



The National Park Service is seeking public comments on the Ocracoke Light Station Rehabilitation Project Environmental Assessment at Cape Hatteras National Seashore



You Are Invited to Participate

The National Park Service is requesting your input on the environmental assessment for the rehabilitation of the Ocracoke Light Station at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (the Seashore). Your participation is important to our planning process.

Join Us for Two Public Meetings

Date: March 28, 2022

Time: 11am to 12pm and 2pm to 3pm

Location: The Berkley Barn at Berkley Manor
58 Water Plant Road, Ocracoke, NC 27960

Please note, we are holding two meetings to accommodate people's schedules. Seashore staff will present the same information at both meetings. Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions following the presentation.

Background

The Ocracoke Lighthouse was built in 1823. Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, it is the oldest functioning lighthouse in North Carolina and the second oldest lighthouse still in service in the United States. The Ocracoke Light Station includes the Double Keepers' Quarters, Carpenter's Shop, Store House, Cisterns, Privy, Oil House, and Generator House. A wooden picket fence (non-historic) encloses the station, and several historic southern live oaks and eastern red cedars and two bald cypresses survive in the landscape near the dwelling. The Ocracoke Light Station lies within the larger Ocracoke Historic District.

Purpose and Need

In the wake of recent storm damage and flooding events and in consideration of future impacts exacerbated by climate change and sea level rise, the National Park Service is proposing to sustainably rehabilitate the Ocracoke Light Station and mitigate reasonably foreseeable flooding impacts to this site.

The project is needed because historic structures have been damaged from recent storms and, if the buildings are left as they are, it is expected they will be damaged further by future storms. Furthermore, the site has evolved with the addition, alteration, and demolition of structures over the years to meet the needs of the Seashore, and rehabilitation of these structures is needed to assist with storm recovery and preservation. The Seashore needs guidance on a sustainable path forward that considers the longevity and sustainability of any changes considered.



Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

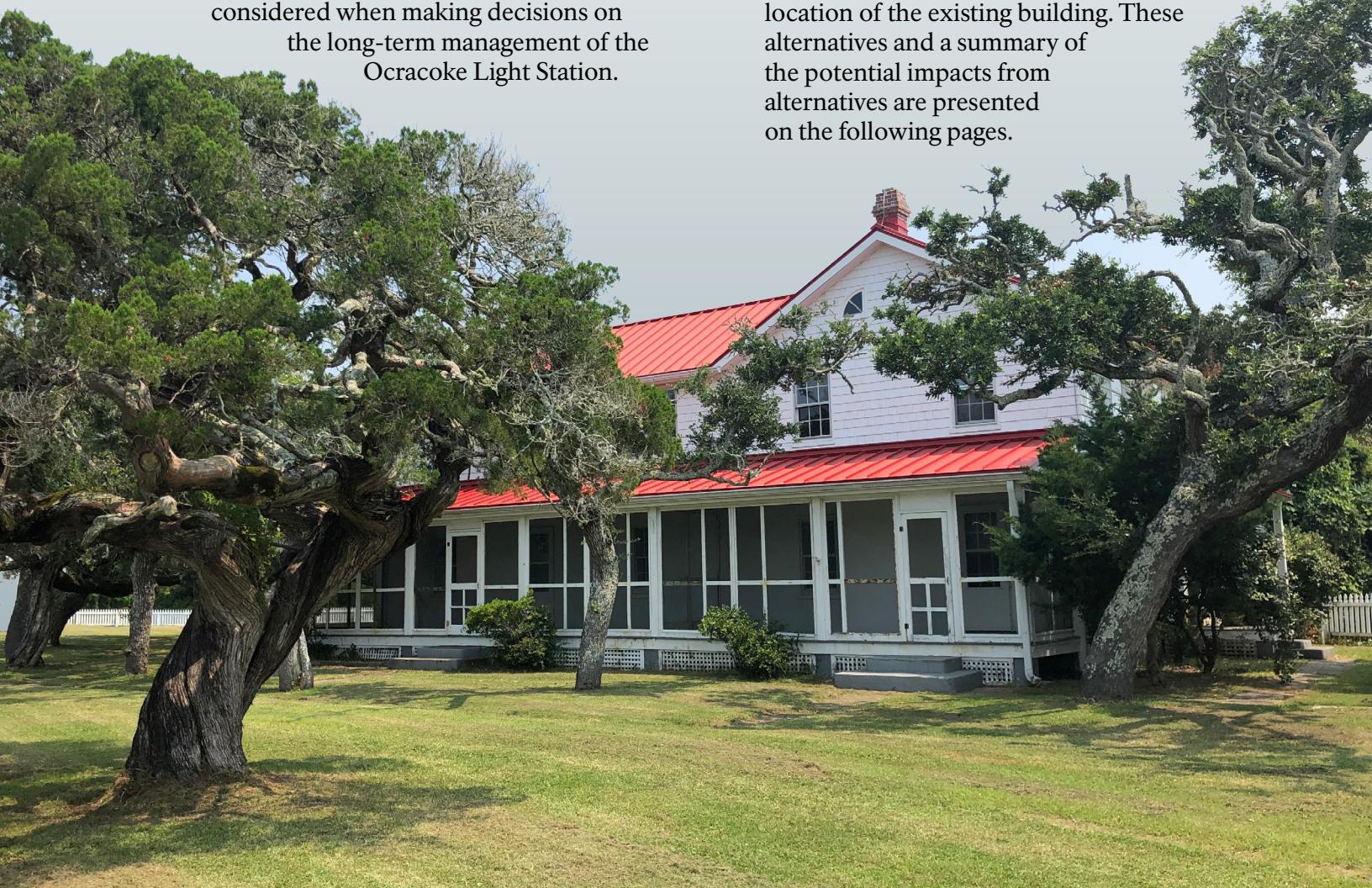
The Seashore is vulnerable to multiple coastal hazards, including coastal erosion, storm surge, and sea level rise. Ocracoke Light Station is not located on the oceanfront or immediately adjacent to Pamlico Sound, so erosion of coastline has not directly affected the site; however, the site is at low elevation and frequently inundated with rainwater and surge associated with storms and tidal flooding during exceptionally high tides. Climate change and resulting sea level rise are likely to increase the frequency and magnitude of flooding events in the future. Vulnerability to flooding at the low-elevation Ocracoke Light Station landscape is projected to increase with local estimates of 2 to 3 feet of sea level rise over the next 50 years. As the sea level rises, the site's vulnerability to coastal storms and the associated surges also increases, putting the historic structures at an elevated level of risk during severe weather events. Future impacts associated with climate change and sea level rise should be considered when making decisions on the long-term management of the Ocracoke Light Station.

Impact Topics and Alternatives

Based on discussions with the public and among the planning team and subject matter experts, the environmental assessment analyzed the following resource topics:

- Historic Buildings and Structures
- Cultural Landscapes

The planning team reviewed a full range of alternatives for the management of the buildings and structures at the Ocracoke Light Station, including alternatives to elevate portions of the Ocracoke Light Station site. Three alternatives were retained for full analysis in the environmental assessment: alternative A, the no-action alternative, alternative B, an alternative to elevate some of the structures at the Ocracoke Light Station, and alternative C, an alternative to remove the Double Keeper's Quarters and replace it with a ghost structure, which would mimic the size, shape, and location of the existing building. These alternatives and a summary of the potential impacts from alternatives are presented on the following pages.





Actions Common to All Alternatives

The Ocracoke Lighthouse would be rehabilitated, which would include the following actions:

- Replace the shotcrete from the exterior of the Lighthouse with an appropriate coating
- Replace damaged masonry
- Repair or replacing all windows with historically appropriate windows
- Repair leaks at the top lantern and repaint
- Recoat interior masonry
- Expose the original stone foundation
- Replace the interior metal staircase with a wooden spiral staircase to match the original material and orientation (alternatives B and C only)

All exterior and interior storm damage to the buildings and structures would be repaired, and the buildings and structures would be repainted. Lead-based paint, mold, mildew, and asbestos would be removed from the buildings and structures, and the Store House would be reoriented back to its original location. All repairs would be completed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.



Alternative A: No-Action Alternative

Elements of Alternative A:

- Ongoing maintenance and storm repairs would be completed, as these are ongoing practices for maintaining the historic structures at the Ocracoke Light Station.

Impacts of Alternative A:

- Future storm events and flooding could stress historic structures beyond the conditions in which they were built, resulting in a loss of the structures.
- Flooding events could also adversely impact the integrity of workmanship, materials, and feeling of the cultural landscape, disqualifying the property for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- The viewshed into the Ocracoke Light Station from other parts of the district would change as contributing features are lost, resulting in an adverse impact on the viewshed from certain vantage points of the Ocracoke Historic District.



Alternative B: Elevate Some Buildings and Structures – NPS Preferred Alternative

Elements of Alternative B:

- The Double Keepers' Quarters would be elevated 4 feet and the Carpenter's Shop, Store House, Privy, and Generator House would be elevated 1 to 2 feet. The new foundations would be masked by historically appropriate material. Stairs and handrails would be constructed to the entrance of the structures.
- An elevated wheelchair lift station and a concrete sidewalk would be added to the Double Keepers' Quarters to provide accessibility. The existing paths among the buildings would be replaced in kind.
- The Carpenter's Shop would be shifted westward slightly and the live oak tree adjacent to the structure would be trimmed to avoid contact with the roof. The Privy would be relocated where a previous privy was located.

Impacts of Alternative B:

- The overall integrity and character-defining features for the buildings/structures and cultural landscape would be minimally affected. The overall relationship of the buildings and structures to each other within the setting would be maintained.
- The characteristics that qualify these buildings for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places would not be diminished, and the integrity of the properties' locations, designs, settings, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association would remain relatively intact.
- The views of the Ocracoke Light Station from the Ocracoke Historic District would be similar as they are today. The views from within the Ocracoke Light Station to other parts of the Ocracoke Historic District would not be affected.



Carpenter's Shop with encroaching live oak tree



Oil House (front) and Generator House (back)



Store House



Privy



Alternative C: Ghost Structures

Elements of Alternative C

- This alternative is proposed because the long-term preservation of the Double Keepers' Quarters may become challenging in the future.
- The Double Keepers' Quarters would be demolished and replaced with a ghost structure. The building would be documented in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Architectural and Engineering Documentation* prior to removal, and interpretive materials would be installed.
- The Carpenter's Shop, Store House, Generator House, and Privy would be anchored to the ground or elevated 1 to 2 feet. The foundations of elevated structures would be masked by historically appropriate material. The Carpenter's Shop would be shifted westward slightly and the live oak tree adjacent to the structure would be trimmed to avoid contact with the roof.
- If the outbuildings were to be damaged in the future, they would either be repaired or demolished and removed and possibly replaced with ghost structures.

Impacts of Alternative C

- The adverse effects to the Double Keepers' Quarters and the cultural landscape would be immediate and permanent.
- Elevating the support structures would retain the character-defining features of the individual structures, make them more resilient to future flooding, and retain the integrity of the landscape.
- If the support structures are not elevated, some of the additional contributing resources that qualify this landscape for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places may also be lost, and the integrity of the property would be altered or destroyed.
- Removal of the contributing features would have noticeable changes to the views from and to the Ocracoke Light Station, resulting in an adverse effect on the Ocracoke Historic District.

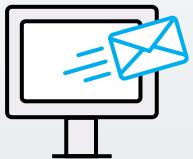




How to Comment

The public comment period ends on April 13, 2022. Your participation will help shape this project. We welcome your ideas, concerns, and suggestions.

Please comment by April 13, 2022 using one of the following methods.



Submit comments via the NPS planning website:

https://parkplanning.gov/CAHA_ocracoke_lightstation

This is the preferred method.



Submit written comments by mail to:

Superintendent
Attn: Ocracoke Light Station
1401 National Park Drive
Manteo, NC 27954

Please note that your entire comment, including your personal information, may be made publicly available at any time. Although you can request that we withhold your personal identifying information from public view, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

