



Off-Road Vehicle Use: *Frequently Asked Questions and Route Map*

Cape Hatteras National Seashore's Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) management plan and special regulation helps preserve the unique plants and wildlife of this dynamic barrier island ecosystem while permitting the use of vehicles on designated ORV routes. This FAQ provides information on the Seashore's ORV regulations and how you can obtain a permit to drive on the beach within the Seashore.

1. What is an Off-Road Vehicle (ORV)? An ORV is any motor vehicle used off of paved park roads; such vehicles must comply with the vehicle and equipment requirements established by the park's ORV management plan and special regulation, and use designated ORV routes. Any vehicle that does not comply is not authorized for use off of park roads. ATV's, UTV's, and motorcycles are not allowed on park beaches.

2. Do I need a permit to use a vehicle off road at the seashore? Yes. An ORV permit is required.

3. What are my options for obtaining an ORV permit? There are two types of permits: 10-day/\$50 permits (valid from the date issued) and annual/\$120 permits (valid for one year from the date issued). If you have access to a printer, you may also obtain a permit at any time via the web by visiting www.recreation.gov. Search for "Cape Hatteras ORV" from the home page or call 1-877-444-6777 to be connected to a recreation.gov representative.

You can also obtain a permit by visiting one of our three permit offices open seven days a week from 9:00-5:00 pm. Here are the locations of each office:

- Bodie Island Lighthouse Visitor Center (8210 Bodie Island Lighthouse Road, Nags Head, NC 27959)
- Cape Hatteras Lighthouse Visitor Center (46368 Lighthouse Road, Buxton, NC 27920)
- Ocracoke Island Visitor Center (40 Irvin Garrish Highway, Ocracoke, NC 27960)

4. What is a print-at-home permit? A print-at-home permit is an ORV permit that you can obtain, 24 hours a day/7 days a week, through www.recreation.gov. After you purchase the permit online, you will receive a digital copy of your permit registration, the rules and regulations, and a proof of permit windshield tag.

- Page one of the printed permit is the registration form and should be secured in the glove box of the permitted vehicle while driving on Seashore beaches. The signature block on the permit form must be signed in order for the permit to be valid.
- Page two of the printed permit contains all the beach driving rules and regulations.
- Page three of the printed permit is the visible proof of permit that must be affixed (taped) to the inside bottom corner of the driver's side windshield. The visible proof of permit must be affixed and displayed properly, in order for the permit to be valid.

Annual permittees may print at the time of purchase a temporary proof of permit. The permanent annual decal will be mailed to the permittee within 7-10 business days. The temporary proof of permit must be affixed, using tape, to the inside of the driver's side windshield and must be displayed at all times that the permittee wishes to access the beach with an ORV.

The temporary proof of permit can be used for no longer than 30 days and should be immediately substituted with the permanent decal once it is received via U.S. mail.

5. Do I have to print the permit, or can I keep it digitally on my smart phone? You must print all pages of the permit. The permit must be signed and the proof of permit must be properly displayed to be valid.

6. I need assistance with a problem I have with an online permit order. Who do I contact? If you need assistance with ordering an ORV permit, please contact Recreation.gov directly. You may contact the customer service department by phone, email, and chat. Here is the information that you will need:

- Email or chat, go to http://support.recreation.gov/rec_contact. They will respond to your email inquiry within 24 hours.
- Reservation Line: 1-877-444-6777, Customer Service Line: 1-888-448-1474.

7. What if I don't have access to a printer? Just come into any one of our three permit offices with your confirmation number and we can print it for you.

8. If I misplace my permit, or lose it, can I print another copy? Yes, here are the instructions:

- Login to your Recreation.gov account.
- Click on "Print Tickets and Permits" link that is located on the left side menu.
- Click on the "Print Permit" button listed under the reservation.
- Acknowledge the rules and regulations for the permit.
- Click on "Proceed with Printing"
- Click on "Print this page" to send the print command to your printer.

9. Are there any specific permit requirements for my vehicle? Yes. To get an ORV permit your vehicle must:

- Be registered, licensed, and insured for highway use and comply with inspection requirements for the state, country, or province where the vehicle is registered;
 - Have no more than two axles and have tires that are listed or approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation as described at: <http://www.safercar.gov/Vehicle+Shoppers/Tires/Tires+Rating/Passenger+Vehicles>; and
 - Have a low-pressure tire gauge, shovel, jack, and jack support board.
- Other equipment that is recommended, but not required, is a full-sized spare tire, first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, trash bag or container, flash-light (if night driving), and tow strap.

10. Is there a limit to the number of ORV permits available? No. There is no limit to the number of permits available.



Off-Road Vehicle Access

Designated ORV Beach Access

- Open Year-Round to Permitted ORVs
- Seasonally Open to Permitted ORVs

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| # | Ramp Number | | Museum of the Sea |
| | Beach Access Parking (Non-Permit) | | Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Permit Office |
| | Boat Launch | | Park Information |
| | Campground | | Restroom |
| | Ferry Terminal | | Showers |
| | Fuel | | Store |
| | Lifeguarded Beach (Summer) | | National Park Service |
| | Lighthouse | | US Fish and Wildlife Service |
| | Marina | | Village |

Beach Access Ramp Opening Times

May 1 - July 31: Priority ORV ramps (*) open at 6:00 am and close at 9:00 pm. All other designated ORV ramps open at 7:00 am and close at 9:00 pm.

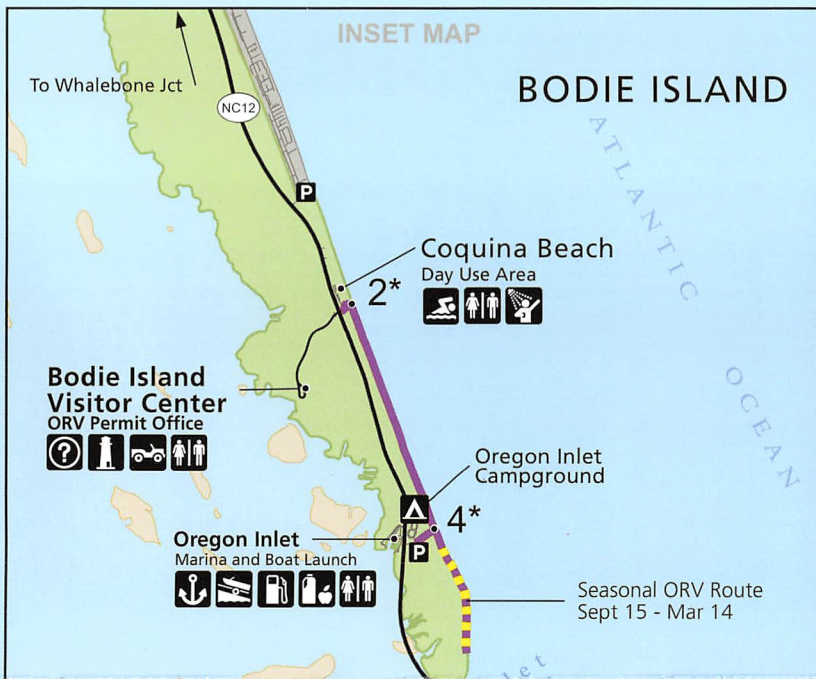
Aug 1 - Sept 30: Priority ORV ramps (*) open at 6:30 am and close at 9:00 pm. All other designated ORV ramps open at 7:00 am and close at 9:00 pm.

Night Driving

Oct 1 - Nov 15: All designated ORV ramps, including priority ramps, open at 7:00 am and close at 9:00 pm.

Sep 15 - Nov 15: Transition to night driving (24 hours a day) could occur if there are no sea turtle nests remaining along a route.

Nov 16 - Apr 30: All designated ORV routes are open to night driving.



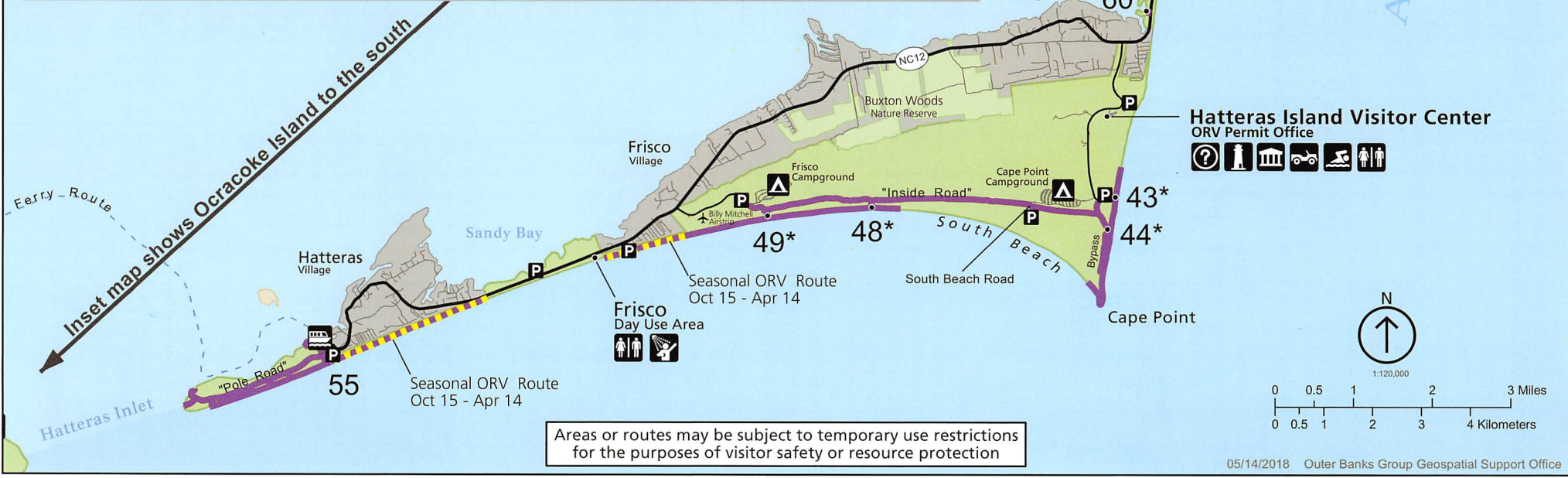
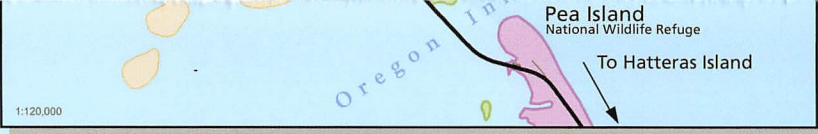
Inset map shows Bodie Island to the north



HATTERAS ISLAND

M L I C O S O U N D

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Areas or routes may be subject to temporary use restrictions for the purposes of visitor safety or resource protection

11. Does the ORV permit guarantee that all ORV routes will be open for me to use?

No. There are several reasons that parts of ORV routes may be closed to ORV use:

- There are seasonal closures along certain routes from Apr. 15–Oct. 14. These are shown on the ORV route map;
- Routes may be temporarily closed if the carrying capacity is reached;
- Routes may be temporarily closed if there is a specific need for resource protection; and
- Routes may be temporarily closed for safety reasons.

All closures are clearly signed.

For the most up-to-date route status, please visit www.nps.gov/caha.

12. How does the carrying capacity work?

The maximum number of vehicles allowed on any ORV route at one time is, basically, the length of the route that is open divided by 20 feet (6 meters). This, in essence, allows vehicles to park side-by-side, one row deep, as long as there is still room on the beach for two-way ORV traffic to pass behind parked vehicles safely. The carrying capacity prevents overcrowding and best provides for safety and visitor experience. In recent years, such closures have only occurred on the Bodie Island spit for several hours, once or twice a year--and there were still many miles of beach open for ORV use elsewhere on the Seashore.

13. Several of my family members have ORVs. Do we need to get a permit for each vehicle?

Yes. You must get a permit for each vehicle.

14. Can family members or friends use my vehicle on the beach if I have an ORV permit for it?

Yes. The person driving the ORV permit-vehicle must have a valid state motor vehicle driver's license. The ORV permit must be in the vehicle and the proof-of-permit properly displayed. You should carefully review the regulations printed on the ORV permit with any person you let operate the vehicle. Your ORV permit can be revoked if they violate these regulations.

15. I plan to rent or lease an ORV during my vacation. How does the permit work with that?

In general, the person renting or leasing the vehicle should be the one applying for the ORV permit. Businesses that rent vehicles specifically for beach driving may obtain annual ORV permits for their fleet of rental vehicles and allow renters to use the permitted vehicles. The operator of the vehicle, whoever that may be, must obey the ORV regulations. The business-owned permit can be revoked if a customer violates the regulations.

16. Can I use my Interagency America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Senior or Access pass to get my ORV permit?

No. The ORV permit falls under the NPS Special Use Permit Program, so Federal Recreational Lands passes do not provide discounts for your ORV permit.

17. Can I drive my two-wheel-drive vehicle on ORV routes? Yes. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are recommended, however, two-wheel-drive vehicles are allowed if, in your judgment, the vehicle is capable of off-road use in deep, soft sand.

18. What about tire pressure? What if my vehicle gets stuck on the beach? When driving on ORV routes, tire pressure must be lowered in order to keep adequate traction within the posted speed limit. Tire pressure of 20 psi is recommended for most vehicles. The softer the sand, the lower the pressure needed. Re-inflate tires to normal pressure as soon as possible after you return to paved roads. If you get stuck and cannot get your vehicle out, you must use a commercial towing service or other assistance. National Park Service (NPS) rangers are not allowed to pull or tow your vehicle.

19. Can I tow a boat or utility trailer with my vehicle on ORV routes? Yes. Towed boat and utility trailers with one or two axles are allowed. Trailers with more than two axles are prohibited.

20. Can I tow a travel or camping trailer (a trailer with sleeping and/or restroom facilities) on ORV routes? No. Travel or camping trailers are prohibited on ORV routes. If you camp in the park, you must use one of the park's designated campgrounds. Visit www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm for information on campground locations and reservations within the Seashore.

21. What is the speed limit on ORV routes? The speed limit is 15 mph unless otherwise posted.

22. What are right-of-way rules I need to know? Pedestrians always have the right-of-way. Vehicles must yield to pedestrians and move to the landward side of the beach when approaching or passing a pedestrian. When traveling within 100 feet of pedestrians, ORVs must slow to 5 mph.

23. Can I drive on ORV routes at night?

Yes, but there are some seasonal restrictions:

- November 16-April 30, all designated ORV ramps are open to night driving (24 hours a day);
 - May 1–July 31, to help protect nesting sea turtles, priority ORV ramps open at 6:00 am and close at 9:00 pm. All other designated ORV ramps open at 7:00 am and close at 9:00 pm;
 - August 1-September 30, to help protect nesting sea turtles, priority ORV ramps open at 6:30 am and close at 9:00 pm. All other designated ORV ramps open at 7:00 am and close at 9:00 pm; and
 - October 1 – November 15, all designated ORV ramps, including priority ramps, open at 7:00 am and close at 9:00 pm.
- From September 15-November 15, a transition to night driving could occur if there are no sea turtle nests remaining along a route.

24. What are the priority ocean beach routes? Routes that are accessible from Ramps 2, 4, 25, 27, 43, 44, 48, 49, 70, and 72.

25. Can I leave my ORV parked on the beach overnight if I don't drive it when night-driving restrictions are in effect? No. During the night-driving restricted seasons, all vehicles are prohibited on ocean beaches.

26. Is a separate permit required for night driving? No. You only need your ORV permit.

27. Why do I sometimes see ORVs in areas closed to ORVs? In addition to NPS vehicles being used by NPS employees to conduct approved management activities and emergency response vehicles, the NPS allows ORV use in certain areas closed to ORVs only for very specific purposes, this includes:

- Participants in regularly scheduled fishing tournaments if such tournament use was allowed in that area for that tournament before January 1, 2009.
- The use of special-permitted ORVs to transport mobility-impaired individuals to a predetermined location in a beach area in front of a village that is not otherwise open to ORV use. Stop by your local permit office for more information about this mobility-impaired transport permit.
- Commercial fishermen with an NPS commercial fishing permit when actively commercial fishing--as long as a beach is not a resource closure or a lifeguarded beach. Also, commercial fishermen can drive on the beach at 5:00 am on days when night driving restrictions are in effect for the general public if they are actively engaged in authorized commercial fishing activity and able to present a fish-house receipt from the previous 30 days.

28. Can I have a fire on the beach? Yes, beach fires are allowed year round, but a free Beach Fire Permit is required. From May 1–Nov 15 fires are allowed only on the ocean beaches in front of Coquina Beach; the villages of Rodanthe, Waves, Salvo, Avon, Buxton, Frisco, and Hatteras; and the Ocracoke Day Use Area. Fires are allowed from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm year-round. You can get a Beach Fire Permit at ORV permit offices, park campgrounds, and visitor centers.

29. Are pets allowed on the beach? Yes, but must be on a 6-foot leash at all times. Pets are prohibited within any resource protection closure or on the beach adjacent to pre-nesting closures.

For more information, call 252-473-2111 or visit the park website at www.nps.gov/caha. We hope you have a safe and enjoyable visit.