

of now-missing buildings. Later buildings of nonhistoric character will be removed. In the structures used for interpretation, visitors may enter and perhaps will view period items and furnishings. Other interiors will be adapted for contemporary administrative functions.

Diamond City on Shackleford Banks is essentially lost; it will remain so, with no attempt to re-create its features. Elsewhere on Shackleford the cemeteries will be maintained by clearing brush, controlling local erosion, and resetting headstones.

The World War II gun emplacement near Cape Lookout Point will be left to the sea. It is already partly destroyed and is covered by ocean tides.

A number of aboriginal sites, all of which have been reduced to almost unintelligible remains, are found in the sound off of Shackleford Banks. Most are outside of the seashore easement footage and the NPS has no control over them. However, when sites are located they will be studied as funds become available.

Stories of offshore shipwrecks, pirates, and wartime maneuvers, which have outlived any resources associated with them, will best be continued by maintaining the natural environment of the Outer Banks where they originated.

The state historic preservation officer will be notified prior to any construction, dredging, or other ground disturbing activities within the national seashore, and will be given a chance to review and comment on plans for such activities.

C. Interpretation and Visitor Use

1. Interpretive Themes

"The Sea" is the basic theme of Cape Lookout National Seashore. Although the seashore itself is mainly land, the very essence of these islands is determined by the whims of the sea, and the waves and winds cast upon them. Because of the all-pervading sea, the natural and cultural themes overlap and are combined in the visitors' impressions.

The natural theme of the seashore will deal with the totality of the barrier-island environment. The coastal geological processes and the severe climate--salt air, wind, northeasters, and hurricanes--are interdependent. The shifting sands affect plant and animal life as well. Cape Lookout National Seashore's varied habitats--open sea, surf zone, beach, berm, dune, maritime forest, shrub thicket, freshwater pond, marsh, shallow sound waters--present several ecological groupings for convenient display to visitors. They are so near to each other, and so integrally related, that interpretation naturally treats them in the whole even when emphasizing only one part.

The historical theme at the seashore will present the stories of man and his relation to the sea, which here is a necessarily compliant relationship. The following historical stories will be told:

- (1) Portsmouth and shipping activities through Ocracoke Inlet
- (2) Commercial fishing along Core Banks
- (3) Lighthouses, life-saving stations, and U.S. Coast Guard activities
- (4) Diamond City and whaling activities
- (5) Cultural and commercial history of the Outer Banks, in general

Some interpretive programs will focus on recreational uses while also promoting a greater understanding of the seashore's resources. There will be emphasis on pursuits such as fishing, hiking, backpacking, and beachcombing.

2. Orientation to the Seashore Islands

Many visitors on their way to Cape Lookout National Seashore will stay overnight, have a meal, and/or purchase supplies in the region. (See Vicinity map.) The motels, restaurants, shops, gasoline stations, and museums in Bogue Banks, Morehead City, Beaufort, and Harkers Island, and the Cedar Island ferry terminal, are places where the visitor can be introduced to the seashore and the specifics of how to use it--schedules, equipment needs, programs, and weather--provided as part of the NPS information service.

Many first-time visitors and many return visitors will come to the NPS contact station on Harkers Island for orientation to the seashore's islands and for embarking on the ferryboats to the islands. Core and Shackleford banks will be in view from the contact station. Museum exhibits, an audiovisual program, and publication sales, supplemented by handouts, bulletin boards, and uniformed public contact personnel, will help visitors to plan their visit to the islands--what there is to see and do and how one needs to be prepared for the environment. For visitors planning to stay overnight on the islands, there will be backcountry information available at the contact station.

The interpretive themes at the contact station will be those already outlined for the seashore. Treatment of the themes will be conceptual, leaving details to be observed on site. Appropriate topics will be the overall formation of barrier islands, including important ecological relationships and the general history of man on the islands. Selected artifacts and specimens will be displayed to illustrate the broader aspects of the seashore and/or to exhibit some items of interest that are not suitable for on-site display.

Visitors traveling to the islands, some for overnight, will park their cars at Harkers Island and then board the passenger ferryboats for the trip to Cape Lookout Point and Shackleford Banks. Picnic areas, restrooms, and interpretive facilities, all designed for use by the handicapped, will be available for use while waiting for the ferryboat at Harkers Island.

On board some of the passenger ferryboats, a uniformed employee, when available, will discuss the features along the way, interpret the islands themselves, and provide information about using them. The commercial ferryboat operator will also assist in disseminating information.

The visitors who take their own boats to the islands will not receive this same orientation; instead, they may obtain information through private marina operators or on the seashore islands. They will be permitted to land their boats anywhere along the islands not specifically closed to their use by management for the protection of the resources. Also, private boats may use the ferryboat docks only long enough to load and unload people and their equipment.

3. Visitor Experiences on the Seashore Islands

a. Recreational Use in General

Regardless of the means of access, public ferry or private boat, most of the visitor activities will be beach oriented and may take place anywhere along the 55 miles of ocean shoreline and along much of the sound shoreline. Visitors will continue to engage in recreational activities including fishing, hunting, swimming, sunbathing, beachcombing, hiking, and backpacking (see the photographs of recreational uses).

The NPS has an emergency procedures handbook and a hurricane/northeaster evacuation plan with which all employees of the seashore are familiar. In a storm emergency, visitors on the islands are contacted by rangers and instructed to proceed immediately to the nearest ferryboat dock for evacuation. It may not always be possible to evacuate vehicles and other personal belongings. The entire seashore will be closed to visitors during some storm conditions.

b. Cape Lookout Point Area

Most visitors will likely go to the Cape Lookout Point area. The lighthouse is a target destination. The cape itself, where a sand spit juts out into the Atlantic and off which many shipwrecks have occurred, attracts visitors for sightseeing, fishing, and beachcombing. This general area is most conducive to active recreational pursuits. Visitors will participate in numerous day-use activities, and some may camp overnight.

Visitor use facilities will consist of a passenger ferryboat dock with associated visitor orientation, a sun/rain shelter, drinking water, and a comfort station located at the Cape Lookout Point area landing point, nearly 1 mile north of the lighthouse. A visitor contact station with drinking water and comfort facilities will be located south of the lighthouse. Here there will be map displays and information on such topics as how and where to explore, the fish currently running, and schedules for the on-island transportation system to Cape Lookout Point. When visitation warrants, personal interpretive services will be provided from the visitor contact station.

Inside one of the structures near the lighthouse (refer to the photographs of the Cape Lookout lighthouse complex), the lighthouse and its associated stories of shipwreck and war may be interpreted. Each of the structures within the lighthouse complex will be labeled with unobtrusive signs.

In this area, a self-guided nature trail from the sound to the ocean will be considered. The varied geologic/ecologic

cross section would be interpreted, as would the dynamic nature of the barrier islands.

Visitors will have the opportunity to ride the on-island transit vehicles from the ferryboat dock to Cape Lookout Point. (See the Core Banks photographs.) They will be able to carry their fishing, picnicking, and camping equipment on the vehicle and will be able to get off and back on again anywhere along the route. Vehicle use will be permitted here as elsewhere on Core Banks with travel limited, as appropriate, to the transportation corridor. Backcountry users may hike into the more remote sections. To prevent accumulations of litter and trash, all visitors will be advised to carry out everything they take in with them.

c. Shackleford Banks

The sound shore of the western end of Shackleford Banks near Mullet Pond now receives intense summer use. Private boat owners go to this site primarily to picnic and swim. Fishing for shrimp and shellfish takes place along the Back Sound side of the island. These uses will continue.

Visitors, fewer in number than those going to Cape Lookout Point, will ride the passenger ferryboat to the east end of Shackleford Banks. This will be a good place to observe the flotilla of pleasure boats, on a summer weekend, anchored in Lookout Bight, or to walk along the beach and swim in the ocean. The more adventuresome will be challenged to hike 9 miles to reach the maritime forest and the high dune fields at the west end of the island, and to observe the herd of wild horses. For some, this will be an overnight trip. (See the Shackleford Banks photographs.)

d. Portsmouth Village

Visitors will come to Portsmouth Village to recall days long past on the Outer Banks. The ocean beaches nearby will attract visitors for fishing and swimming. Visitors may also enter through Portsmouth Village to hike and camp along Core Banks 21 miles south to New Drum Inlet.

A passenger ferryboat from Ocracoke Village will carry visitors to Portsmouth Village. At the NPS visitor contact station in Ocracoke (Cape Hatteras National Seashore), information will be available about Portsmouth Village and the preparations necessary for visiting the north end of Cape Lookout National Seashore. The history of Portsmouth Village will be presented in one of the old buildings at Portsmouth.

The visitor will also experience the more recent history of Portsmouth Village through self-guided interpretive trails. (Refer to the Portsmouth Village photographs.) The later periods of village occupancy are represented by the existing buildings, some of which will be open to visitors.

Portions of the islands between the village and New Drum Inlet may be flooded periodically by overwash caused by unusually

high tides or storms. Over the years, many inlets have opened, migrated, and closed naturally at various locations, and this process will continue. Some open and close seasonally. The park's interpretive effort will identify these inlets to park visitors. Ferryboat operators will also be able to inform visitors about current conditions.

e. Shingle Point and North New Drum Inlet

These landing points on Core Banks are south and north, respectively, of New Drum Inlet. At each location, the NPS will provide a shelter, comfort station, and orientation facilities. Both vehicles and hikers may debark from ferryboats operating out of the villages of Davis and Atlantic on the mainland. Persons in private boats may tie up at the docks, but only while embarking and debarking.

Existing cabins in the fish camps at Shingle Point and North New Drum Inlet will be replaced by enclosed camping shelters available for overnight rental. There will be a central comfort station at each camp. The four camps now at Shingle Point will be consolidated at one location.

New Drum Inlet separates the two landing points. It is a barrier that cannot be crossed by vehicles or hikers. The inlet was dredged open by the Corps of Engineers. It is now shoaling with sand and it will probably close in time. The Corps presently has no plans for maintenance dredging, but if it is required in the future, it will be done by mutual agreement between the secretaries of the army and of the interior (section 6, PL 89-366).

Visitors to Core Banks north of New Drum Inlet will have the opportunity to experience isolation and solitude to a greater extent than elsewhere in Cape Lookout National Seashore. Here the barrier islands are the most remote from the mainland. They are low lying and so narrow as to be ribbonlike in configuration. On the east is the restless ocean contrasting with the more placid sound waters on the west.

D. Seashore Carrying Capacity and Visitation

1. Carrying Capacity

The visitor carrying capacity, or recreational use limitation, of Cape Lookout National Seashore will be based on management objectives, ecological constraints, and what is considered to be a quality experience for the visitor. The fundamental management objective is to provide outdoor recreation while conserving natural features.

As yet there is insufficient scientific data to assign quotas as carrying capacities for the seashore's ecological zones. Therefore, ecological constraints are best considered on the basis of relative intensities of use that can be tolerated without excessive damage to the various ecological zones. (See the graphic, Interpretation of Ecosystems/Suitability for Recreational Use.) For example, except during turtle nesting season, the beach and berm are more resilient to use and can tolerate larger densities of people without permanent damage to that particular resource. Moderate visitor use is appropriate in grasslands and shrub thickets, which are less tolerant to pedestrian trampling. The

dunes and saltwater marsh are the most sensitive to visitor use. They suffer from loss of vegetation and disruption of animal habitat in the short term. Long-lasting impacts include interruption of the marine food chain at its source and destruction of the landscape both topographically and vegetationally.

At ferryboat landing points, which are not in the resilient beach/berm area, boardwalks may be required to minimize impacts on the resource. Measures to allow use in areas where it would otherwise not be possible may include designation of campground areas and "resting" them by periodic closings or rotation of use to other sites, and seasonal closing of bird and sea turtle nesting areas.

It is important that managers continuously monitor the impact of visitor use on the environment and keep accurate, periodic records of visitor activities, visitor distribution, and visitor likes and dislikes. Then steps can be taken to ensure the protection of the environment while guaranteeing a quality experience for the visitor.

There is no evidence now of a carrying capacity problem nor do we expect that one is likely to develop in the foreseeable future. No increase in ferryboat service and overnight accommodations is envisioned.

2. Visitation

Data on visitation to Cape Lookout National Seashore by concession ferryboat and private boat is found in table 1. Visitation is seasonal, with 83% of all visitors arriving between June and November in 1978, 86.8% in 1979, 83.7% in 1980, and 80% in 1981.

The park's reports show that during the months of heavy visitation, there is no significant difference between weekend and weekday visitation, except for holiday weekends such as the Fourth of July. The peak-day visitation was recorded on July 4, 1978, when 580 visitors were at the seashore. Approximately three-fourths of these people (435 visitors) arrived on the islands via private boat. The remaining 145 visitors arrived via concession ferryboats.

Based on past distribution of visitors throughout the seashore, we predict that during the summer months, 15% of the visitors will want to go to Shackleford Banks, 50% to Cape Lookout, 10% to Shingle Point, 10% to North New Drum Inlet, and 15% to Portsmouth Village. These percentages will change throughout the year, since many user activities and, in turn, user destinations are highly seasonal. For example, in the fall, when fishing is best, visitation to Shackleford Banks should decrease, while it should remain the same at Lookout Point and increase at Shingle Point, North New Drum Inlet, and Portsmouth Village.

Projections of visitation are desirable to determine sizes and numbers of ferryboats and sizes of facilities. At this time there is insufficient data to make reliable projections based upon past visitation at Cape Lookout. Therefore, present ferryboat service will continue and will be expanded only if visitor demand warrants and management deems it necessary.

If other NPS areas which use ferryboats for public transportation--such as Cumberland Island National Seashore--are used as examples, then we should expect that soon after scheduled ferryboat service is instituted at Cape Lookout National Seashore, the boats will be filled to capacity on many days during the summer months. Therefore, a ferryboat reservation system may have to be instituted at some future time; but this will be a management decision.

E. General Development

1. Overview

This plan for Cape Lookout National Seashore emphasizes minimum development on the barrier islands. There is no bridge access to the islands, and none is proposed. There are no hotels, motels, or restaurants on the islands, and none are proposed. The islands will remain without improved roads. The private vehicles that were abandoned on the islands will be removed to the extent possible. In general, development will be in accord with the attempt to reestablish a natural condition, to preserve and maintain the diversity of natural habitats and the native flora and fauna, and to allow natural coastal processes to continue undisturbed by man as much as possible. Visitor activities will be based on the characteristics of the resources and in the context of using the islands on their own terms.

Development will occur on Harkers Island and at five locations on the seashore islands. It will be phased in the following order of priority: administrative site on east Harkers Island, Cape Lookout Point area, Shingle Point, North New Drum Inlet, Portsmouth Village, and east Shackelford Banks. (See the General Development Plan map.)

Due to the nature of contracting and construction, and similarities of work to be done at each site, development at various sites will probably overlap. Public ferryboat transportation from east Harkers Island to the new landing point north of the Cape Lookout lighthouse and to east Shackelford Banks will commence after development at these sites is sufficient to accommodate visitor demand.

Because the barrier islands of the seashore are low lying, it is not possible to avoid the 100-year floodplain or coastal high hazard area in locating development. Consequently, only minimal facilities that are expendable are proposed for the islands. At Harkers Island, facilities not requiring a waterfront location or close proximity to the waterfront will be located out of the 100-year floodplain.

The landing points providing access to the seashore islands will be carefully sited. The east Shackelford Banks dock site is along the sandy inlet shoreline, whereas the sites at the Cape Lookout Point area, Shingle Point, North New Drum Inlet, and Portsmouth Village are fringed by saltwater marsh. Where possible, landing points will be located at existing channels to minimize dredging and associated impacts. Where necessary, there will be a boardwalk over the marsh between the dock and firm land.