

# UFWDA Influencing the Focus of Recreation Management

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United Four Wheel Drive Associations occupies one of 30 seats on a regulatory negotiation committee convened by the Department of Interior on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS), Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area.

The purpose of the committee is to develop a proposed alternative to be considered in detail by the NPS under its proposed rulemaking for Off-road Vehicle (ORV) management at Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area. The committee is comprised of stakeholders representing various interests such as the federal government, state government, county government, civic and homeowner associations, open access user groups, ORV users, recreational fishing, bird watchers, surfers, pedestrian recreation, commercial fisherman, businesses through the chamber of commerce, county tourism board, national environmental organizations, and state and regional environmental organizations.

The committee was convened in January. The committee met in January, February, and March, and will meet next in May, 2008. The issues to be addressed by the committee are often-times complicated, complex, and controversial. My experience thus far is that even the issues I think will be "easy" to articulate and agree upon are fraught with complications.

The issues tackled thus far by the committee included whether to have an ORV speed limit on the beaches and if so how slow in which areas. The speed limit issue remains unsettled where UFWDA and other stakeholders advocate for 25 mph on all beaches unless posted otherwise, with a second speed limit of 15 mph in the excepted areas. Some environmental and civic stakeholders can not reach consensus on the speed limit until the 15 mph exception is lowered to 10 mph. It might seem that both "sides" of the argument could just say it doesn't matter and move from their stalwart positions. UFWDA feels that a 10 mph speed limit is so low that it would render forward movement impossible. That's a round-about way of saying 10 mph is so slow we'd get stuck. So while it seems simple to merely compromise and agree to the lower 10 mph speed limit, doing so would likely leave the driver with the choice between not driving or breaking the speed limit to get through a particular section of loose deep sand. The choice between breaking the law and not getting