

Beach Update from The Trustees

Many of you have probably heard about the disagreement between the County Commissioners and the Trustees over renewal of a long term agreement for the management of Norton Point Beach by TTOR. We are hopeful this issue can get resolved in the next few weeks. Our current agreement with the County expires on 3/31 but we intend to continue to manage the beach as long as it appears we are making some progress with the County to resolve our differences. We have an incredible staff that work at all of the beaches and who put the resource and public access high on their list.

The beach looks pretty good running from Katama to the Gut. A small section from Aruda Point to the Jetties remains closed to OSV's due to a steep section of beach. We're hoping to have that open soon. The beach connector between Norton Point and Wasque Point is open for travel but is subject to occasional overwash. You may have to delay your trip across if the beach appears to be overwashing the trail but it will be drivable. Stay in the track and do not venture too close to the surf (if you're going to err, stay on the pond side of the connector).

The connector area is steadily move shoreward and in several sections have reconnected to Wasque Point. We are hoping to have a set of aluminum stairs leading from the area of the Fishermen's lot to the beach in place for this summer. We intend to file a Notice of Intent shortly with the Edgartown Conservation Commission to see approval for the stairs.

Trustees have filed a draft **Impact Avoidance and Minimization Plan for East Beach, Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge**. That's a mouthful! The IAMP would provide Trustees with the ability to allow self-escorted OSV past either the Narrows (just north of the Dike Bridge) or past the south end of Leland Beach in cases where unfledged plover chicks are crossing back and forth (which would otherwise force the closure of those OSV chokepoints. Under this plan, drivers would have to have someone walk in front of their vehicle while passing through the "danger" area (usually 150-200 yards). Driver-only vehicles will probably have to wait for a vehicle escort (a staffer, volunteer or other escorted vehicle) to proceed through the area. Once through, you would then be free to travel to your intended destination. We would be required to hire additional shorebird staff to monitor the chicks and vehicles as they pass through the area and they would stop access immediately if they lost sight of the chicks. We are asking the State to allow us to open these chokepoint areas for up to six hours a day. Drivers would be required to view a Mass Fish and Wildlife PowerPoint program online and take an online quiz before they can access the chokepoints for the first time each season. Details on the how, when, where are still to come. As we have said before it is not a perfect solution but better than what we've had in the past.

OSV Permits for 2016-2017 are available online until May 1 when the price for the Chappy and Combo permits goes up by \$20. Don't delay, go online (www.thetrustees.org) and renew/purchase your Chappy permit today. Permits will be available to pick up after May 1 from our Vineyard Haven office (860 State Road) or from any gatehouse as of the Memorial Day weekend.