

Study for a
National Seaside

Including

Kill Devil Hill

Hatteras

Cape Lookout

Fort Macon Area



BRANCH OF PLANNING • NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

"HATTERAS"

NORTH CAROLINA

GENERAL

This report covers the area beginning at Kill Devil Hill National Monument with its interesting dune formations. It includes Bodie Island, Oregon Inlet and continues to Cape Hatteras, Ocracoke and on to Cape Lookout constituting a unique and practically undeveloped portion of the Atlantic Seacoast. The whole territory consists of a narrow "spit" approximately 150 miles long and resembles the formation of a barrier reef protecting the broad Sounds of Currituck, Albermarle and Pamlico.

The area from the quaint old village of Duck to Nags Head, hereafter called the Kill Devil Hill area, consists principally of sand dunes with a fringe of forest cover on the Sound side. There are also two major islands in this region, those of the Collingtons and Roanoke, which have good forest covers, contain interesting topography and are very suitable for recreational development, particularly that of camping. At the northern point of Roanoke Island is Fort Raleigh which has important historical value and draws many visitors. There are two fishing villages on the Sound side and two beach developments on the ocean side, all of which will have to be and should be excluded from this project.

The area from the Manteo highway to Oregon Inlet contains the best ocean beach of the entire area. The Biological Survey is at present optioning a fifteen mile strip, both ocean and sound frontage. The Survey has indicated a desire to cooperate with the Park Service in allocating the proper administration of the different functions from Manteo to Rodanthea - it is informally understood that the Park Service will be interested in the ocean side and the Biological Survey in the Sound shore.

Oregon Inlet is now accessible only by ferry and should remain so (a bridge should not be even contemplated). From the Inlet to Cape Hatteras, a distance of 30 miles is a wild and undeveloped section. There are no developments with the exception of the fishing villages of Rodanthea and Kinnikeet (Avon), the coast guard stations at intervals of six miles and an obtrusive line of telephone poles.

The State of North Carolina has been donated 1,000 acres which is now known as Hatteras State Park. This area has a most abundant forest growth, consisting of pine, holly and live oak with a luxuriant floor cover of yupon and palmetto and various other native shrubs. Naturally, the prominent points of interest are the Diamond Shoals, the old light house, the old fishing village of Buxton, and the unusual sand formation which, though low, is very irregular and picturesque. There is fresh water extending three or four square miles, which by very little effort could be protected from its present exposure to salt water flooding.

The City of Hatteras at Hatteras Inlet will have to be excluded from the area, but its presence will always attract the visitor since its quaintness and fishing activities are most interesting. The barrier reef between Hatteras Inlet and Whalebone Inlet, including Ocracoke, is at present inaccessible by motor car and should for a long time remain so. To bridge these inlets would destroy the primeval character of the region. The access should remain that of boats.

This report recommends the acquisition of the area from Whalebone Inlet to and beyond Cape Lookout, including Shackleford Banks and Fort Macon. It is thought, however, that the only portion of this section that should be immediately developed is that surrounding Cape Lookout and extending west to Shackleford Point and across the Inlet to Fort Macon. The stretch north of Cape Lookout to Whalebone Inlet should be acquired on the basis of comprehensive planning, but this primitive area should not be developed for twenty-five or fifty years, depending on population trends and future use of the surrounding territory.

It is recommended that the taking boundary stop sufficiently beyond Fort Macon to assure a complete protected area of that Fort but that beyond this no area be considered pending future private development along the twenty-five mile Bogue Island. At present there is an intensified real estate activity at the end of the bridge from Moorhead City and it is recommended that this development be allowed to take its natural course before any recommendations be submitted as to additional acquisitions along Bogue Island.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Except for the three focal points of Kill Devil Hill, Hatteras and Cape Lookout, construction should be kept to an absolute minimum and in most instances no changes should be proposed. A feeling of conservation and preservation should guide the designer in planning for the use of this area since its highest value lies in its broad expanses and primitive atmosphere. The types of recreation to be encouraged should be confined to fishing, swimming, boating and wildlife study and such incidental features as camping, hiking and picnicking.

The area around Kill Devil Hill lends itself to active recreational development since here is concentrated interesting geologic, historic and educational features which would naturally attract great numbers of visitors. Camping facilities could be provided in the woods along the sound or on Collington or Roanoke Islands. The Collington Islands are particularly suitable for such a recreational development. The access road into the area should be located on the Sound side where it could be more easily maintained, its location would be more picturesque and in general less obtrusive on the landscape. The use of the beaches, both ocean and sound, can be developed for visitors to the Monument and perhaps in one section a public bathing house should be recommended. There should never be developed the typical "board walk".

Bodie Island affords the best beach in the entire area.

It is questionable whether there should be permanent structures erected on the Island or whether housing facilities should be confined to temporary beach camping. Perhaps permanent structures would be permissible at the northern end of Bodie Island but as one approaches Oregon Inlet one senses more and more the primitive atmosphere. There will have to be provided a reasonably good hard surface access road through Bodie Island. This should be located on the high ground near the center of the Island and protected from sand and wind action by the encouragement of small grass covered dunes.

The area between Oregon Inlet and Cape Hatteras should be left in an undisturbed condition except for an inconspicuous access road treated similarly to that proposed for Bodie Island. The fishing villages and coast guard stations in this section could be used for centers to provide sanitary facilities and whatever concessions are deemed advisable. There should be no housing facilities provided other than beach camping.

The broad wooded area at Cape Hatteras suggests the development of a recreational center. The forest growth and the topography is well suited for camp sites, picnic areas and the construction of a trail system. As elsewhere, the cabins should be set back on the fringe of the wooded area and not clutter the beach. The beach should be considered a public area whereas a cabin assumes a semi-private status.

The access road should not extend beyond Hatteras. The area

between Hatteras and Cape Lookout should not be disturbed for many years. The present access by boat is deemed sufficient for the type of people it should serve, such as fishermen and those interested in the study of wildlife and boating. If any automobile driving is necessary in this section, the beach is always available at low water. This area is recommended for purchase at this time because it will offer a different and less intensive type of recreation than that proposed at Kill Devil Hill, Hatteras or Cape Lookout and its acquisition will preserve this primitive section for a future use as determined by population trends and future recreational interest. Its inaccessibility is actually an asset. The entire area forms a complete unit and there appears no strong reason for the exclusion of any portion thereof. Its purchase is also wise from the standpoint of real estate values. To acquire land surrounding this area would immediately enhance its value, at least in the minds of the owners, thus making future acquisition more difficult.

The area including Cape Lookout, Shackleford Banks and Fort Macon can be considered as a recreational unit in conjunction with Morehead City and Beaufort. At present there is no access to Lookout and the Banks and it might be advisable to construct a causeway from Beaufort. This, however, will depend upon the plan of development for Lookout. There is a bridge leading from Morehead City to Fort Macon.

At the end of the bridge from Morehead City is a very active real estate and beach development. The beach development is an

ordinary board walk and bath house type and it is recommended that the limits of the area be set some distance before reaching this development. The beach along Bogue Island is very desirable but the present real estate activity may gain such proportion as to advise against developing the Island for recreational use. It is recommended that this real estate development be allowed to take its natural course assuming that the Island is well adapted to private dwellings and that such use is a very desirable one. Later on it may develop that the lower end of the Island should be set aside for recreational purposes.

*Resp Submitted
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