



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Assateague Island
National Seashore

7206 National Seashore Lane
Berlin, Maryland 21811

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Assateague Island National Seashore

News Release

Date: March 11, 2008

For Immediate Release

Contact: Regina P. Jones-Brake- 410-641-1443 x202

Public comments sought for Assateague Island National Seashore's Over Sand Vehicle (OSV) Zone

Superintendent Scott J. Bentley announced today the opportunity for public comment on a proposed study to assess visitor attitudes, experiences and expectations associated with the management and use of over-sand vehicles at Assateague Island National Seashore.

As visitation to the National Seashore has grown, park managers have been challenged to find the appropriate balance between protecting park resources while providing high quality recreational opportunities. Visitor experiences at Assateague Island are increasingly influenced by the steadily growing number of visitors, including users of the park's over-sand vehicle (OSV) zone. During busy summer months the OSV zone (limited to 145 vehicles) is routinely full and visitors often have long wait times before they can access the beach, if at all. As a result, the pressure to allow more access to the OSV zone has steadily increased. At the same time, the number and types of sensitive natural resources potentially threatened by OSV use has expanded. Of particular concern are populations of two threatened species, Sea Beach Amaranth and Piping Plover, which use beach habitats within the OSV zone, and conflicts between OSV use and protection of the proposed Assateague Wilderness. To address these challenges and develop appropriate management strategies, the park has a pressing need for better information describing current OSV use and the expectations of its OSV and other backcountry users.

The National Seashore is proposing a study to develop information about contemporary OSV use at ASIS and the nature and expectations of visitors to the OSV zone and other backcountry areas. The results are expected to assist in the upcoming General Management Plan revision process by providing currently unavailable information for decision-making related to the future management of the OSV zone. The study has three primary objectives: 1) develop baseline data on users of the backcountry and OSV zone including types, frequency and patterns of use, and socio-economic and demographic characteristics; 2) identify potential indicators and standards of quality for maintaining the desired visitor experience in the backcountry and OSV zone; and 3) determine visitor attitudes toward existing and potential alternative OSV management and resource protection practices.



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A [Federal Register notice](#) announcing the proposed study and soliciting public comment is available. Comments regarding this study are being accepted through the April 19, 2008. Please send your comments to:

Eppley Institute for Parks & Public Lands
Indiana University Research Park, RE: ASIS
501 N. Morton Street, Suite 100
Bloomington, IN 47404
Phone: (812) 855-3095
Fax (812) 856-5600
E-mail: eppley@indiana.edu

You may also send comments to:

Leonard Stowe
NPS Information Collection Clearance Officer
1849 C St., NW. (2605),
Washington, DC 20240
E-mail at Leonard_stowe@nps.gov

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. To Request a Draft of Proposed Collection of Information Contact: Eppley Institute for Parks & Public Lands Indiana University Research Park, RE: ASIS, 501 N. Morton Street, Suite 100, Bloomington, IN 47404; Phone: (812) 855-3095 ; Fax (812) 856-5600, e-mail: eppley@indiana.edu.



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

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