fishing, shellfishing, hunting, beachcombing, swimming, and photography among others. After removal of the remaining trash and abandoned vehicles, these areas will revegetate and the barrier-island scene will return to a more natural appearance.



 DEVELOPED COAST OR ACCESSIBLE TO AUTOMOBILE BY ROAD



**THE REGION & DEVELOPED ZONES OF
NORTH CAROLINA'S OUTER BANKS**
CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE / NORTH CAROLINA
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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C. Establishment of the Seashore

On March 10, 1966, the U.S. Congress authorized the establishment of Cape Lookout National Seashore "to preserve for public use and enjoyment an area in the State of North Carolina possessing outstanding natural and recreation values" (PL 89-366). This followed studies about protection of the Outer Banks from storm destruction. The state of North Carolina concluded that the expense of rehabilitating and developing the banks as a public seashore exceeded state resources, and that the project should be handled by the federal government. Similarly, concern about the increasing development of America's few remaining natural seashores had been voiced by the NPS in its Surveys of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts report (1955).

The secretary of the interior declared the establishment of the seashore once there was enough land to sufficiently administer it (Federal Register, September 10, 1976). The enabling legislation defined the seashore to include "the outer banks of Carteret County, North Carolina, between Ocracoke Inlet and Beaufort Inlet, plus adjoining marshlands and waters." An administrative site at east Harkers Island was authorized and depicted on the map referenced in the amending legislation (map 623-20,009 dated March 1974). The seashore was to be administered "for the general purposes of public outdoor recreation, including conservation of natural features contributing to public enjoyment" (PL 89-366).

D. Management Objectives

Management objectives for an area of the National Park System are intended to guide its administration. The objectives are based upon but are more specific than the legislative mandates that established the area, and they provide a foundation for the management plan. The following management objectives are similar to those in the Statement for Management, which were written in 1976. They have been updated to reflect changes in NPS policy, and the knowledge gained during the planning process regarding natural barrier island systems, the cultural history of the area, and the recreational needs of the visitor.

1. Overall Management

To manage in accordance with the management policies of the NPS. (It is necessary to state this for Cape Lookout National Seashore because the enabling legislation of March 10, 1966, leaves this decision as an option with the secretary of the interior. See section 5 of PL 89-366 in appendix C.)

To seek concurrent jurisdiction with the state of North Carolina for law enforcement requirements, so as to provide more efficient compliance with seashore resource protection and visitor management.

2. Resources Management

To maintain the Outer Banks islands of the seashore in a condition of natural geology/ecology illustrative of their exposed, maritime setting and to recognize the dynamic natural processes as the primary consideration in managing the barrier-island resources and environment. (They will be allowed to return to a natural state at their own pace or will be restored to that condition wherever feasible.)

To protect native wildlife and ensure its perpetuation, to the extent possible, especially those on the federal endangered and threatened species lists. To permit hunting, fishing, and shellfishing under state and federal laws and through rules and regulations promulgated in consultation with the state of North Carolina's wildlife agency.

To designate transportation corridors for minimizing damage by motorized vehicles to dunes, wildlife, and vegetation. (The locations of the corridors may vary seasonally for the protection of nesting birds, sea turtles, and other resource values.)

To preserve intact, as feasible, the historic resources of the national seashore and to recognize that dynamic natural forces have influenced them throughout their existence and will continue to influence them. (The structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places are at the state level of significance.)

3. Visitor Use and Interpretation

To make seashore resources available to visitors by providing access to the barrier islands.

To orient the visitor to recreational pursuits having limited environmental impacts such as beachcombing, hiking, primitive camping, nature study, and historic appreciation. To investigate impacts from recreational activities and to apply management techniques to mitigate the impacts.

To encourage visitors to experience the islands as they are by bringing with them only what they need and returning with their trash, litter, etc., to the point of embarkation on the mainland.

To provide an evacuation program from the seashore islands during life-threatening emergencies such as hurricanes and major northeasters.

To interpret the seashore to visitors, with the primary emphasis on the sea and the barrier islands.

To emphasize the totality of the barrier-island environment in the natural theme.

To emphasize man and his relation to the sea in the historical theme and to interpret maritime history at the lighthouse and cultural and economic life of the Outer Bankers at Portsmouth Village.

To offer overall seashore interpretation and orientation at a central location convenient to transportation services and to reinforce this with simpler stations and devices on the barrier islands.

4. Development

To develop only those facilities on the Outer Banks essential to visitor use and safety and to resources management--small docks at the sound-side landing points, necessary sanitation facilities,

water supplies, maintenance areas, and simple ranger/visitor contact stations--and to site them so as to leave large tracts of the seashore unimpacted.

To design structures that are appropriate for a barrier-island environment (elevated, away from an eroding shoreline, nonpolluting of groundwater) and energy efficient, and to recognize, in site selection and design, that structures on the islands are in a high-risk environment and might be lost by storm action.

To remove present unsightly evidence of man's past uses (litter, junk, and abandoned vehicles) from the islands to the extent possible and to rehabilitate the disturbed sites where appropriate.

To provide the major facilities for visitor contact/administrative/maintenance functions at the centralized mainland site on Harkers Island.

5. Wilderness

To propose the appropriate area of the seashore for wilderness designation.

6. Land Acquisition

To complete the acquisition of all private land within the seashore.

7. Cooperative Planning

To cooperate with other governmental and quasi-governmental entities in the vicinity, including federal, state, and local agencies and civic groups, for planning and managing the seashore's natural, recreational, and cultural resources.

E. Context of This Plan

This General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan is in response to the requirement in the amended enabling legislation (PL 93-477) for a "master plan for full development of the seashore consistent with the preservation objectives of this Act, indicating--(1) the facilities needed to accommodate the health, safety and recreation needs of the visiting public; (2) the location and estimated cost of all facilities; and (3) the projected need for any additional facilities within the seashore." Funds in the amount of \$2,935,000 were authorized for development of these facilities. The intent of the plan is the implementation of a program to coordinate seashore management, development, visitor use, and resource protection.

In addition, "the suitability or nonsuitability of any area within the seashore for preservation as wilderness" shall be reported. The issue of wilderness will be the subject of a separate evaluation and proposal. The wilderness analysis can be expected in the near future. In the interim, those areas with potential wilderness values will be managed to avoid compromise to possible wilderness values until such time as the president makes a recommendation and Congress decides whether to designate wilderness at Cape Lookout National Seashore. The area under wilderness consideration is Shackleford Banks.

The plan that has evolved is responsive to the considerations presented in this "Basis for the Plan" section, the environmental concerns (detailed in the accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement), legislative constraints, and the public preferences expressed during meetings and through written comments.

Once the plan is approved, its proposals will be implemented as soon as they are funded. In order that some of the proposals can be more specific, future planning will include further resources management studies, historic structures reports, carrying capacity/visitor use analyses, interpretive plans, and concession feasibility studies. The phasing of the actions will first provide the mainland site base from which to operate while other proposals of the plan are being implemented. Effort will be directed towards realizing the increased benefits of the proposals at the earliest possible time.

BEAUFORT
ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS,
MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

SHACKLEFORD BANKS
(BEING ACQUIRED)
59 STRUCTURES

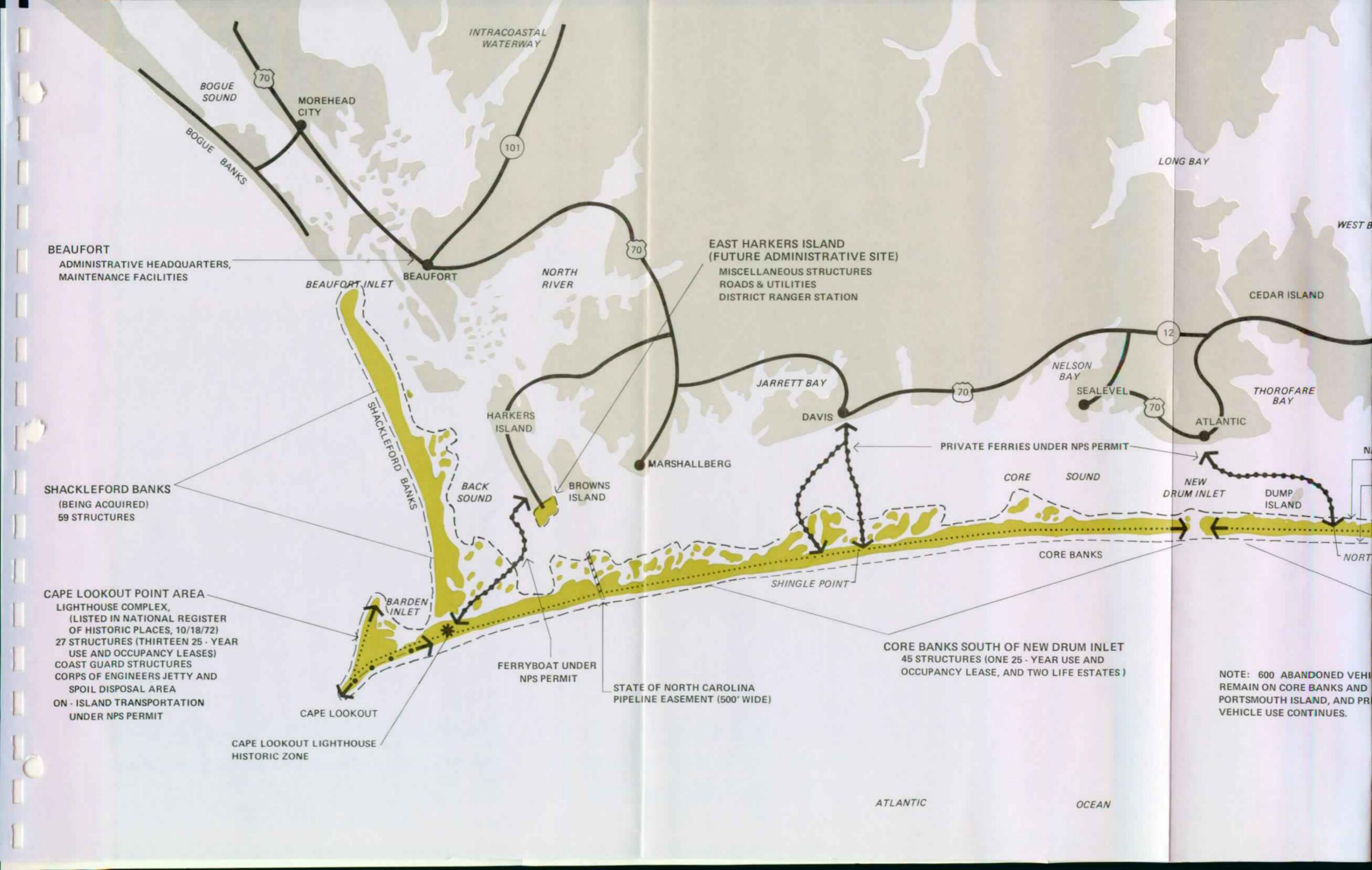
CAPE LOOKOUT POINT AREA
LIGHTHOUSE COMPLEX,
(LISTED IN NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES, 10/18/72)
27 STRUCTURES (THIRTEEN 25 - YEAR
USE AND OCCUPANCY LEASES)
COAST GUARD STRUCTURES
CORPS OF ENGINEERS JETTY AND
SPOIL DISPOSAL AREA
ON - ISLAND TRANSPORTATION
UNDER NPS PERMIT

CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHTHOUSE
HISTORIC ZONE

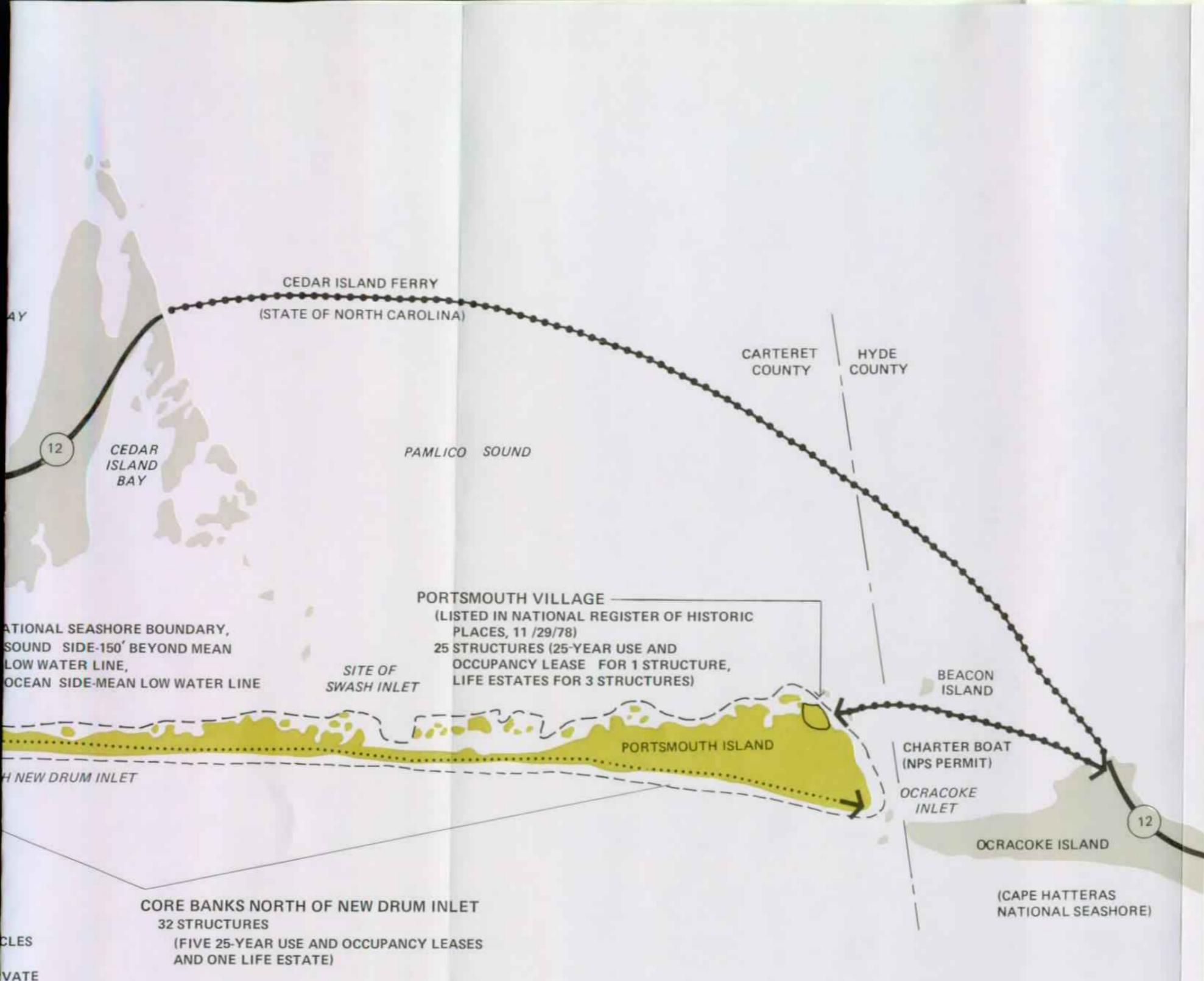
EAST HARKERS ISLAND
(FUTURE ADMINISTRATIVE SITE)
MISCELLANEOUS STRUCTURES
ROADS & UTILITIES
DISTRICT RANGER STATION

CORE BANKS SOUTH OF NEW DRUM INLET
45 STRUCTURES (ONE 25 - YEAR USE AND
OCCUPANCY LEASE, AND TWO LIFE ESTATES)

NOTE: 600 ABANDONED VEHICLES
REMAIN ON CORE BANKS AND
PORTSMOUTH ISLAND, AND PRIVATE
VEHICLE USE CONTINUES.



ATLANTIC OCEAN



- EMERGENT LAND WITHIN THE NATIONAL SEASHORE, APPROXIMATELY 18,500 ACRES
- CAPE LOOKOUT LIGHTHOUSE
- FERRYBOAT ROUTES
- PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
- PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION
- NATIONAL SEASHORE BOUNDARY, ENCLOSING 28,400 ACRES, INCLUDING WATER AND SOUND-SIDE ISLANDS



EXISTING CONDITIONS
 CAPE LOOKOUT NATIONAL SEASHORE / NORTH CAROLINA
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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