

CACO Annual Report for FY02

General: The park's authorized ONPS budget in FY02 was \$5,918,200 compared to \$5,600,000 in FY01. Budget shortfalls have continued to worsen this year, causing additional reductions in service. Four permanent positions were lapsed for the entire fiscal year and a number of other positions were lapsed for extended periods. The operating season for Provincelands Visitor Center was reduced by six weeks to May 1 through October 31. We also reduced year-round custodial services and summer program schedules. During the year the Federal Salary Council recommended that Barnstable County be added to the Boston locality pay area. Then, after the end of the fiscal year, we received word that the President's Pay Agent had declined to act on the recommendation for FY04, preferring to wait until new census figures were complete. Of course, that was both good news and bad news.

Malcolm Wilbur, the Administrative Officer and long-tenured member of the park management team, transferred to DEWA. He was replaced by Ted Nicholson, from VAFO. In other "staff" news Dr. Charles Foster's Conservation Service Award was presented at a convocation hosted by the Department of the Interior in Washington. As Dr. Foster was unable to attend due to a personal emergency the superintendent, Brenda Boleyn and Jonathan Moore attended in his stead. The festivities were gala and Maria and Brenda enjoyed a personal tour of the monuments on the Mall.

On the whole community relations are smooth and constructive. We provided the Provincetown Airport with a draft General Agreement (July) to regularize the permitting arrangements, and at the end of the year had not received a reaction to the draft. It may be sensitive as it outlines the legal basis for the airport's presence as we see it (which is that the airport remains at the discretion of the secretary). We have been working on the zoning issue; see below. Cooperative work on water continues with the USGS study well into its third year and is producing useful data. Attendance at several water forums show that the public is interested and willing to be educated. The difficult issue of Pilgrim Lake tidal restoration (see below) was resolved because of good behind-the-scenes working relationships with Truro.

Environmental Management: We had had an environmental audit in September 2000 and our ACT plan showed strategies to remediate over several years. However, a visit from EPA in September 2001 turned into a set of ugly surprises as we were advised that our planned time frames were unacceptable and our hazardous materials storage and hazardous waste disposal operations were seriously deficient. A number of deficiencies were identified and although mostly in the maintenance operation there were also issues involving processes and procedures involving the bio lab, beach wastes, and waste disposal practices in general. We were threatened with fines and jail time (!) if our response was inadequate. Hard effort through the year, including training and significant expenditures for new storage containers and other materials, got us past the next inspection unscathed. However, our procurement practices must change dramatically to reduce the scope of the problem, and at the end of the year staff were organizing the change.

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Coast Guard Beach Drop-Off Shutdown: As planned the park closed off the very popular public drop-off at Coast Guard Beach in Eastham permanently. Advance work with the community and good planning by South District staff made the transition relatively easy. Although there were certainly complaints, community and business leaders were prepared and on the whole supportive. Some residents are continuing to work over the winter to see if we can be pressured through the Congressional delegation to reopen the drop-off. However, support from that corner has been excellent. The results were better even than expected – we had a very manageable crowd on the beach, and we also lost the vast bulk of the pedestrian traffic that had been so problematic. Shuttle reliability and scheduling also improved. Consequently, we were able to drop plans for a new walkway to the beach that had been unpopular with the closest neighbors.

Salt Marsh Restoration: Progress is now visible and measurable at Hatches Harbor and is generating great enthusiasm. So much so that we decided to try for Pilgrim Lake. With the initial concurrence of the Truro Cons Com the culverts were opened experimentally, but had to be re-closed when state fisheries folks began to fear for the alewife population. Later in the summer there was a huge midge outbreak, which was devastating to local motels. Politics got sticky as folks tried to blame each other and back off support for the project. The experiment was blamed by many. Careful work with the state and the town resulted in a resolution that has allowed the work to proceed, and for the state to agree to sacrifice the alewife population, if necessary, to achieve a far greater good. In Eastham the restoration of flow past the Mary Chase Dike was undertaken after interesting cultural compliance work involving the dike was completed.

Transportation Planning: The park received up to \$300,000 to complete 25-year transportation planning for the Outer Cape via a DOT grants program. The Volpe National Transportation Systems Center was hired to work with Outer Cape communities and the park to develop a proposal for year-round services as well as summer shuttles. At the end of the year consultations were only partially complete, but work was proceeding apace. This effort is fully coordinated with work already underway by the Cape Cod Transit Planning Task Force and the Cape Cod Commission. The hope is that with a plan towns and the park can look for funds to equip and operate scheduled service.

Zoning Standards: Our solicitors have determined that an amendment to our zoning standards regulation will not require amendment of town zoning bylaws for towns' Seashore Districts. Furthermore, any such amendment to our standard might actually have a chilling effect on town bylaw revisions. This is because if a bylaw is amended it must match or be stronger than the existing secretarial standard. A town willing to meet us halfway (but no further), for example, would thus be deterred from making any improvement. For that reason we have worked this year to be absolutely certain that all towns, Truro and Wellfleet in particular, are aware of the potential changes that could take place inside the park in each town, and understand that there is little if anything the park can do about it. Response has been cautious interest in Wellfleet and Truro both.

OSHA: Progress continued in addressing safety issues. The accidents in the canoe program that seemed to happen every year were completely eliminated this year, for example, through a job hazard analysis, training and the purchase of new equipment. We increased our annual budget to support safety program costs from \$20,000 to \$30,000. OSHA is encouraging us to go for Voluntary Protection Program status. This would mean that our program is at such a high level that we can do our own inspections. We would be the only park, and one of just a handful of federal installations, to have this status, which has been reserved for use in the private sector till recently.

Union: In August 2001 the union requested to renegotiate the 1979 basic agreement. To date, the union has not submitted a contract proposal to park management and we continue to operate under the existing contract. Maybe next FY?

Pheasant Lawsuit: A group of animal rights organizations including the United States Humane Society have sued the director and the secretary for allowing non-native pheasant to be stocked in the park. This program, run virtually entirely by the state, has been ongoing for 50 years, and pre-dates the establishment of the park. The suit alleges inadequate compliance with NEPA process, and violation of Management Policies. Our defense has been vigorous, and we were successful in fending off a temporary restraining order for the hunt this year. The appeal of the ruling in the Horseshoe Crab lawsuit by the plaintiffs is still pending.

Construction: The park had funding for two projects and made progress on both. The rehab of SPVC hit roadblock after roadblock relating to contracting, project design and clearances. The biggest hurdle came when the first round of bids revealed what looked like a huge funding shortfall. However, a review of the contract documents and the process used show significant room for cost reductions. At the end of the year new contracting plans were almost complete. The project has been delayed, however.

*Find Sources
for remaining
of SPVC*

The Highlands Center Utility rehab project also hit obstacles with the discovery that contaminated sludge still sits in unused utility pipes below the center. Over the year we worked through Congressman Delahunt's office to make contact with the USAF to see if we could get remediation help from them. At the end of the year it was looking hopeful. We signed an agreement with a new fundraising partner, HCI, in April. During the year they had limited success, and are considering how best to retarget their efforts. It looks as if an RFP will go out the first of the new year looking for a management partner as well as the first "big fish" program partners. Atlantic Learning Center construction cost estimates came in higher than expected. We reduced the scope of the planned systems and other improvements, and demanded redesign of other components.

Spring/Fall Fees: For the first time this year we began collecting entrance fees at Herring Cove, Race Point, Nauset Light and Coast Guard beaches during spring and fall weekends. Use of the lots during those periods (and accompanying wear and tear and parking lot incidents) have increased dramatically over the past years as the Cape becomes more and more popular as a shoulder season destination. Provincetown protested, but a written response cataloguing the reasons seemed to do the job.

Provincetown merchants have been among the most aggressive promoters of off-season use. The fees much more than paid for the cost of collecting them, and the presence of the fee collectors had a civilizing effect on visitors.

Central Files: After being trained by the federal records center in Waltham, Executive Secretary Melissa Lewandowski led a thorough purging and archiving of park files. Literally four decades of accumulation in the attic and lots of filing cabinets all over the park needed badly to be sorted and disposed of. Staff were trained in proper disposal procedures to try to reduce future accumulations and dozens of boxes of archival material were sent to Waltham. A significant amount of material was also destroyed. To come is an SOP that all support staff can use to encourage proper filing/retention/disposal procedures.

Marconi Centennial: Beginning in December, 2001 Chief of Interpretation Sue Moynihan and staff began to prepare for the 100th anniversary of Guglielmo Marconi's historic two-way transatlantic wireless communication (1903). With the Marconi Radio Club W1AA staff did a practice run of a 24-hour radio station transmitting out of the Coast Guard NEED building in January, 2002. Ranger Barbara Dougan used a Parks-as-Classrooms grant to get her ham radio license and radio equipment for a station, and began working with local schools to develop curricula related to science, world geography, history, social studies and other related topics.