

Antelope Island State Park

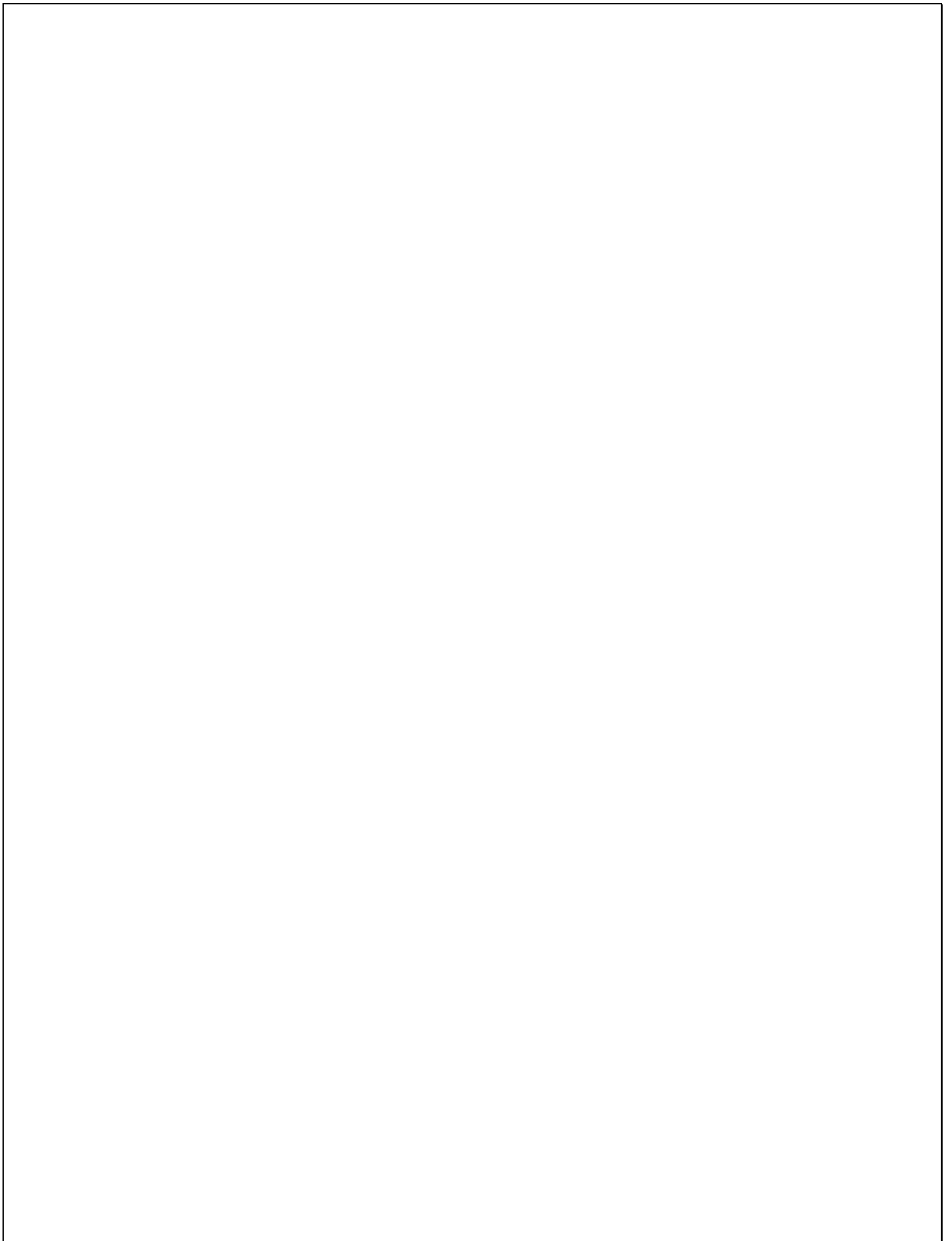


Access Management Plan

May 2004



STATE OF UTAH
NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Parks & Recreation



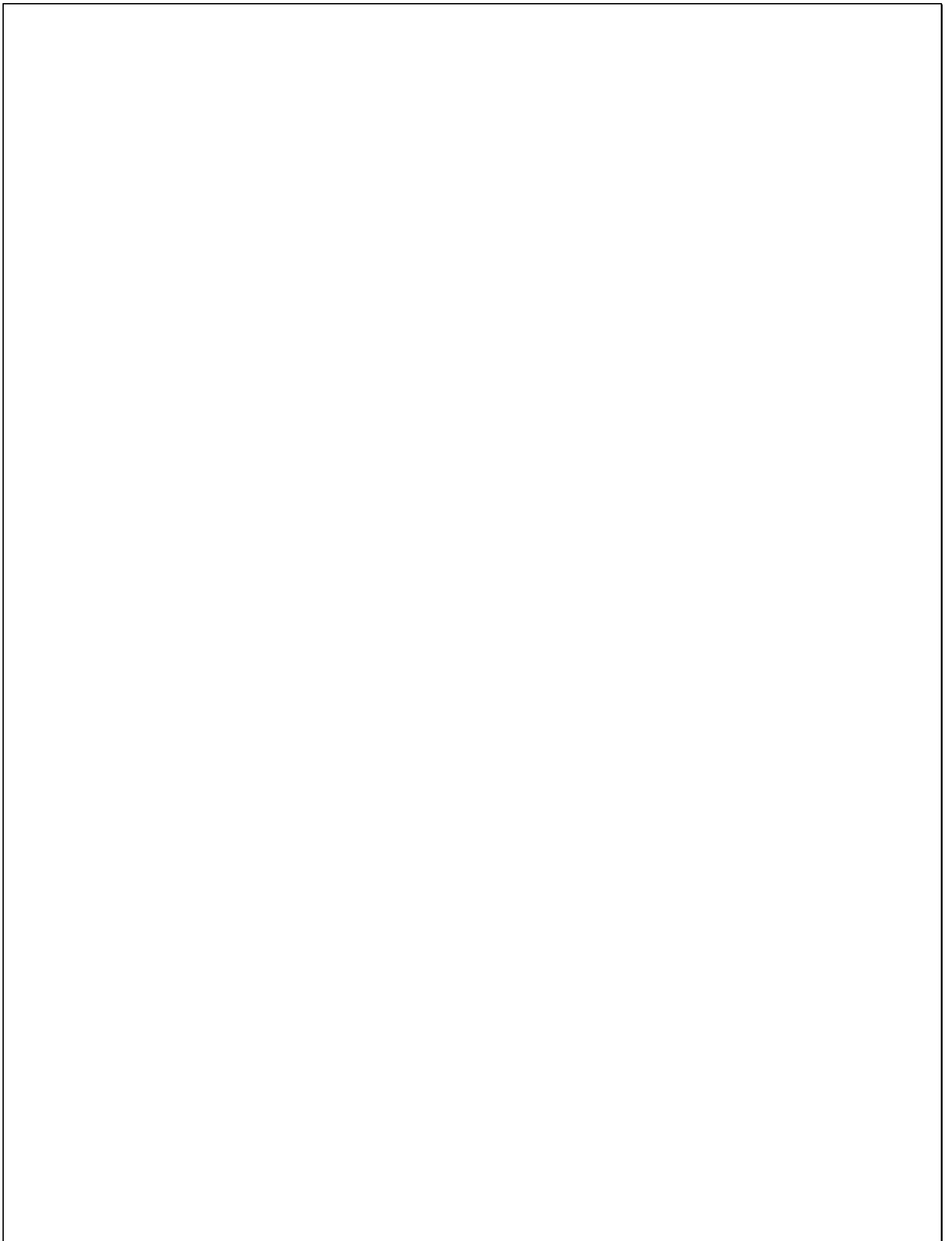
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Utah State Parks & Antelope Island Access Management Plan

Legend:

- ▲ Utah State Park Locations
- ★ Access Management Plan Study Locality





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Acknowledgements

Antelope Island State Park

Access

Management Planning Team

Jerry Adair, Real Estate Proprietor/Former Legislator, Riverdale
Steve Bates, Wildlife Range Manager, Antelope Island State Park, Syracuse
Jay Christianson, N.W. Region Manager, Utah Div. of Parks & Rec., Salt Lake City
Steve Hadden, Antelope Island Trail Patrol, Bountiful
Kevin Jones, State Archeologist, Salt Lake City
Bruce Kartchner, Backcountry Horsemen, Sandy
Rick Mayfield, Friends of Antelope Island, Kaysville
Kirk Nichols, University of Utah, Salt Lake City
Wilf Sommerkorn, Davis County, Farmington
Shelleice Stokes, Ogden/Weber Convention and Visitors Bureau, Ogden
Ron Taylor, Park Manager, Antelope Island State Park, Syracuse

Recreation Inventory Subcommittee

Ron Taylor
Steve Hadden
Steve Bates
Bruce Kartchner
Kirk Nichols

Other Participants

Keith Crumpton, Forestry, Fire and State Lands
Jamie Dalton, Research Consultant, Utah State Parks
Bob Hanover, Park Manager, Fremont Indian State Park and Museum
John Knudson, Trails Grant Coordinator, Utah State Parks
Karen Krieger, Heritage Coordinator, Utah State Parks
Greg Mortensen, Wildlife Biologist, Antelope Island
Courtland Nelson, Director, Division of Parks and Recreation
Shannon Peterson, Planner, Utah State Parks
Rock Smith, Research Consultant, Utah State Parks
Tim Smith, Southeast Regional Manager, Utah State Parks
Susan Zarekarizi, GIS Manager, Utah State Parks



Preface

Visits to Antelope Island State Park have tripled over the past decade since the park's reopening in 1993. As a consequence, there is increasing demand for more island access. The Utah Division of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) currently faces the problem of providing greater access while simultaneously protecting the island's unique and extensive natural, cultural and historical resource base.

State Parks developed a Resource Management Plan (RMP) in 1994 to provide guidelines, opportunities and limitations for needed development on Antelope Island. Many of the RMP's recommendations have been achieved on the island's northernmost section. Significant opportunities have been created in the island's southern half as well. In 1997, the Division developed an interpretive/site plan to preserve, interpret and restore the historic Garr Ranch. This culminated in the opening of the restored ranch in 2000. In 1998, south and eastside access were greatly improved with construction of a paved road to the ranch. Comprehensive planning for management of island wildlife was also completed in 2001.

In spite of these accomplishments, many of the plan's recommendations concerning broader public access remain unfulfilled. The RMP's recommendations specifying greater access - particularly to the island's southern and western portions - include the following actions:

- Provide greater public access to the southern 26,000 acres. In providing such access, the Division and park staff should direct and manage visitor activities and traffic in order to address public safety and resource protection.
- Preserve the area's solitude, isolation, remoteness, ruggedness and quietness. Any development that does occur in the southern portion should be consistent with these values.
- Protect the island's historical/cultural resource and sites prior to allowing public access.
- Provide additional camping opportunities – both primitive and group – on the island's south and west portions.
- Design/develop a sensitively designed trails system that addresses issues relating to resource protection, accessibility, multiple use, interpretive programs, limited/no access areas and safety.
- Provide for limited and controlled vehicular access to the southern part of the island via the eastside road.
- Provide additional visitor services and interpretive opportunities along the east road (additional educational, informational and interpretive programming, information signage, interpretive kiosks/plazas, restrooms, photo sites, etc.).
- Provide overnight accommodations in the vicinity of the Garr Ranch; utilize as an integrated business retreat center.
- Provide the opportunity to develop and operate an eco-tourism camping experience on the remote west side of the island. Also consider boating access to this area.

The southern end of Antelope Island has been closed to the general public since the park reopened in 1993. The southern end has allowed limited access in the form of concessionaire-led tours and special events such as Buffalo Days and the Buffalo Roundup. Park managers list concerns about the potential for negative impacts on the unique wildlife residing on the island when the south end is opened to the public.

With some initial groundwork laid by the 1994 RMP and the subsequent Garr Ranch Interpretive/Site Plan and updated wildlife management planning efforts, State Parks is poised to fulfill the remaining planning objectives specified above. A formal access planning process is required to achieve these goals.

Team recommendations – contained in this plan - to resolve these issues were reached by consensus and included input from the public, subject matter experts (see Appendix A) and other government agencies. They are intended to be dynamic and will evolve concurrently with park needs as the plan's goals are achieved.

Comprehensive Park planning is required by the Utah Legislature and the Board of Utah State Parks and Recreation to guide short and long-term site management and capital development. The planning process recommends limits of acceptable change or modification, and a future vision for the park. Specifically, the process: (1) recognizes the importance of public access to the park's resources; (2) recognizes impacts will result from use and enjoyment of the site; (3) questions how much and what types of impacts may be accommodated while providing reasonable protection of the resources for future visitors; (4) seeks sustained quality and value; and (5) seeks to determine the conditions under which this can be attained.

The most recent RMP for Antelope Island was completed in 1994. The results and recommendations from the RMP have helped to shape this **Access Management Plan (AMP)**. Recommendations contained within this plan will be implemented under the direction of the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation. This plan is intended to be a useful, workable document that will guide access management of the park.

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Executive Summary

In early 2003 Division representatives met with community stakeholders to initiate an access management planning effort for Antelope Island State Park. The planning process was based on public input and involvement. The Antelope Island Access Management Planning Team, a citizen-based team representing community leaders, interested users, local residents, subject matter experts and agency representatives, was at the core of the process. A subcommittee of agency representatives and subject matter experts was formed to aid in the process. The recommendations contained in this document represent several months of work by the team.

The plan provides recommendations founded upon mission and vision statements developed by the planning team. The mission of the Antelope Island State Park Access Management Planning Team is to develop a comprehensive access management plan that defines visitor opportunities, emphasizes the protection of resources, and preserves the values of solitude, openness and ruggedness.

The Antelope Island State Park Access Management Planning Team was chartered to evaluate the feasibility of opening the island to broader public access. The team accomplished this goal by first; developing procedures and guidelines by which access will be evaluated; and second, considering specific access issues deemed feasible by this process.

With all access recommendations, the following factors were considered:

- Determination of the limits of acceptable change to maintain the island's solitude, openness and ruggedness
- Identification of the appropriate level of management required for each activity along with a determination of revenue needs, costs and available resources
- Impacts upon flora, fauna, cultural/historic resources
- Inhibiting the spread of noxious weeds and fire danger
- Visitor safety issues
- Ensuring consistency with previous planning efforts
- Visitor education information and interpretation needs and opportunities
- Ensure that proposed development complements the island's natural and cultural features
- Ensure that recommendations do not merely duplicate existing opportunities before the whole Island is considered for greater access
- Minimize user conflicts and promote responsible use
- Partnerships, user groups, and stakeholders should be part of the decision-making process

These objectives are geared toward improving and expanding access to the park, improving the park's recreational opportunities, protecting its resources and providing the visitor with a safe, enjoyable experience. Achievement of these objectives will require the continued support of users, legislative and community leaders, and the Division of Parks and Recreation.

Team members followed a process to determine the feasibility and adoption of proposed actions. The process can be outlined as follows: a recreation subcommittee composed of team members was formed and asked to develop specific issues; the issues were placed into a matrix format and scored against 23 criteria identified in the vision; the issues were then evaluated for feasibility and approved for adoption by subject matter experts. The planning team issued several specific recommendations in support of the plan's mission and vision statements and considerations. Eight issue areas form the basis of the team's recommendations. The issue areas with accompanying recommendations are outlined as follows:

General Park Access

- If staffing levels allow, the main gate should open at 6:00am and close at 10:00pm, April through September; 8:00pm, October and March; 7:00pm, November and February; 6:00pm, December and January.
- Visitors should leave the park when the gate closes, following State Park guidelines.
- Park management should assess whether staff should stay later to assist late arriving campers to their reserved campsites.
- Park management needs to establish guidelines for what events are approved for the Fielding Garr Ranch and Visitor Center. Any "after-hours" activities must be sanctioned events. Staff must host ranch activities. Park managers should also consider approved after-hours events for the *entire* Park, not just at the Visitor Center or Ranch.
- The nine-mile gate, located just north of the Ranch, will be open only when staff, including certified volunteers, are there. Additional funding/staff would be required if the gate were to remain open additional hours.

Closures On Trail Systems

- Maintain the annual seasonal closures on the Mountain View Trail due to pronghorn fawning from the north trailhead to the Frary Peak trailhead for approximately one month between May 15 and June 16 (actual dates may vary).
- Maintain the closure of the Frary Peak Trail from April 20 to the Memorial Day weekend (approximately) for bighorn lambing and also to help mitigate various law enforcement problems if necessary.
- Once new trails are identified and approved for access, define needed closures as appropriate.
- Park management, at their discretion, should close trails during muddy conditions, flood periods or where use may result in damage or safety hazards. If possible, staff will identify other existing, alternative trails for use during such closures.
- Consult state risk management and develop guidelines for trail closure when the probability of lightning is high. Signage, commensurate with guidelines, should be considered.
- Consider periodic trail closures when reconstruction might require temporary closure.

Access Along the Southern Tip Road

- Resolve the problematic mud-“bog” area on the road to Southern Tip/Unicorn Point near McIntyre Springs.
- Establish a trailhead at the overflow, gravel-parking area for the Fielding Garr Ranch. Use the trailhead for one year, monitoring the effects on the Fielding Garr Ranch. After one year, examine the feasibility of moving the trailhead further south. The goal is to provide access to users of all ability levels without large-scale development. The trails will be open to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians. Continue concession van tours.

Provision Of Open Access Areas

- Maintain current policies providing open access, defined as on or off-trail use without permit, for the north 2,000 acres and southern portion on Buffalo Days (one-day event) and the Buffalo Round Up (four days). Staff will identify and designate other areas for open access by permit. Enhance staff to more effectively manage these events.

New Trail Opportunities

Proposed trails were based on the spatial categories concept adopted by the team (Please see Plate 1). In this spatial categories concept, provision of access (defined as hiking, bicycling and equestrian use) is contingent upon the degree of impact to resources within a given area. Simply meaning that the team took critical and sensitive wildlife habitat into consideration when deciding which areas should be opened to public access. Similarly, archeological/cultural surveys and mitigation must be considered when opening new trail sections. Park management will design and implement a permit system for southern/backcountry trail use.

Specific trail opportunities were proposed:

Note that all users must stay on trails

- 1a) Develop a trail segment from ranch to the Sentry on existing dirt road from ranch; appropriate actions should be taken to secure and protect the Mushroom Springs site. No access should be provided to the Mushroom Springs site unless specified in an interpretive plan for the site. Mitigation efforts to protect the site should be instituted.
- 1c) Provide access along trail segment from ranch to “Y” in existing road below Sentry that leads toward Buffalo Scaffold Canyon and forks toward the westside shore.
- 1d) Consider equestrian access and evaluate impacts on trail segment from ranch to “Y” in existing road below Sentry that leads to Buffalo Scaffold Canyon and forks northward passing by Buffalo Scaffold Canyon, Dry Canyon, Red Rocks Canyon, Mormon Rocks and Split Rock Bay and connects to the existing Split Rock trail system. Evaluate safety issues prior to opening to the general public.
- 3) Develop trail spurs from the existing Mountain View Trail to Frary and Mulberry Grove sites contingent on completion of an interpretive plan that outlines protective measures for archeological/ historic sites and other resources.
- 5) Develop a marsh/pickleweed boardwalk/interpretive walk (for foot traffic only) near White Rock Bay group campsites.

- 6) Develop a trail to Dooley Knob utilizing the existing Frary Peak Trailhead. The trail would be for hiking only.

Camping

- Examine the feasibility of a walk-in tent site/camping area on the north end of the beach below the Visitor Center versus other sites.
- Expand the existing Bridger Bay Campground considering development of a second loop.
- Examine allowing overnight campers use of the buffalo corrals to corral their horses during their visit.
- Provide boat camping in the marina.
- Implement a permit system/process for overnight boaters' parking.
- Perform a feasibility study for campsites on the north trail system and lakeside (see Plate 1) before these sites are considered for backcountry campsites. The proposed locations for these campsites are at Split Rock Bay, near Red Rocks Canyon and Cambria Point and Buffalo Scaffold Canyon near the "Old Cowboy Campsite"/Cedar Springs area.
- Park management will be responsible for deciding which special events are held near Fielding Garr Ranch, and if camping will be allowed in conjunction with the events.

Archeological/Historic Site Access

- Develop a comprehensive Antelope Island Interpretive Plan that adequately protects cultural and historic sites as outlined in the Division's MOU with State History, which states that any new development, including trails, will have a cultural survey completed and any necessary mitigation efforts approved by State History.
- Perform a survey, management plan and other management guidance prior to allowing public access to new sites, including the following:
 - Frary Grave Site
 - Headbanger Cave
 - Mushroom Springs Site
 - Mulberry Grove Area with visitors routed away from Garden Creek
 - Stone Corral Site, include wayside exhibits
 - Unicorn Point
 - Mormon Rocks

Proposed Facilities Development

- Expand the Visitor Center to include more conference rooms, meeting space and storage space.
- Improve the current information pullouts on the eastside road to provide better visual/interpretive information.
- Construct formal trailheads at places where the Mountain View Trail intersects the eastside road (near Camera Flats, for example).

Antelope Island Access Management Plan

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

The mission of the Antelope Island State Park Access Management Planning Team is to develop a comprehensive access management plan that defines visitor opportunities, emphasizes the protection of resources, and preserves the values of solitude, openness and ruggedness.

Antelope Island State Park currently faces the problem of providing greater access while simultaneously protecting the island's unique and extensive natural, cultural and historical resource base. Team members developed the mission statement out of the desire for increased public access on Antelope Island. The team recognized that the Island is unique in that it holds both land and water-based recreational opportunities such as day-use activities, camping and water-related recreation. The island also houses several archeological and historic sites. Antelope Island presently serves, and will continue, as a recreational destination for the surrounding community, the state of Utah and areas beyond.

Vision Statement

The vision for the Antelope Island State Park Access Management Planning Team is to evaluate the feasibility of opening the Island to broader public access. The team will accomplish this by first developing procedures and guidelines by which access will be evaluated; and second, considering specific access issues.

Utilizing the basic principles in the mission statement, the team developed a vision statement to guide development of the plan's recommendations. The vision statement establishes the foundation for recommendations to meet needs for increased access, archeological/historic site protection, wildlife habitat protection and facilities development. Each recommendation is consistent with the principles outlined in the vision statement.

In the process of creating the vision statement the following evaluative criteria were also developed. These criteria should be considered for all access recommendations:

- ❑ Determination of the limits of acceptable change to maintain the island's solitude, openness and ruggedness
- ❑ Identification of the appropriate level of management required for each activity along with a determination of revenue needs, costs and available resources
- ❑ Impacts upon flora, fauna, cultural/historic resources
- ❑ Inhibiting the spread of noxious weeds and fire danger
- ❑ Visitor safety issues
- ❑ Ensuring consistency with previous planning efforts
- ❑ Visitor education information and interpretation needs and opportunities
- ❑ Ensure that proposed development complements the island's natural and cultural features
- ❑ Ensure that recommendations do not merely duplicate existing opportunities before the whole Island is considered for greater access
- ❑ Minimize user conflicts and promote responsible use
- ❑ Partnerships, user groups, and stakeholders should be part of the decision-making process

Access Management Plan

Purpose and Process

Purpose of the Plan

Courtland Nelson, Director of Utah State Parks and Recreation chartered the Antelope Island State Park Access Management Planning Team in January 2003. The team's purpose was to develop a series of recommendations that would allow for "broader public access, particularly in the island's southern areas." Previous planning efforts involving recreational use and public access of the island spanned two extremes of potential access and use: from limited public access and wildlife preservation, to highly developed, island-wide public use. This Access Management Plan will further clarify access issues described in the 1994 comprehensive Resource Management Plan (RMP) and try to strike a balance between the public's desire to access more of the scenic beauty of Antelope Island and the sensitive issues posed by wildlife management and historic preservation.

1994 Resource Management Plan

State Parks developed a Resource Management Plan (RMP) in 1994 to provide guidelines, opportunities and limitations for needed development on Antelope Island. Many of the RMP's recommendations have been achieved on the island's northernmost section. Significant opportunities have been created in the island's southern half as well. In 1997, the Division developed an interpretive/site plan to preserve, interpret and restore the historic Garr Ranch. This culminated in the opening of the restored ranch in 2000. In 1998, south and east side access was greatly improved with construction of a paved road to the ranch. Comprehensive planning for management of island wildlife was also completed in 2001.

In spite of these accomplishments, many of the plan's recommendations concerning broader public access remain unfulfilled. The RMP's recommendations specifying greater access, particularly to the island's southern and western portions - include the actions listed in the preface (piii).

Access Plan Development

While the 1994 RMP specifies broad goals concerning expanded island access, the division representatives determined that the current RMP and subsequent trails inventories are insufficient in terms of providing specific guidelines for potential trails and routes, resource impacts, designated use areas, staffing needs and associated costs. For this reason, the group agreed to initiate development of a comprehensive Island Access Management Plan. This process would incorporate relevant public input and feedback gathered during subsequent planning efforts. It was determined that the planning process should explore and resolve the following issues:

Access

- Identify the existing conditions regarding park access, i.e., current access points, trails and routes.
- Define desired future condition and goals and objectives regarding lake access, trail access and development and resource impacts.
- Clearly identify impacts on island resources.
- Utilize past survey information and public comments to identify key access concerns and needs among the population requiring access, e.g., hikers, bikers, equestrians, and others.
- Identify potential constraints or conflicts with management goals or previous planning efforts.
- Identify user conflict issues regarding access and define desired future conditions along with related goals and objectives to resolve access conflict.

Information, Education and Interpretation

- Identify existing conditions concerning access-related information, education and interpretive needs regarding access impacts on island resources, safety on trails, routes, etc.

Park Concessions

- Define issues regarding park concessions with respect to access issues, determine what type of concessions are appropriate and should be offered.

Management, Funding and Staff Impacts

- Identify management impacts and costs associated with potential access recommendations.
- Identify impacts upon staff and related safety and law enforcement issues, needs and goals.

Antelope Island State Park must plan for public access, particularly as the island continues to increase in popularity. Access on Antelope Island has, and will continue to be, a salient issue for Utah State Parks. The key goal for Park Management is to strike a balance between uninhibited access and resource protection - to nurture a situation in which the public is able to explore and enjoy the island while respecting the environment and natural surroundings.

Planning is necessary to achieve these objectives. It is also needed to assist Park Managers to obtain necessary funding for operations, maintenance and capital development needs related to access management.

The Planning Process

Planning for an outstanding recreational resource such as Antelope Island State Park is required for protection of this unique area and to enable increased non-consumptive public access to the island. It is necessary to determine the recreating public's needs, develop strategies for implementing facilities, events and related policies and for the long-term protection and public enjoyment of the area's unique resources. This Access Management Plan (AMP) will help to guide short and long-term site/event management and capital development.

The process is based on input from potential users, area citizens, division staff and subject-matter experts. Issues and recommendations were gathered from a series of team and subcommittee meetings.

In early 2002 it was determined that a comprehensive Island Access Management Plan was needed. Division representatives met with community stakeholders to familiarize them with the proposed process and the need for creating an Access Management Plan (AMP) for Antelope Island State Park.

In February 2003 Division representatives met with the goal of selecting 8-12 individuals to compose the access management planning team. Team members were selected for a variety of reasons ranging from technical expertise to interest in the park. All team members participated on a voluntary basis and expressed a willingness to sacrifice a significant portion of their time and expertise to the process. Eleven individuals were selected to serve on the planning team:

- Jerry Adair, Former Legislator
- Steve Bates, Wildlife Range Manager
- Jay Christianson, Northwest Region Manager
- Steve Hadden, Antelope Island Trail Patrol
- Kevin Jones, State Archeologist
- Bruce Kartchner, Backcountry Horsemen
- Rick Mayfield, Friends of Antelope Island
- Kirk Nichols, University of Utah
- Wilf Sommerkorn, Davis County Government
- Shelleice Stokes, Ogden/Weber Convention
- Ron Taylor, Park Manager

Several representatives from the Division also served as staff to the team.

In March 2003 the first Antelope Island Access Management Planning Team meeting was held. The meeting was a field trip to Antelope Island to provide team members with an on-site experience to learn about the island's natural, cultural and historic resource base, existing recreational opportunities, potential access opportunities, and related constraints and concerns. Park and Division staff covered several locations and areas of concern including: Buffalo Point, Beacon Knob, Frary Gravesite, Garden Creek/Mulberry Grove, The Sentry, Fielding Garr Ranch, South Causeway, and Unicorn Point. Subsequent team meetings reviewed resource issues and constraints, identified guiding principles (mission and vision statements) and examined the area's strengths, opportunities and threats (SOT).

This section will go into greater detail on the overall planning process, in particular, how issues regarding access were identified, evaluated for feasibility and also how plan recommendations were adopted by the team. The team utilized various analytical strategies to develop issues and determine recommendations. These include: SOT, a matrix of proposed actions, and the comments of subject matter experts.

Strengths, Opportunities and Threats (SOT)

The team worked to develop recommendations through a process of reviewing resource issues and constraints, developing guiding principles (mission and vision statements) and examining the area's strengths, opportunities and threats (SOT exercise).

Current Park Conditions and Problems Relating to Access

During the SOT exercise park staff were able to outline several of the access problems they would like the team to help solve. Park staff provided an overview of current access opportunities, potential opportunities, operation-related access issues and the types of recreation opportunities currently allowed. Issues highlighted were:

- Concerns that several of the park's existing facilities are insufficient to handle the public's current access needs
- There is a need for more access opportunities at Fielding Garr Ranch
- Hours of operation need to be revisited
- Island wildlife and habitat issues
 - A primary objective of the team should be to identify critical wildlife/habitat areas and ensure that proposed access alternatives do not pose negative impacts and that the actions adopted by the Access Management Plan (AMP) be consistent with the 2001 Wildlife Management Plan.
 - The team should pay special attention to sensitive species, major viewing species such as mule deer and bison, weed infestation and range rehabilitation and fire control.

The state archeologist noted various cultural/historic resource issues. He identified several of the island's notable prehistoric sites and also pointed out other historical sites of interest or concern. He expressed that there is a need for all of these sites to be evaluated if access is to be allowed in their proximity. He provided a Memorandum of Agreement between State Parks and State History that requires State Parks to consult with State History to ensure that potential planning or development actions meet the minimum standards for complying with state cultural resource protection laws.

Strengths, Opportunities and Threats

The team identified strengths, opportunities and threats relating to park access. The following are the key strengths, opportunities and threats as prioritized by individual team member vote:

Strengths

- The island's outstanding panoramic views and its scenic beauty
- The island's cultural, historic and geologic treasures and the associated Great Salt Lake ecosystem
- Visitor ability to view island wildlife
- Diversity of the recreational opportunities available

Opportunities

- Education and interpretive-related programs related to access, resources, etc., should be enhanced; The Visitor Center needs to be expanded and comprehensive interpretive planning related to access should be developed; These efforts should focus on additional signage, more trail brochures, boardwalk experiences, etc.
- Provide more backcountry recreation experiences such as controlled backcountry access (trails), eco-tours, adventure events, disbursed backcountry camping, etc.
- Provide additional camping opportunities
- Provide additional marina-based boating (primarily kayak, sailboat and canoe) experiences

Threats

- There is a major concern about access-related damage/degradation to island resources and the visitor experience: Wildlife/habitat impacts/displacement, cultural/historic resource impacts, off-trail impacts (erosion, widening trails), litter, human waste, and the loss of visitor solitude are potential issues as more access is provided
- There is a concern about limited funding and insufficient staff to adequately protect and manage resources, develop new infrastructure and maintain existing facilities as visitation increases
- As more access is provided, there are concerns about overcrowding
- Potential wildfire problems and difficulties in controlling the spread of noxious weeds with additional access

Team members were given the results of the SOT exercise and after review, grouped the emergent issues into distinct categories. Within each issue area, staff listed several potential goals taken from the prioritized SOT outcomes. It was recommended that the team define specific actions to achieve each goal, and monitor/measure how each goal can be accomplished. This led to the development of an evaluation process to determine the feasibility of proposed actions.

Matrix – Evaluation of Proposed Actions

A subcommittee of planning team members was formed and asked to develop specific action proposals for each issue identified by the team. The development of issues and action proposals is discussed in detail in the *Issues and Recommendations* section of this plan.

To evaluate proposed access actions, team members suggested using a list of 23 criteria that reflect those identified in the vision statement (Figure 1).

Figure 1

1. Likelihood that proposed action will impinge on values of solitude, openness and ruggedness
 2. Likelihood that this opportunity duplicates other similar opportunities in the park
 3. Likelihood that proposed action will increase potential user conflicts
 4. Level of impact on staff or management to implement the proposed action
 5. Likelihood that action will negatively impact visitor safety
 6. Degree of impact (inconsistency) with access-related objectives outlined in the RMP, WMP and other documents
 7. Level of facilities development needed for proposed action
 8. Level of impact required facilities and infrastructure will have on the island's natural and cultural features
 9. Budgetary Impacts
 10. Likelihood that proposal will require seasonal closures or alter current hours of use/ operation
 11. Level of impact on wildlife in the area
 12. Level of impact on area habitat (erosion, plant loss, etc.)
 13. Level of impact on cultural/ historic resources in the area
 14. Level of impact on archeological (prehistoric) resources in the area
 15. Probability that proposal will contribute to spread of noxious weeds
 16. Probability that proposal will increase fire danger
 17. Likelihood that the proposal could occur on other portions of the island that are already open
 18. Level of visitor information needed for effective implementation
 19. Potential for proposed action to increase/enhance education and interpretation opportunities
 20. Level of potential concessionaire involvement with the proposal
 21. Likelihood that the proposal will result in economic benefits to nearby communities/ counties
 22. Likelihood that the proposal will result in additional net revenues to the park
 23. Likelihood that partnerships, user groups and stakeholders can be an effective participant in this proposal
- NOTE: Criteria with a "positive" or "mitigating" score

The team decided that all proposed access actions would be evaluated using these criteria. The evaluative criteria were grouped into five subject areas: 1) Visitor Experience, 2) Management Concerns, 3) Resource Impacts, 4) Interpretive Needs, and 5) Economic Benefits. The team also recommended that staff identify individuals with expertise in each of these five subject areas to evaluate the impact of proposed actions. These “subject matter experts” would rate each proposed action using the criteria in the category of their expertise.

Each subject matter expert was presented with a matrix listing the proposed access actions and the corresponding evaluative criteria related to their area of expertise. They were asked to use the matrix to rate each proposed action using their specific criteria, and to comment on each action item. A matrix listing all 23 criteria is included as Appendix B. Each subject matter expert was asked to rate the impact of each proposed action upon the accepted criteria using a simple rating scale: Impacts were categorized as low, moderate or high. An example would be the Visitor Experience Subject Matter Expert rating all proposed actions as low, moderate or high impact for the following evaluative criteria: 1) Negative impact on island solitude, openness and ruggedness; 2) Likelihood the proposal duplicates other existing opportunities in the park (is not unique); 3) Likelihood the proposal will increase user conflicts; and 4) Likelihood that action will negatively impact visitor safety.

Upon completion, the ratings and comments from all subject matter experts were combined into a larger matrix (Appendix C). The combined matrix indicated the relative impact score, within each category, for each proposed action. This combined matrix was distributed to the entire team. Each team member was asked to review the combined matrix and indicate whether or not they would support the individual access actions. At a subsequent team meeting, the action proposals were discussed in detail and those included in the plan were agreed upon by consensus. All proposals with a high impact rating, with the exception of closing trails during adverse conditions, new trail segment 1d, provision for primitive campsites on the north trail system and lakeside, and access to Mormon Rocks, were not adopted by the team.

Background Information

Historic Use

An understanding of the park's historic attributes regarding access is essential to developing sound access recommendations that protect and celebrate these attributes. A brief summary is provided here. Several archeological sites present evidence of prehistoric Native American use of Antelope Island approximately 1,000 years before the first European visitors arrived on the island. The exact purpose and extent of use by early Native American cultures is not fully understood, but evidence of prehistoric camps and food processing has been documented at Mushroom Springs and Headbanger Cave. Similarly, there is evidence of historic use by Chief Wanship's band of Ute Indians as recorded by John C. Fremont in his 1845 excursion to Antelope Island.

From 1848 to 1979, Antelope Island's predominate use and development centered on commercial ranching with limited, private recreation. In the late 1960s, a causeway was constructed from Syracuse to the north end of the island. In 1969, what is commonly known as the north 2,000 acres (of the 28,000 acre island), was purchased by Utah State Parks and Recreation. The remaining 26,000 acres, with the exclusion of two small areas owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), were purchased in 1981. By the early 1980s, the roads on the north 2,000 were paved; the first marina had been constructed; the day use and campground facilities were built in Bridger Bay and White Rock Bay; and an OHV "playground" was in use on the beaches of White Rock Bay. However, public access was limited to the northern tip of Antelope Island, while the island's remaining 26,000 acres was held in private ownership and off limits to park visitors. The northern causeway was the main access route to Antelope Island. In 1983 all development and public recreation on Antelope Island ceased when the causeway was washed out by the floodwaters of the Great Salt Lake. The island remained closed for 10 years with the only access being boat or barge.

In 1991, plans to rebuild the causeway were drafted and construction on this improved causeway began in 1992. Antelope Island State Park formally opened its doors to the public in July 1993. After 10 years without a causeway for access, the park was in need of major renovation.

In early 1993 the park's infrastructure, water, sewer, and electrical were repaired and improved. In the subsequent years Antelope Island facilities were either renovated or developed to the current levels.

Impacts from Increased Visitation

Non-motorized trail use has emerged as one of Antelope Island's most popular recreational activities. 38% of visitors have used the trails on Antelope Island, listing hiking as their primary

trail activity (Antelope Island State Park Visitor Survey Report, 2000). Antelope Island provides approximately 35 miles of trails offering visitors a wide array of recreational opportunities and experiences. Not only do the trails provide a variety of terrain with outstanding scenic views, users have the opportunity to encounter native and migratory wildlife, geological formations or historic sites. These opportunities in such close proximity to a major metropolitan area are rare indeed. The trail opportunities on Antelope Island are unique and open to the public year round.

Increasing numbers of hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrian users are taking advantage of this expansive and unique trail system. However, with the increasing popularity of Antelope's trail system, new problems have surfaced. Park managers note increases in depreciative behavior among trail users. For example, conflict between competing user groups is becoming more frequent. Visitors often express concerns about crowding on trails because of the increased use. Increasing numbers of users are not staying on designated trails and sometimes engage in the illegal collection of cultural artifacts or natural resources.

In addition to these behavioral concerns, increased use may be disturbing the park's natural resource base. Park managers note that increased human presence on trails cause wildlife to move away from adjacent critical habitat areas. It has also led to impacts on the quality of the island's limited water sources - a problem that is particularly acute with off-trail use.

Antelope Island trails require a high degree of maintenance to prevent soil erosion, promote safety in trail operations and ensure proper use. Maintenance requirements are proportionate with increases in trail use. However, funding and staff remain at a constant, minimal level resulting in an increasing maintenance burden upon park staff. New and existing trails need to take these points into consideration.

Current Trail Management Policies

Current trail management practices center on information, education and staff involvement. As visitors enter the park they receive informational brochures describing the park's trail system and its natural and cultural attributes. At each trailhead, signs are posted to orient a visitor with basic information such as trail length, direction and closures. Trailhead signs also provide interpretive information about relevant historical topics and natural/physical features. Most importantly, these signs inform users about safety, trail/park rules as well as explain why visitors need to protect park resources. Park managers note that properly informed trail users will typically comply with established rules and regulations.

A human presence is maintained on Antelope Island trails by park rangers, a volunteer trail patrol (about 40 members) and other members of the law enforcement community. Trail patrollers are trained in CPR, basic first aid, and are taught basic conservation principles. These volunteers attend a four-hour orientation about park rules, ethics, park history, and island wildlife.

As demands for trail use continue to increase, future management guidelines must thoroughly address impacts. The appropriateness of expanding the park's trail system is an issue that is explored by this plan. Planning for such expansion includes a thorough evaluation of the impacts that new trails may have on critical resources. Careful consideration must also be given to trail design and alignment as new trails are developed.

This plan is not the first examination of Antelope Island's trails. Public input and previous research and planning efforts provide guidance for this Access Management Plan (AMP). The Key documents are the 1994 RMP, the 1997 Interpretive and Site Plan for Fielding Garr Ranch, the 1997 Backcountry Trail Management Plan, the 1999 Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Study (VERP) and the 2000 Visitor Survey.

Public Input and Survey Research

The Utah Division of Parks and Recreation and University of Utah volunteers conducted the 2000 Visitor Survey on Antelope Island on April 29, 2000. The purpose of this study was to explore visitor opinions regarding the proposal before the State Parks Board to introduce a limited public mule deer hunt on the Island.

Participants were asked questions about the use, management and development of Antelope Island trails. Results are summarized as follows:

- 74% had used a trail on Antelope Island
- Visitors appear to be very concerned about the availability of information about park trails, e.g., maps and appropriate use on trails
- Three-quarters of those responding indicated that the ability to view wildlife from Island trails is very important
- In general, respondents were concerned about overuse of Antelope Island trails: negative impacts on wildlife and vegetation; trail damage from excessive use; overcrowding, etc.
- A majority of survey respondents (50%) stated that this was their first visit to the Island.
- Approximately 20 percent visit once a year, and 18 percent frequent the Island every other year or less.
- Less than 10 percent of respondents visit the island twice per year.
- A majority of survey respondents (81.7%) stated that they planned on staying on the Island for 1 day or less.

Visitors were asked the following questions in regard to their trip(s) to Antelope Island:

Question: What Recreational Activities Do You Engage In During A Typical Visit?

Response: The top recreation activities among survey respondents include sightseeing (77.3%), wildlife viewing (59.1%), hiking (50%) and biking (40.9%). Other popular activities included picnicking, camping, and visiting historical sites.

Question: What Is Your Primary Recreational Activity On The Island?

Response: Visitors to the Island engaged primarily in sightseeing (26.3%). Other popular activities were swimming, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, and camping.

Question: What City/Town Are You From?

Response: A majority of survey respondents were from Salt Lake City, Utah (31.6%). Others were from Layton, Sandy, Logan, and Ogden, and from other areas not located along the Wasatch Front.

Question: What State Are You From?

Response: A vast majority of survey respondents were from Utah (73.7%). Other states represented were Montana, Pennsylvania, and New Mexico

Question: What Is Your Age?

Response: A majority of survey respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25. Ages ranged from 18 to 54. The mean age was 45.6 years.

Participants in the 2000 Visitor Survey indicated that the public should have increased access to the Island (AISPVS, p14, Appendix D). When asked their greatest concerns about trails and trail use on Antelope Island, participants responded that more trails are needed on the south end. Some participants stated that access to the Island should continue to be on-trail only with no off-trail use allowed while others stated that they would like to see off-trail access adopted on the Island (AISPVS, p11). Participants also voiced their desire for multi-use trails (AISPVS Appendix A, p29).

Referring to the public's interest in these areas, survey research found that a visitor's ability to access eastside areas is important. Visitors were asked if they had ever visited any of the key eastside sites. If so, they were asked to identify the types of activities in which they participated. Respondents were also asked to describe their level of awareness with various policies and programs concerning resource protection and interpretive/educational information. Results are summarized as follows:

Respondent visitation rates for the following sites:

- 58.1 percent had visited the **Fielding Garr Ranch**
- 48.0 percent had visited the **Mountain View Trail**
- 36.0 percent had visited the **Frary Peak Trail**
- 45.3 percent had visited the **Frary Peak Trailhead/Overlook**
- More than two-thirds of the respondents indicated sightseeing and wildlife viewing as their preferred eastside activity.
- 76 percent of the respondents listed at least some awareness with eastside resource protection restrictions
- 65.7 percent indicated at least some awareness of the interpretive signs on auto pullouts along the Garr Ranch Road

- 67.5 percent indicated at least some awareness of the interpretive/educational information provided at the Garr Ranch
- 60 percent indicated at least some awareness of the interpretive/educational information provided along the Mountain View Trail
- 49.3 percent indicated some knowledge of the hours of operation or the Garr Ranch Road

Management of Antelope Island's East Side

There is concern among park managers about preserving the area's natural and cultural values in light of increased visitation. Several problems have recently surfaced:

- There is concern with public access to natural and cultural sites that have not been designated nor secured for public use. In particular, illegal collection of historical or natural artifacts.
- The level of visitor safety, particularly with bicyclists on the main road and visitor interaction with bison.

Another concern is the potential impacts from unmonitored use at Fielding Garr Ranch. The ranch attracts large numbers of visitors - approximately one thousand on weekends. Concerns specific to the Ranch include:

- Determining the number of daily visitors that the site can handle without impacting the resources.
- Determining what type of additional educational/interpretive opportunities are appropriate.

Antelope Island's east side was recently opened for public use. The east side contains many of the scenic, natural and recreational features that draw visitors to the park. However, it also contains a wealth of sites relating to human history. One of the east side's most prominent features is the Fielding Garr Ranch. The ranch and adjacent areas contain many significant historic/prehistoric resources that provide visitors with a broad perspective of human history.

Evidence of human life is clearly apparent on the Island's east side - from lithic (related to or composed of stone: "lithic sandstone") scatters to hearth remnants, charred and carved animal bones, grinding tools, home foundations, china fragments, whiskey bottles and organ reeds - many human stories are represented. These are found both in the form of scattered, unstructured sites and intact residences. Ongoing investigations reveal additional sites once inhabited by Fremont and late prehistoric peoples. Remnants from the east side link visitors with a span of cultural history dating back approximately 6,000 years.

The value of each cultural site on Antelope Island's east side is directly proportional to its authenticity. Preserved sites allow great insight into what life was really like for the people who lived there. Therefore, interpretive plans and development guidelines - instituted through a recent planning process - recommend preserving the sites authentic flavor.¹ These guidelines provide

¹ State of Utah, Antelope Island Fielding Garr Ranch, Interpretive and Site Plan: Utah Division of Parks and Recreation, Oct. 1997

direction in helping staff balance site preservation and interpretation with visitor service. They also recommend that development be spare and consistent with each site's remote, rural, agricultural origins. This is especially important at the Garr Ranch.

With expanded access, managers are challenged with the problem of preserving sensitive areas - historic sites, natural features and adjacent habitat - while providing visitors with a chance to learn about and experience those essential components of a specific site. Managers are also concerned about carrying capacity, i.e., how many visitors does it take to physically impact or diminish the overall experience? What types of interpretive techniques will capture the public's attention and desire to learn about the site's history? How can visitors be provided access without compromising the site's protection? Should all sites be accessible?

Clearly, park managers are enthused about the increased public interest in Antelope Island's east side. At the same time, they are also concerned about how to effectively balance increasing visitor demands with the need to protect and preserve the area's vast cultural and natural resources.

Backcountry Trail Management Plan

A master plan for trail use - a recommendation put forth in the Antelope Island RMP - was issued in 1997 to help identify potential trails on the island.² It recommends involving trail users or others with an interest in preserving natural areas to collaboratively address trail-related issues. It also identifies the interrelationship between trail use and critical resources, particularly those related to wildlife impacts: winter range, birth and rearing areas, movement corridors and required cover and shade.

The purpose of the trail plan was to develop a means for visitors to utilize the southern end of the island while minimizing impacts to resources, particularly wildlife resources. In order to accomplish these goals the resources were evaluated and a map of environmental constraints was developed. Considerations ranged from issues such as sensitive habitats to potential safety problems that recreationists might encounter. A map of opportunities was then developed to determine the most desirable location for trails. The final trail plan was developed based on maximizing opportunities while minimizing impacts. The Access Management Planning Team adopted many of the conceptual recommendations issued in this plan. Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) study

The Division of Parks and Recreation entered into a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (IORT) at Utah State University to conduct research that would help identify a balance point between recreation needs and resource protection at Antelope Island. The VERP study was conducted May-October 1999. The survey was intended to measure visitors' satisfactions, preferences, and concerns regarding their experiences at Antelope Island and management actions taken at the park. Particular attention was paid to experiences in

² SWCA Environmental Consultants Inc., Antelope Island SP Back Country Trail Management Plan: Salt Lake City, Utah, May 1997

the backcountry areas of the park (the 80% of Antelope Island located south of the buffalo fence).

From 1992 until 1998, visitors were mainly confined to the northern 20% of the island that contains the park's developed facilities. The only exception was a network of trails leading to a portion of the island's west shore directly south of the "buffalo fence" that bisects the island from southeast to northwest, and periodic special openings of a gravel road leading to Fielding Garr Ranch of the island's southeast shore. In spring 1999, however, the east shore road was paved and new roadside interpretive sites were added. A lakeside hiker/bicycle/horseback trail was completed linking the north end with the ranch, and a separate hiker-only trail was opened that leads to the top of Frary Peak, the highest point on the island.

Results for this study are summarized as follows:

- The more developed north end was four times more likely to be visited than any backcountry location with Buffalo Point being the most frequently visited north end location
- The White Rock Bay backcountry trails were the most frequently visited location south of the buffalo fence.
- The heaviest use occurred during holidays and weekends.
- 40% of visitors came from outside of Utah, including about 8% who live outside the United States.
- The most popular activities for both areas were wildlife viewing, picnicking, hiking and bird watching.
- Trail users were primarily hikers, bicyclists or horseback riders with hikers being the most common.
- Satisfaction levels were found to be high for both areas of the park.

Visitors were asked how they felt about current management practices. A majority of respondents found that current practices were about right. Although, north end users did feel there were too few facilities and trail users felt the number of trails was inadequate.

Trail users voiced the desire to have greater opportunities to enjoy backcountry hiking, bicycling and horseback riding in the park. One way to increase trail opportunities would be through the development of short spur trails, especially where they might provide better access to viewpoints or resting places. For example, the Frary Peak trail passes on the level for several hundred yards along the east side of the ridge north of the peak before rising to a point where hikers can see across to the west side of the Great Salt Lake.

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Issues and Recommendations

The recommendations developed by the planning team are at the core of this plan. The recommendations presented in this section will achieve the team's goals as outlined in the mission and vision statements to:

- Improve public access on the Island
- Minimize potential development actions to preserve the island's solitude, openness and ruggedness
- Clearly define general access in terms of hours of (park) operation
- Promote better relations with the local community
- Boost visitation and revenue

A number of issues covering areas from: interpretation, education and information; recreation access opportunities; reducing impacts from additional recreation access; promotion, coordination and outreach; staffing/funding/operations; and infrastructure development, were addressed in the plan. Each of these issues was identified by various sources including input from planning team members and subject matter experts.

Team members identified 23 major issues that were aggregated into eight distinct categories. These categories were transposed into the evaluative matrix described above (see Appendix B to view the complete matrix) to ensure that recommendations conform to the team's mission. A specific description or statement summarizing each issues or problem was constructed to clearly identify and articulate the problem at hand.

A number of constraints (e.g., available funding, sufficiency of staff, facility location and design, and state regulations, etc.) were identified as some of the limiting factors that may hinder implementation of a specific team recommendation. From these issues, and with the constraints in mind, the planning team developed and adopted specific recommendations. Team members made a concerted effort to ensure that recommendations are consistent with the team's mission and vision statements.

The eight issue areas forming the basis of the team's recommendations include:

1. General park access
2. Closures on trail systems
3. Access along southern tip road
4. Provision of open access areas
5. New trail opportunities
6. Camping
7. Archeological/historic site access
8. Proposed facilities development

Team members made their recommendations on the basis of a use area map adopted by the team. The map relies heavily on recreation spatial categories with an emphasis on wildlife habitat. Team member Kirk Nichols, the map's author, based the areas on existing categories and then combined these areas with an island-wide wildlife habitat map provided by Steve Bates and Greg Mortenson, the park's wildlife managers.

The resulting map divides the island into five recreation areas: open recreation (OR), recreation corridors in wildlife habitat (RCW), recreation shore in wildlife habitat (RSW), restricted recreation – entry by permit (RRW), and limited entry - critical wildlife habitat (LE). There are two important points associated with this zoning concept:

- All areas, with the exception of open recreation, will require users to complete a short training session and obtain a permit from the Visitor Center prior to access. Users are required to remain on designated trails.
- Any and all trails that pass through critical wildlife habitat will be closed during birthing seasons.

Open recreation (OR) areas do not require a permit for access. The open recreation areas include the northern 2,000 acres and the Fielding Garr Ranch. The proposed marsh/pickleweed boardwalk (new trail 5) lies within the northern 2,000 acres and will be accessed off the road southwest of the Park office at the existing trailhead. Special events such as Buffalo Days are classified as open recreation even though they may not take place within the designated open recreation areas.

Recreation corridors in wildlife habitat (RCW) consist of open trails and road corridors. This area will encompass approximately one-third to one-half of the island directly south of the northern 2,000 acres and on the east side to Unicorn Point. The trail spurs (new trail 3), off the existing Mountain View Trail, to the Frary Gravesite and Mulberry Grove lie within this area. The proposed trailhead for the new trails (1a, 1c and 1d) at the gravel overflow parking area for the Fielding Garr Ranch is also located within this designation.

Recreation shore in wildlife habitat (RSW) is a 200-foot shoreline area for water-based access. The west shore begins at the boundary fence and runs southward to just north of the Picture Rock/Indian Bay area. The limited entry, critical wildlife habitat area in the southwest corner of the island near Westside Spring is not included in the recreation shore in wildlife habitat designated area. The east shore begins at the boundary fence and extends south/southwesterly to the Indian Bay area. Due to wildlife concerns either the entire eastside shore will be closed from April until September or specific landing points will be designated that minimize impact on wildlife.

Areas designated as restricted recreation, entry by permit (RRW) require registration and education, similar to that required by Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, to obtain a permit for access. These areas are located on the island's western areas near Redrock Canyon, Cambria Springs, and Buffalo Scaffold Canyon. They continue eastward to the Sentry and then south toward Unicorn Point, east of Westside Springs. The majority of the new trails (1a, 1c and 1d) lie within this designation.

Limited entry - critical wildlife habitat (LE) areas are located in the island's "Central Highlands" along Daddy Stump Ridge and also around the Westside Spring area on the southwest corner of the island. Trail access should not be allowed in these areas due to the negative impact that human presence can have on wildlife.

The spatial categories map was presented to the team for approval. Team members adopted this map as the conceptual foundation for the recommendations of this plan.

A discussion of specific team issues and recommendations under each issue area follows.

I. General Park Access

At the onset of the planning process, team members set a goal to develop an access management plan that will allow increased Island access while still preserving the values of solitude, openness and ruggedness. The team wanted to provide visitors more amenable and convenient access options. Put simply, to make it easier for the public to access the island.

Proposed general park access actions consistent with this goal include:

- Proposed hours for the main gate
- Consideration of “after hours” activities
- When visitors will be asked to leave the park
- Closure policies impacting the “Nine-Mile Gate” near Fielding Garr Ranch

The team’s general park access recommendations will work towards increases in park accessibility.

Issue Area: General Park Access

Key Issues:

- ❑ The hours for the main gate (opening and closing) need to be established.
- ❑ Consider “after hours” activities at the Visitor Center and Garr Ranch
- ❑ Determine the hours that the “Nine-Mile Gate” should be opened and closed

Issue: Main Gate Hours of Operation

Team members expressed concerns that the current hours of operation may not allow visitors adequate time to enjoy the park.

Currently the main gate opens at 7:00am and closes at 6:00pm in January and February; 7:00pm in March; 9:00pm in April; 10:00pm in May, June, July, and August; 9:00pm in September; 7:00pm in October; and 6:00pm in November and December.

Recommendation

The team adopted the subcommittee’s recommendation that the hours of operation should follow or conform more closely to hours specified in park policy which are defined by UDPR Administrative Guidelines, Opening and Closing of Parks, pp.1 -2, 11/1/87.³

³ Minimum operating schedules for park areas are as follows: Park areas shall be open daily to the visiting public for boating, fishing, picnicking and sightseeing from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. April 1 through September 30, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. October 1 through March 31, except when approved for seasonal closure.

The specific recommendation is that the main gate hours will be:

Open at 6:00am

Close at 10:00pm, April through September

8:00pm, October and March

7:00pm, November and February

6:00pm, December and January

There was some concern that the purposed schedule may be difficult for visitors to remember. As a result, the team recommended a reevaluation of this proposal after a six-month trial period. It was suggested that two additional proposals be combined with this one. They were:

- *Proposal*
Once visitors enter the gate for day use, they will not be asked to leave the park until 10:00pm
- *Recommendation*
State Park guidelines should be followed and that visitors should leave the park when the gate closes
- *Proposal*
Park staff should work with late-arriving campers with reservations to ensure that campers can access their campsite (a current problem in the late fall and winter months when gate is closed early); team members noted that Friday nights seem to be the problem
- *Recommendation*
Management should assess whether staff should stay later to accommodate late arrivals

Issue: “After Hours” Activities at the Visitor Center and Ranch

Several user groups and special interest groups have voiced interest in holding events after regular park operating hours. The proposal was to consider “after hours” activities at the Visitor Center and Ranch.

Recommendation

The team adopted the following recommendations:

Park management must review and approve all “after hours” activities and events. Staff must host the activities. Consider approved after-hours events for the entire Park, not just at the Visitor Center or Ranch. Management needs to establish guidelines for approved activities held at the Ranch and Visitor Center.

Issue: Closure of the Nine-Mile Gate

The nine-mile gate (see Plate 1) is located on the east side of the island south of the Frary Gravesite. Presently, one of the main functions of the nine-mile gate is to control access to the Garr Ranch. There were several purposed actions in regards to the nine-mile gate. Team members considered the following options:

- Option 1: Follow current policy of closing this gate at the same closing times for the Ranch (9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. May 16 through Sept. 15, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sept. 16 through May 15).
- Option 2: Leave gate open continuously.

- Option 3: Leave gate open for longer periods on specified days of the week. Example, on Saturday and Sunday, leave gate open until 10:00 p.m. Staff must be at the Ranch to protect ranch area and sensitive cultural resources and provide assistance for safety and patrol purposes.

Recommendation

The team commented that additional funding/staff would be required if the gate was open additional hours; They proposed that the gate simply be open when staff are at the ranch as an alternative to the listed options (Option 1 with the caveat that if a staff member arrives before regular opening hours, then the staff member will go ahead and open the gate). Team members noted that staff includes certified volunteers.

II. Closures On Trail Systems

Sections of the existing trail system on Antelope Island are subject to seasonal closures. These closures correspond to the calving, lambing and fawning seasons of the varied wildlife that populate the island. Trail closures also need to be considered when safety and resource damage concerns arise.

Issue Area: Closures on Trail Systems

Key Issues:

- ❑ Annual seasonal closures due to pronghorn fawning and bighorn lambing
- ❑ Define needed closures for new, approved trails
- ❑ Determine appropriate conditions for trail closures

Issue: Annual Seasonal Closures Due To Pronghorn Fawning and Bighorn Lambing

Presently there are annual seasonal closures on the Mountain View Trail due to pronghorn fawning from the north trailhead to the Frary Peak trailhead for approximately one month between May 15 and June 16 (actual dates may vary). The Frary Peak Trail is also closed from April 20 to the Memorial Day weekend (approximately) for bighorn lambing. This closure also helps mitigate various law enforcement problems.

Recommendation

Team members recommended that the annual seasonal closures be maintained. Management stated

that these actions would represent “business as usual”. It was suggested that better signage and advertising of these closures are needed to raise park visitors’ awareness.

Issue: Determine Appropriate Conditions For Trail Closures

Several issues need to be considered in the development of a new trail. The subject matter experts note that wildlife and resource impacts shall be examined prior to the construction of any new trails. Again, adequate signage and relevant information are necessary components of any trail. They promote visitor safety, resource protection, and good user etiquette. Users assume risk when they make the decision to travel on any trail in the State Park system. Even so, management bears the brunt of complaints if anything happens to a visitor on the trail. Conditions that pose a risk or danger to visitors need to be identified. When such conditions exist, trails should be closed to general use. Conditions that increase the probability of resource damage also warrant trail closures.

Recommendation

The team adopted the following recommendations:

- Once new trails are identified and approved for access, trail closures should be implemented as appropriate. The team stated that if a trail is identified and approved for access, it is only reasonable to define when closures would be needed to protect resources.
- The park, at their discretion, should close trails during muddy conditions, flood periods or where use may result in damage or safety hazards. If possible, staff should recommend other alternative trails for use during such closures.
- It was also recommended that park management consult with state risk management and suggested that guidelines be developed for trail closure when the probability of lightning is high. Signage, commensurate with guidelines, should be considered.
- Park staff should consider periodic trail closures when erosion is a problem or when there is a need for trail reconstruction. When the closure-for-reconstruction need is long term, provide alternative routes on existing trails, where possible.

III. Access Along the Southern Tip Road

Access along the southern side of the island is limited for the general visitor. The public has expressed interest and desire in increased ‘open’ access on the southern section of the island. Presently the only public access allowed is by limited/guided tours.

Issue Area: Access Along the Southern Tip Road

Key Issues:

- Stabilize Road Surface
- Southern Tip Road Access

Issue: Stabilize Existing Road Surface Near McIntyre Springs

The proposal presented to the team was to resolve the problematic mud-“bog” area on the road to Southern Tip/Unicorn Point near McIntyre Springs. Currently, water runoff/seepage from the nearby springs makes the road virtually impassible and may also serve to accelerate the spread and transportation of noxious weeds via mud sticking to vehicles or other transport. Management suggests this concern be resolved irrespective of types of access allowed on road. Actions should ensure that the quality of the spring is preserved. Some members of the team voiced concern that cleaning up this area might result in increased traffic and an increased chance that the historic sites south of this area could be impacted.

Recommendation

Team members recommended that the division improve the alignment by installation of culverts, channels or other measures to ensure stability of the existing roadway. Such actions must not negatively impact adjacent springs.

Issue: Southern Tip Road Access

The team was presented with several options dealing with access along the southern tip road. The options were:

- Maintain current closed access status of road (i.e., no public access except limited/guided tours).
- Provide guided access on the existing road (currently, the public may participate in limited guided tours using concessionaire-provided horses only). Under this option, the public may participate in guided hiking, biking or horseback riding (and may utilize their own horses).
- Allow open access of the road for hiking, biking and horseback riding when the Fielding Garr Ranch is open and staffed. Access under this option should be monitored.

Recommendation

Team members suggested that the road be opened for hiking, biking and horseback riding when the Fielding Garr Ranch is open and staffed. The team suggested a permit-based system of access. It was also recommended that van tours continue to be allowed.

After careful review of the proposed options, the team suggested the trailhead be located at the overflow gravel parking area for the Fielding Garr Ranch (See Plate 1). The parking area is a natural trailhead for access of westside trails as existing trails/corridors begin from this point. This recommendation also facilitates access to new trail opportunities adopted by the team (see New Trail Opportunities, pp 28-30).

IV. Provision of Open Access Areas

The public expressed interest in increased open access on the island. Open access is defined as on or off-trail use without a permit. Currently the north 2,000 acres are the only area on the island designated as open access.

Issue Area: Provision of Open Access Areas

Key Issue:

- ❑ Maintain current policies
- ❑ Special events on the southern 26,000 acres

Issue: Open Access Areas

Currently, the only area where open access is allowed is in the north 2,000 acres of the park. The southern portion of the island is opened to the public during Buffalo Days (one-day event) and the Buffalo Round Up (four-day event).

Recommendation

It was proposed that the park maintain current policies providing open access for the north 2,000 acres and southern portion on Buffalo Days (one-day event) and the Buffalo Round Up (four-days). It was also recommended that park staff allow open access events on the southern 26,000 acres. These events will occur by special permit with requisite resource clearances conducted prior to the approval of open access in each designated area. It was also recommended that the division consider strategies to enhance staff to more effectively manage these events.

V. New Trail Opportunities

Increased access necessitates the development of new trails. These trails would be intended primarily for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians. Designated trails are necessary to prevent unauthorized access and subsequent damage to sensitive resources.

Issue Area: New Trail Opportunities

Key Issues:

- ❑ Develop a southern/backcountry trail system
- ❑ Develop a "History Trail"
- ❑ Develop trail spurs from the Mountain View Trail to the Frary Grave and Mulberry Grove sites
- ❑ Develop a marsh/pickleweed boardwalk/interpretive walk
- ❑ Develop a trail to Dooley Knob

Issue: Development Of A Southern/Backcountry Trail System

Team members determined that access, via designated trails, should be provided on the southern portion of the island. The major trailhead would be located at the overflow gravel parking area for the Fielding Garr Ranch. This location's effects on the Fielding Garr Ranch will be monitored for the period of one year, after which the feasibility of moving the trailhead further south will be considered. The system would mostly utilize existing service roads.

Team members were presented with several options for this proposed trail system (Please refer to Plate 1 for location-reference information). The options are listed by number, which correspond to the numbers on the trails map. These trails provide access to areas previously not available to the public, views of the west side of the island and wildlife, and more challenging hiking, bicycling and equestrian experiences.

- 1a. Trail segment from ranch to the Sentry on existing dirt road from ranch. Appropriate actions should be taken to protect the Mushroom Springs site
- 1c. Trail segment from ranch to the point where the existing road diverges below Sentry that leads toward Buffalo Scaffold Canyon and forks toward the west side shore
- 1d. Trail segment from ranch to the point where the existing road diverges below Sentry that leads to Buffalo Scaffold Canyon and forks northward passing by Buffalo Scaffold Canyon, Dry Canyon, Red Rocks Canyon, Mormon Rocks and Split Rock Bay and connects to the existing Split Rock trail system

Recommendation

- 1a. The team recommended that this trail segment would be appropriate for development. No access should be provided to the Mushroom Springs site unless specified in an interpretive plan for the site. Mitigation efforts to protect the site should be instituted.
- 1c. The team recommended that this segment should be monitored closely for erosion. There were safety concerns for users. As a result, users will be educated about the safety concerns specific to this area during the permitting process. Team members stated that this is a very steep/difficult section.
- 1d. The team recommended that this segment should be adopted in principle. Team members stated that there is a need for further, more in-depth study before the segment is opened to the general public.

Issue: Trail Spurs to the Frary and Mulberry Grove Sites

A "History Trail" is a trail system or network that would connect several sites of historical and/or cultural significance. Each of the historic sites along this trail would be interpreted as appropriate. As an alternative to the "History Trail," the suggestion was to develop trail spurs from the existing Mountain View trail to the Frary Gravesite and the Mulberry Grove site (Please see Plate 1, Proposed Trail 3). It was stated that this alternative would reduce impacts on wildlife and would also minimize erosion potential as compared with the proposed history trail.

Recommendation

The team recommended adopting these trail spurs contingent on a more in-depth study on soil impacts including stabilization of sites and trails. Access to sensitive sites will be allowed only after

the interpretative plan is completed and corresponding actions (archeological survey, etc.) are taken to secure sensitive resources.

Issue: Marsh/Pickleweed Boardwalk/Interpretive Walk

The team proposed development of a marsh/pickleweed boardwalk/interpretive walk (for foot traffic only) near White Rock Bay group campsites.

Recommendation

The team recommended that this proposal be adopted (Please see Plate 1, Proposed Trail 5).

Issue: Trail to Dooley Knob

The team proposed development of a trail to Dooley Knob with a trailhead at the existing Frary Peak Trailhead. The trail would be for hiking only.

Recommendation

The team recommended that this proposal be adopted (Please see Plate 1, Proposed Trail 6).

VI. Camping

The team recommended that additional camping opportunities are needed in areas that do not presently have campsites. Team members developed recommendations for backcountry, equestrian, and boat camping as well as, more developed camping opportunities as access is expanded. Feasibility studies should be completed for any proposed campsites.

Issue Area: Camping

Key Issues:

- Walk-in tent site/camping area below the Visitor Center
- Expand Bridger Bay Campground
- Provide overnight horse corralling
- Provide for boat camping in the marina
- Provide overnight parking for boat campers
- Backcountry/primitive campsites
- Special event camping near the Garr Ranch

Issue: Developed Camping Opportunities

The team proposed development of a walk-in tent site/camping area on the north end of the beach below the Visitor Center. The team also proposed expansion of the existing Bridger Bay campground, with the possible development of a second loop for this highly utilized area.

Recommendation

The team's recommendation is to examine the feasibility of the site on north end of the beach below the Visitor Center versus other sites. By examining a number of sites the location that best serves the needs of the public and management will be chosen. The team also recommended that the Bridger Bay Campground be expanded.

Issue: Facilitation of Equestrian Camper Needs

Presently overnight equestrian campers do not have access to corrals for their own horses. Equestrian activities are quite popular on the island and overnight access to corrals would serve the needs of these users. The proposal is to provide overnight horse corralling for campers staying in established campsites. Overnight campers use of the buffalo corral, located near the Fielding Garr Ranch (Please see Plate 1), should be examined.

Recommendation

The team recommended that corrals be provided for equestrian campers.

Issue: Boat Camping and Overnight Parking for Boat Campers

Team members proposed the provision of boat camping in the marina. This would allow boaters to stay overnight on their boats. Currently boaters must either limit their activities to day-use or get a campsite if they choose to stay overnight. Overnight boaters will need parking. These overnight boat campers' vehicles will need to be differentiated from day-use visitors' vehicles.

Recommendation

The team recommended that boat camping in the marina be allowed. Team members, for safety and security reasons, recommended a permit system/process for overnight boater parking. Boat campers can purchase an overnight parking permit, to be displayed in their vehicle, at the marina.

Issue: Provide Backcountry/Primitive Campsites

Backcountry is defined as the southern 26,000 acres of the island for the purpose of this document. Primitive refers to undeveloped or limited service facilities. A primitive campsite may have access to a composting toilet, picnic shelter and tent pad. These campsites will not have water or electricity hookups, flushing toilet or shower facilities. The team recommended that these sites should be offered by permit due to their location in the southern 26,000 acres of the island. These sites should be tied to the proposed westside trail system and should also provide for "boat-in" access. Team

members stated that open fires should not be allowed, and that encroachment of wildlife near area springs should be minimized.

The proposed locations for these campsites are:

- Split Rock Bay
- Lakeside near Red Rocks Canyon
- Lakeside near Cambria Point
- Buffalo Scaffold Canyon near the “Old Cowboy Campsite”/Cedar Springs area

Recommendation

The team recommended primitive campsites on the north trail system, located in the northern open recreation area and lakeside, located in the western recreation shore in wildlife habitat area (See Plate 1). Team members will visit each of the proposed locations to determine their feasibility as campsites.

Issue: Special Event Camping Near the Garr Ranch

The proposal is to provide special event camping near the Garr Ranch, on the island’s south end or near the Frary Peak trailhead parking area. Examples of special events that encourage overnight camping include equestrian endurance rides and concession-guided camping among others.

Recommendation

The team recommended keeping special event camping ‘as is’, meaning that special events are considered on an event-by-event basis. Park management will be responsible for deciding which special events are held and if camping will be allowed in conjunction with the events. Team members specifically recommended continuing the annual Buffalo Round Up special event.

VII. Archeological/Historic Site Access

There are certain requirements that must be considered for archeological and historic sites. Kevin Jones, State Archeologist provided a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that defines agency responsibilities pursuant to Utah Code (9-8-404). The MOA requires State Parks to consult with State History to ensure that potential planning or development actions meet the minimum standards for complying with state cultural resource protection laws. All sites with archeological resources - Garr Ranch, Frary Homestead, Headbanger Cave, Mushroom Springs, and others - need to be evaluated if access is to be allowed in their proximity. The team stated that there is a need to enhance education, interpretation and information programs to provide user groups with sufficient education about the need to preserve island resources for future users. Team members recommended that this be accomplished by forming an Antelope Island Comprehensive Interpretive Team to develop a comprehensive interpretive plan for the island as per the recommendations specified in the Antelope Island RMP. This team should accomplish the following goals:

- Assess existing programs and resources, coordinate programs and resources to work and complement each other; consolidate existing/previous interpretive planning efforts

- Identify user groups, and then determine information, education and interpretation needs for each group.
- Establish goals, objectives and methods for interpretive needs (general and education), specifically as they relate to access needs; focus on hands-on experiences.
- Ensure that sufficient interpretive planning is developed before access is provided at sites with sensitive resources. Adequate education should be required for special use (special events, special use) as defined by park management
- Identify educational and interpretive resources that the island provides
- The interpretive plan should make recommendations for orientation and training of park staff
- Identify potential revenue sources to carry out goals
- Measurable outcomes of the interpretive plan will include the following: Products (e.g., brochures, signage), field testing of plan via interviews/questionnaires for users and management to assess effectiveness; apply this feedback to improve process

Issue Area: Archeological/Historic Site Access

Key Issues:

- Allow access to the Frary Grave Site
- Allow access to the Mushroom Springs Site
- Allow access to the Mulberry Grove area
- Allow access to the Stone Corral Site
- Allow access to Unicorn Point
- Allow access to Mormon Rocks

Issue: Access to Archeological/Historic Sites

The team proposed completion of site protection efforts (archeological surveys), via the comprehensive interpretive plan, prior to allowing access to any and all proposed sites, including the following:

- Frary Grave site
- Mushroom Springs site
- Mulberry Grove Area
- Stone Corral site
- Unicorn Point
- Mormon Rocks

Recommendation

The team recommended that once site protection efforts are complete to provide access to these sites. Team members had several site-specific recommendations:

- The team recommended restricted access in the form of guided tours for the Mushroom Springs site. This is due to park management’s concerns that monitoring the area could pose a significant impact on park staff, and also that this is a critical watering and breeding area for bison.

- Team members noted that the Mulberry Grove area is periodically a source of shade for wildlife. The team recommended that visitors be routed away from Garden Creek.
- The team recommended that wayside exhibits should be included at the Stone Corral site.

VIII. Proposed Facilities Development

To better accommodate our visitors new facilities need to be constructed and existing facilities should be improved/updated. Budget/funding concerns are paramount in the issue area.

Issue Area: Proposed Facilities Development

Key Issues:

- ❑ Expand the Visitor Center
- ❑ Improve information pullouts on Eastside Road
- ❑ Construct formal trailheads

Issue: Developments and Improvements

Team members noted issues in three areas – the Visitor Center, information pullouts, and trailheads.

- The Visitor Center doesn't have enough space to provide both a conference center and a theater for video presentations. Park management voiced concerns that there is high public demand for an on-island meeting center. The Visitor Center also suffers from an immediate shortage of storage space.
- Current information pullouts on the Eastside Road are dated and in need of renovations.
- The team proposed construction of trailheads along the Mountain View Trail. Team members noted that Park staff would need to determine if new/additional interpretive information is necessary.

Recommendation

- The team recommended that the Visitor Center be expanded to include more conference rooms, meeting space and storage space.
- Team members recommended that the current information pullouts on the Eastside Road be improved to provide better visual/interpretive information. The team felt that this would help expand visitor knowledge of the island.
- The team recommended construction of formal trailheads at locations where the Mountain View Trail intersects the Eastside Road. An example is a trailhead near Camera Flats (Please see Plate 1).

Conclusion

This plan is a blueprint to help implement the access planning team's recommendations. As such, it outlines the initial steps to be taken by park management in concert with park visitors, local communities and other interested users to promote better access opportunities on Antelope Island. Plan recommendations will also help boost visitation and revenue, develop new and improved facilities and storage, and provide better protection of the natural resources of Antelope Island.

The recommendations contained in this plan conform to the team's mission of developing a comprehensive access management plan that defines visitor opportunities, emphasizes the protection of resources, and preserves the values of solitude, openness and ruggedness. The two most important tools in the development of recommendations are the evaluative criteria created from the elements of the vision statement and the zoning concept map adopted by the team.

The plan's recommendations effectively address the current needs for increased access on the southern 26,000 acres of the island, facility enhancement, cultural resource protection, and park operations. The plan's success is dependent upon the continued support of stakeholders. This support will be essential for the effective implementation of plan recommendations. Stakeholder support will ensure continuity in the open and collaborative process upon which this plan was developed.

It is also essential that the document be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its viability, relevance and usefulness. This document has sufficient flexibility to be amended in response to changing resource conditions, visitor needs and expectations, community needs and agency priorities. Such amendments may occur under the guidance of the Division of Parks and Recreation. Any such modification will include input from park visitors, local citizens, community leaders, park management or other stakeholders with interests relevant to access issues in Antelope Island State Park.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Subject Matter Experts

Appendix B: Evaluative Matrix

Appendix C: Proposal Matrix

Appendix D: Public Input

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Appendix A: Subject Matter Experts

Subject Matter Expert	Subject Area	Category
Rick Mayfield, Friends of Antelope Island Jerry Adair, Former Legislator Bruce Kartchner, Equestrian Representative Steve Hadden, Antelope Island SP Trail Patrol	Visitor Experience	Likelihood that proposal will impinge on island solitude, openness and ruggedness
Rick Mayfield/Jerry Adair/ Bruce Kartchner/Steve Hadden	Visitor Experience	Likelihood that the proposal already duplicates other existing opportunities in the park (is not unique)
Rick Mayfield/Jerry Adair/ Bruce Kartchner/Steve Hadden	Visitor Experience	Likelihood that the proposal will increase user conflicts
Jay Christianson, Northwest Region Manager Ron Taylor, Antelope Island SP Manager Steve Bates, AISP Wildlife Range Manager Jim Harland, Northeast Region Manager	Management	Level of impact on staff or management with implementation of proposal
Jay Christianson/Ron Taylor/ Steve Bates/Steve Hadden	Management	Likelihood that proposal will negatively impact visitor safety
Jay Christianson/Ron Taylor/Steve Bates/	Management	Degree of impact (inconsistency) with

Jim Harland		access-related objectives in previous planning efforts
Jay Christianson/Ron Taylor/Steve Bates	Management	Level of facilities development needed to carry out proposed action
Jay Christianson/Ron Taylor/Steve Bates/Jim Harland	Management	Level of impact development/construction associated with proposed action will have on nearby natural/cultural features
Jay Christianson/Ron Taylor/Jim Harland	Management	Budgetary impacts of proposed action
Jay Christianson/Ron Taylor/Steve Bates	Management	Likelihood that proposal will require seasonal closures or alter current hours of operation/use
Steve Bates	Resources	Impact of proposal on island wildlife
Steve Bates	Resources	Impact of proposal on island habitat
Kevin Jones, State Archeologist Bob Hanover, Manager Fremont Indian SP	Resources	Impact of proposal on cultural/historic resources
Kevin Jones/Bob Hanover	Resources	Impact of proposal on archeological resources
Steve Bates	Resources	Likelihood that the proposal will accelerate the spread of noxious weeds
Steve Bates Keith Crumpton, FFSL	Resources	Likelihood that the proposal will increase fire danger
Ron Taylor/Steve Bates	Resources	Likelihood that the proposal could occur on other portions of the island that are already open to such use
Tim Smith, Southeast Region Manager Karen Krieger, SP Heritage Coordinator	Interpretive	Level of associated visitor information needed to ensure protection of resources, safety and reduce management burden
Tim Smith/Karen Krieger	Interpretive	Potential for proposed action to present opportunities to increase user awareness of the need to protect island resources, promote a positive visitor experience
Jay Christianson Shelleice Stokes, Weber County Travel Wilf Sommerkorn, Davis County Ron Taylor	Economic	Increase level of potential concessionaire involvement with the proposal
Jay Christianson/Shelleice Stokes/ Wilf Sommerkorn/Ron Taylor	Economic	Probability that proposal will significantly benefit local economies
Jay Christianson/Shelleice Stokes/ Wilf Sommerkorn/Ron Taylor	Economic	Probability that the proposal will result in additional net revenues to the park
Jay Christianson/Shelleice Stokes/ Wilf Sommerkorn/Ron Taylor	Economic	Likelihood that partnerships, user groups and other stakeholders can play an effective role in implementing the proposed action

Appendix B: Evaluative Matrix

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Appendix C: Proposal Matrix

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Appendix D: Public Input

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Public Input: Comments and Responses

In April 2004, this plan was released to the public for review and comment. The public was notified of the plan and corresponding input period through a press release to the local newspapers. In addition to the standard press release, news stories were featured in the Standard-Examiner. The plan was made available to the public at large via Internet access. The following is a summary of comments received in response to the Draft Plan. Responses from private citizens account for the bulk of comments submitted. All issues raised by the public are summarized below along with the corresponding responses.

Comment:

Camping on the south end of the island could be set up with designated sites accessible by boat only. These sites would have tent pads and simple tables, but no fire or waste facilities. Also, separation of trail users would virtually eliminate trail conflicts, if not physically, then temporally (alternate weeks, for example).

Response:

Park resource managers will determine backcountry campsite location and construction with input from the users.

The southern trails will be designated for multiple uses: hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. It is park management's discretion as to whether a use/user-rotation schedule is desirable for the trails.

Comment:

Fee collection and access within the 200-foot recreational shore in wildlife habitat strip would be impossible for park staff to enforce. Also the 200-foot strip seems excessively wide. Also, shoreline access should be limited to corridors for campsite access rather than the majority of the island's shoreline.

Response:

Visitors will be required to complete backcountry use training and purchase a backcountry permit prior to accessing these areas.

Park resource managers will determine backcountry campsite location and construction with input from the users.

Comment:

Recommend that the trail for the Mulberry Grove site be moved away from Garden Creek.

Response:

Trail location and proximity to other resources will be considered prior to allowing public access.

Comment:

For the backcountry campsites, plan composting toilets far from springs, water sources and groundwater access points. Suggest that pads and picnic shelters be kept small and primitive so as not to unnecessarily disturb the range and scenic qualities of the island.

Response:

Park resource managers will determine backcountry campsite location and construction with input from the users.

Comment:

How large will the visitor center be after the proposed improvements? How will the additions tie into the original design intent to blend into the island and be of minimal visual impact? What type of conferences will be held at the expanded visitor center?

Response:

Facility/site plans have not been developed at this time for the proposed expansion of the visitor center. Any additions to the existing structure will follow the original design intent to blend into the island as much as possible. Park management will use their discretion to determine which conferences are held at the visitor center.

Comment:

Open the park at 5:30am during the summer months for working professionals who would like to get a workout in before the workday begins. Early morning access is also important during the very hot summer months when the only practical time to do a long bike ride is first thing in the day.

Response:

The recommendation, dependent on staffing, is that the hours of operation should follow or conform more closely to hours specified in park policy which are defined by UDPR Administrative Guidelines, Opening and Closing of Parks, pp.1 -2, 11/1/87.

The specific recommendation is that the main gate hours will be:

Open at 6:00am

Close at 10:00pm, April through September

8:00pm, October and March

7:00pm, November and February

6:00pm, December and January

Comment:

While I'm in full support of Scout troop activities, it would be preferable if a policy of group camping was enforced in the Bridger Bay campground that either 1) had the Scouts camping in the group areas designed for them at White Rock or 2) created a group section in Bridger Bay. Beyond tying up all of the campgrounds on Friday nights, the Scouts tax the campsites beyond their design.

Response:

Park management will review this issue and examine having the Scouts utilize the group camping site at White Rock.

The team recommended an expansion of the Bridger Bay campground. Park management will consider the feasibility of a possible group site at the Bridger Bay campground.

Comment:

Consider revamping the Buffalo Point deck area to include some shelter/shade. I realize that this probably straddles a fine line between the public and private usage, but the view from that deck is one of the nicest on the island and a shaded area is well needed. At a minimum, consider replacing the dark green picnic tables with white equipment as they wear out.

Response:

This request is beyond the scope of this plan (not a covered/discussed topic). This issue could be revisited/reviewed in the upcoming Antelope Island Interpretive Plan.

Comment:

A more extensive educational effort throughout the island in the form of interpretive guides and signage is needed. An aggressive partnering effort with local school aged children to teach them to appreciate the wonders of the Great Salt Lake, this would line up with the expansion of the visitor's center. Also, consider more geological and environmental information in areas such as the Garr Ranch rather than simply historical info. While I appreciate the human history

of the ranch, the area around there is filled with fascinating features that are glossed over and are not emphasized enough.

Response:

These requests are beyond the scope of this plan (not a covered/discussed topic). This issue could be revisited/reviewed in the upcoming Antelope Island Interpretive Plan.

Comment:

I would like to see the return of the Ogden Astronomical Society star parties to the park. The experience that was provided at the star parties was one that my kids and I will not forget. Please bring this fun activity back.

Response:

This request is beyond the scope of this plan (not a covered/discussed topic). This issue could be revisited/reviewed in the upcoming Antelope Island Interpretive Plan.