

Padre Island

Administrative History



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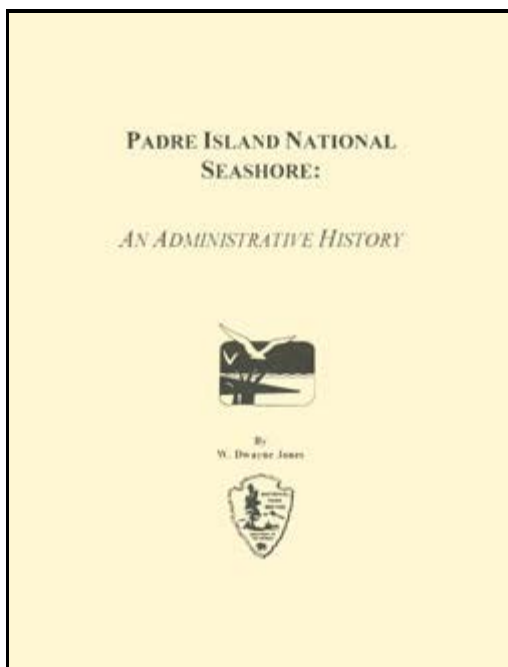
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PADRE ISLAND

Administrative History



Padre Island National Seashore: An Administrative History

W. Dwayne Jones

1999

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Many people assisted in the research and final preparation of this work and deserve thanks. The park personnel at Padre Island National Seashore are the first to be thanked. Former Superintendent Butch Farabee deserves credit for reviving interest in the administrative history, John Lujan for overseeing my work and serving as a contact, Kristey Bosworth for orientation and assistance with the collections, Anita McDaniel and Tommy McDaniel for giving interviews and handling extensive paperwork, and many others for their cooperation and assistance when requested. A special thanks goes to Robert Whistler, former Chief Naturalist at Padre Island, for reviewing the draft manuscripts and providing additional information when needed. Without his long years of collecting information on the park and securing the collections, this writing would not be possible. John Miller also provided extensive comments on the park's natural resources and gave additional insight into this important aspect of its history. At the Southwest Regional Office, I thank Neil Mangum for helping to locate needed documents and reviewing drafts.

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Dwayne Jones
Austin, Texas
February 1998

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Padre Island National Seashore, authorized by Congress in 1962, covers 66 miles of the approximately 113-mile long Padre Island in South Texas. Padre Island is the longest natural barrier island along the Gulf of Mexico broken only by the Mansfield Channel, a shipping channel dredged to the Port of Mansfield. The island is noted for its expansive white sandy beaches and tall foredunes that run along its eastern edge. On its western boundary, the island shelters the Laguna Madre, a shallow lagoon varying in width from several hundred to six miles in width. The lagoon is one of the richest habitats for sea and animal life along the Gulf Coast. Despite development to the north and south, Padre remains one of the most pristine seashore preserves in the United States and thus offers incomparable scenic and recreational opportunities. The island's diverse and fragile natural environment, however, is the primary focus of the park's interpretive programs as well as being the center of significant efforts in resource conservation.

The National Seashore lies approximately 30 miles southeast of Corpus Christi and 50 miles northeast of Brownsville. Interstate Highway 37, Highway 358, South Padre Island Drive, and Park Road 22 provide access to the northern end of the park. Headquarters are based in Flour Bluff 18 miles northwest of the park. Although most of the park is undeveloped, Malaquite Beach offers the largest visitor facilities. Gulf Ranger Station, three miles within the park's northern boundary, houses most of the ranger support facilities. Other areas with facilities include Bird Island Basin and Yarborough Pass.

The Malaquitas, a part of a larger tribe of Coahuiltecan, and the Karankawas roamed much of Padre Island for centuries. These Native Americans left few occupation sites, but were reported by European explorers as early as 1519 and again in an ill-fated 1554 Spanish expedition. Padre Nicholas Balli, a Catholic priest, and his nephew, Juan Jose Balli, received a Spanish grant for the first settlement of the island by 1820. The Balli family established the first cattle ranching on the island and is responsible for the name "Padre Island." In 1879 Patrick Dunn, known as the "Duke of Padre," leased part of the island for cattle ranching and continued to expand his ranching operation on the island through the 1920s.

Patrick Dunn's long tenure on the island ended with the arrival of automobile tourists and the Texas state park program in the 1920s. Under the direction of Governor Pat Neff and San Antonio booster David E. Colp, Padre Island and other significant resources of Texas were considered for state parks. Private investors found Padre Island's resources as attractive for development as those interested in a park designation. Several plans for major development offered during the 1920s and again in the 1950s never materialized leaving most of the island in its pristine state. The National Park Service also expressed interest in the island at various times from the 1930s through the 1950s, but never exercised any firm commitment to parkland acquisition or legislative action.

In 1958, Senator Ralph W. Yarborough of Texas offered the first bill in Congress for establishing an 88-acre Padre Island National Park. Although not successful, Yarborough continued to introduce legislation in subsequent sessions but later changed the designation to

Padre Island National Seashore. At the opening of the 87th Congress in January 1961, Senator Yarborough again introduced S.4 while Representatives Joe Kilgore and John Young introduced H.R. 5013 and H.R. 5049, respectively. The latter bills differed in several substantive ways including reducing the length of the proposed National Seashore and authorizing construction of a road the full length of the island. After subcommittee and committee hearings in 1961 - 1962, Yarborough's initiative stalled because of differences with Texas officials on mineral extraction in the tidelands and the size and accessibility of the park.

Senator Yarborough, however, took a decisive step in the spring of 1962 and maneuvered S.4 to the full Senate for consideration. On April 11, 1962, the Senate passed the bill and forwarded it to the House for approval. Representatives in the House amended S.4 but substantively authorized the National Seashore. President John F. Kennedy signed the bill on September 28, 1962, in the presence of Senator Yarborough and many longtime supporters. In August of the following year, Land Commissioner Jerry Sadler, Governor John Connally, and Attorney General Waggoner Carr deeded the Texas-owned land within the park boundaries to the Federal government ending the State's long-held ambivalence toward the designation.

The National Park Service appointed the first superintendent and began land acquisition for Padre Island National Seashore in the summer of 1963. Conflicting land surveys, reluctant property owners, law suits, and an ever-changing shoreline complicated early efforts to acquire land. After efforts to acquire the parkland and several appropriations by Congress, the Park Service, U.S. Attorney General, and a Federal judge from South Texas agreed in December 1968 to a reduction in park size to 66 miles, extending seven miles south of Bob Hall Pier to the Mansfield Channel. The following July 1969 Congress passed a final appropriation of \$4.1 million to complete the purchase of parkland with the compromise. Park planning proceeded at the same time resulting in the release of a master plan in 1964 and the opening of a permanent park headquarters in Flour Bluff in March 1965. North and South Districts, established in the mid 1960s, demonstrated the commitment to park facilities on both ends of the National Seashore. The first and most intensive development occurred at the North District station, some 12 miles south of Bob Hall Pier. Later named for the island's native Coahuiltecan tribe, the Malaquite Beach facilities included 11 planned buildings and structures placed along the foredunes overlooking North Beach. Construction work ended in late 1969 allowing for full operation of the park beginning with the 1970 season. The Park Service abandoned plans for development at the South District station after attempts at area land acquisition failed.



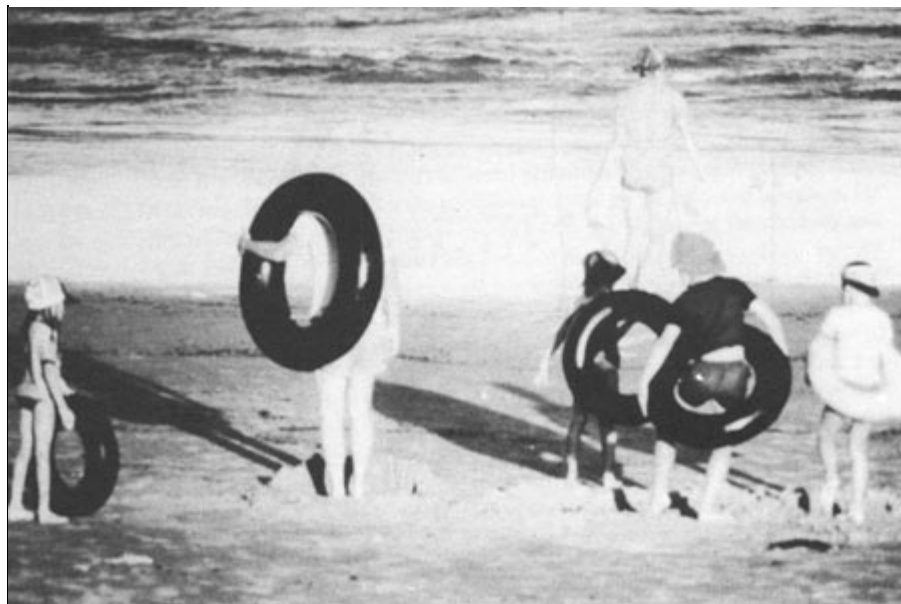


Figure 1. Park Visitors along Malaquite Beach. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives [1960].*

From 1970 to 1980, National Seashore personnel faced a number of challenges to the operation of the new park. Several buildings among the Malaquite Beach facilities began to show signs of stress from the harsh environment along the foredunes and construction defects. The problems persisted despite attempts to stabilize the facilities and remained a serious maintenance issue into the next decade. Park staff also settled longstanding environmental problems by ending cattle grazing on the island and negotiating a settlement to remove the makeshift cabins on the spoil islands in the Laguna Madre. These two accomplishments conformed to the reports issued during the early 1970s on the island's natural resources and the adopted Master Plan. In 1975 park administrators finally settled a debate concerning the permanent location of the headquarters with the selection of a new building at 9405 South Padre Island Drive in Flour Bluff.

In August 1980, Hurricane Allen formed in the Caribbean and made landfall near the Mansfield Channel along Padre Island. The hurricane left much of the island in a shambles and pointed to the importance of integrating human occupation with the island's natural features. In the aftermath of Hurricane Allen the Park Service reevaluated existing plans and released a new General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan by 1982 and Land Protection Plan by 1985. Natural resource management now became the priority for the National Park Service as it stepped up its research programs to better understand the functions of the barrier island and island wildlife. In the meantime, the Park Service planned and designed a new visitor facility to replace the Malaquite Pavilion. The contractor turned over Phase I of the new facilities to the National Seashore staff in July 1989 and Phase II in 1990.

By the mid 1990s, Padre Island National Seashore offered an assortment of recreational opportunities and numerous visitor services. Annual visitation figures indicated a relatively consistent number of visitors taking advantage of the park's facilities and resources. New bilingual interpretive exhibits and programs enhanced early park public relations and education by reaching the growing regional population. A progressive natural resource program also synthesized previous research and established new baseline data. After more than 30 years of park operations, Padre Island National Seashore operated as a stable unit of the diverse national park system seemingly on course with its commitment to balance recreation with resource conservation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Location and Setting

Padre Island National Seashore occupies the central 66 miles of the approximately 113-mile long Padre Island in South Texas. Stretching from just south of the Nueces County line on the north to the northern end of Willacy County on the south, the National Seashore includes portions of Kleberg, Kenedy, and Willacy Counties, with the majority of the park in Kenedy County.

Padre Island is the longest natural barrier island along the Gulf of Mexico coastlines. The chain continues south to include Brazos Island at the mouth of the Rio Grande, separated by the Brazos Santiago Pass, and north to include Mustang Island, once separated by Corpus Christi Pass, and St. Joseph's, Matagorda, and Galveston Islands. Mansfield Channel, a shipping channel dredged across Padre to Port Mansfield in Willacy County, breaks the natural length of the island.



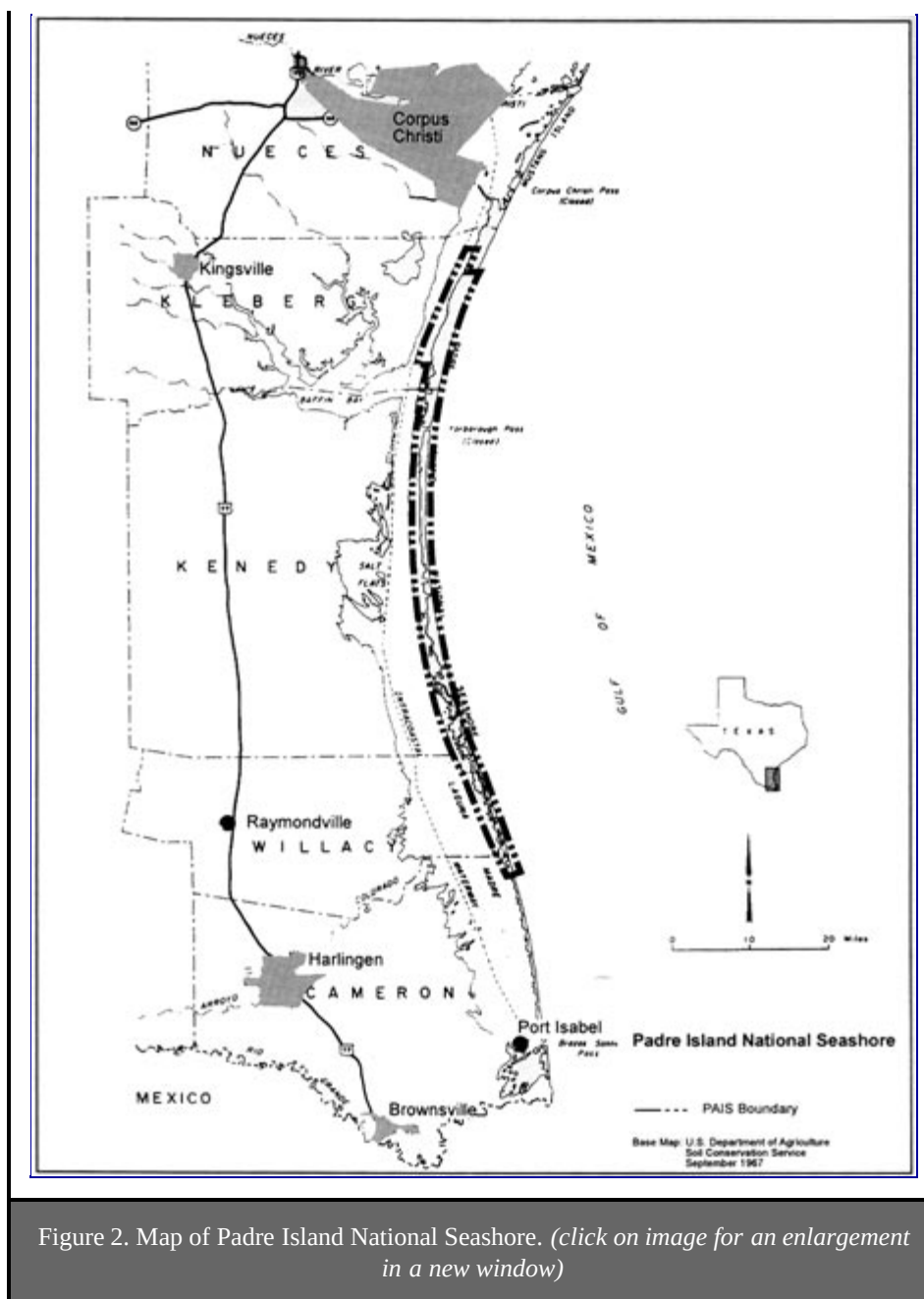


Figure 2. Map of Padre Island National Seashore. *(click on image for an enlargement in a new window)*

Padre Island divides into two geographic areas: North and South Padre. Mansfield Channel serves as the physical separation between the two areas. Padre Island National Seashore lies largely on North Padre Island, leaving the extreme northern end of North Padre and almost all of South Padre in private ownership. Land immediately adjacent to the park boundaries on the north and across the Mansfield Channel on the south remains undeveloped. Privately owned land on both ends of Padre Island currently supports various types of development including subdivisions of single-family houses, high-rise condominiums and hotels, and assorted retail and service businesses supporting the regional tourism industry.

Mean low tide or two fathom line (12 feet deep or roughly one quarter of a mile from shore) forms the eastern boundary of the park; the eastern edge of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway down to Baffin Bay and the western-most line of dry land forms the western. On the west, a shallow lagoon, the Laguna Madre, varies from several hundred feet to more than six miles wide. On the western edge of the Laguna Madre, the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway follows the mainland as part of a full Gulf coast commercial transportation route. The Laguna Madre, the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, and a number of small inlets and bays, separate Padre Island

from the mainland that it guards.

Padre Island National Seashore contains roughly six management areas: North Beach, South Beach, Little Shell Beach, Big Shell Beach, the down-island primitive beach area, and Bird Island Basin. North Beach fronts the Gulf of Mexico at the northernmost end of the National Seashore for five miles. Its wide, flat white sandy beach provides the focus for the Malaquite Beach Area and access to the Bob Hall pier and Padre Balli County Park north of the park boundary. The majority of North Beach is closed to vehicular traffic to provide a control area for observance of natural processes.

Bird Island Basin forms another area west of North Beach along the Laguna Madre. Named for North and South Bird Islands that it encompasses, the basin stretches for approximately ten miles. Tidal flats, mud flats, and grasslands predominate. Bird Island Basin possesses some of the deepest water in the Laguna Madre and may be used by motor boats. North and South Bird Islands are natural formations that host ideal habitats for waterfowl. A line of spoil islands, formed from the disposed dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway, lie to the west of the Bird Islands. The basin's varied topography contributes to the rich ecological environment and vital wetlands for which it is known.

South Beach on the eastern side of the island begins at the end of Park Road 22 and extends for ten miles, denoted by a marker every five miles. It is similar in appearance to North Beach but gradually becomes narrower and contains softer sand after five miles. Vehicles are allowed on South Beach, but only four-wheel drive vehicles may continue past milepost five on the beach.

South Beach continues into Little Shell and Big Shell Beaches, the narrowest section of Padre Island. These two areas possess steep beach embankments that rise to tall foredunes. Because the Gulf tides converge along these beaches, they are known for the large number of fine, unbroken sea shells. Both Little Shell and Big Shell Beaches are approximately ten miles in length, and while open to four-wheel drive vehicles, are not always accessible because of high water. At mile marker 15 on Little Shell Beach, vehicles may drive across the island to the Laguna Madre via a shell road at Yarborough Pass. Yarborough Pass, however, is a manmade channel reclaimed by the active island processes and may be inaccessible during high tides.

The lower 30 miles of the National Seashore, from mile marker 30 to mile marker 60, are considered "down island." The down-island area possesses the National Seashore's more primitive facilities and pristine appearance. Its wide, white beaches and tall foredunes become broken by extensive washover channels and low-lying tidal flats. The Island extends to some of its widest points in this section. The Mansfield Channel serves as the southern boundary of the down-island area and the National Seashore.

Access

The northern end of Padre Island National Seashore lies approximately 30 miles southeast of downtown Corpus Christi and 18 miles southeast of the community of Flour Bluff. Flour Bluff is the home of the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station and the headquarters of the National Seashore. Interstate Highway 37 goes through Flour Bluff and leads into South Padre Island Drive, Highway 358 (from the junction of the Crosstown Expressway), and Park Road 22. Park Road 22, maintained by the State of Texas, provides a generous two-lane hardtop drive directly into the north end and principal entrance to the Seashore. Vehicular access is only available at this entrance. A narrow two-lane hard-topped road continues into the park concluding at the northern end of South Beach with a feeder road to the east allowing access to North Beach and another one to the west for access to Bird Island Basin.

On the southern end, the National Seashore is approximately 50 miles from Brownsville via the Isabella Causeway, Port Isabel, and the City of South Padre Island. Some 20 miles of the 50 are roadless and lie between the City of South Padre Island and Mansfield Channel. No vehicular access is currently available to the southern end of the National Seashore from Port Mansfield or South Padre Island.

The National Seashore offers no airfield for commercial or private airplanes. Although much of the park may be reached by boat, there are neither marinas nor docking facilities within its boundaries. Boats may be launched or loaded, however, at Bird Island Basin in the northern end of the park.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Five areas of the park contain facilities; one is outside the park boundaries. Malaquite Beach includes the largest and most frequented facilities. A visitor center, observation deck, concession operation, restrooms, showers, changing rooms, and a large paved parking lot comprise the majority of the park buildings and structures located on the western edge of the foredunes. Beach access is available by raised wooden walkways across the dunes. The Malaquite Beach Campground, adjacent to the complex, contains more than 40 campsites, picnic tables, restrooms, cold showers, and a sanitary dump station. Other nearby park facilities include an observation and water tower, two ranger housing units, and water treatment plant. Most of the ranger interpretive staff are based at the Malaquite Beach facility.

Bird Island Basin, the second park area with facilities, includes a boat launch and primitive camping. Yarborough Pass, near mile marker 15 on the Laguna Madre, also offers a primitive campsite with chemical toilets and picnic tables, but no fresh water.

The final park facility within the boundaries is the Gulf Ranger Station, approximately three miles beyond the National Seashore entrance. A large trailer serves as offices for park rangers and support staff. A collection of work and vehicular sheds and various wooden frame outbuildings complete the Gulf Ranger Station complex.

The primary administrative facility for Padre Island National Seashore is located in Flour Bluff. This headquarters building provides offices for the park superintendent and administrative staff. In addition, the park archives and collections and records are maintained at the headquarters. The National Seashore works in cooperation with the City of Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau to offer information and assistance to visitors in the lobby area.

Scenic and Recreational Opportunities

Padre Island National Seashore represents one of the largest and most pristine seashore preserves in the United States. As such, it offers incomparable scenic and recreational opportunities year round. Visitors come from all over the United States and foreign countries. The largest number of visitors is from within a 250-mile radius of the National Seashore, mostly from non-urban areas. [1] Visitor profiles indicate that a broad demographic spread exists with a significant population of Hispanic visitors. [2] For the 14-year period between 1976 and September 1989, the average annual visitation was 645,209, with the highest year being almost one million in 1976. [3]

Visitors come to Padre Island for a myriad of reasons sometimes reflected in the month of visitation. Those interested in beach activities increase the visitation counts during the summer months and mostly on weekends. June, July, and August tend to be the busiest months of visitation; Saturday and Sunday are the most popular days of the week. Many of the summer visitors use the Malaquite Beach facilities. In recent years, however, Bird Island

Basin increased in popularity with a high number of boat users and windsurfing enthusiasts. Fishing is popular all year along both the Laguna Madre and the seashore and contributes to at least a minimal number of visitors throughout the year. Winter Texans, largely senior citizens, are increasing in numbers between December and April. Bird Island Basin hosts many seasonal visitors, thereby increasing the numbers of recreational vehicles housed there during the winter. [4]

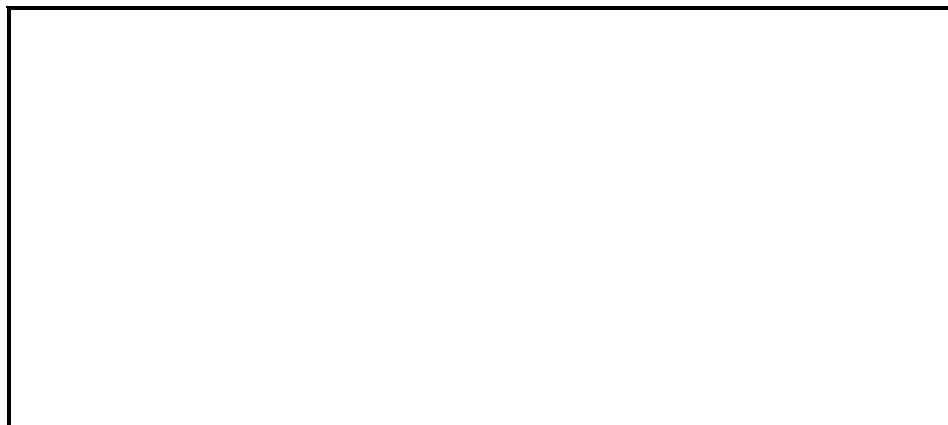
Many forms of passive and active recreation are available in the National Seashore. Swimming and sunbathing combines as one of the most popular activities. Although these are permitted along any of the beaches, Malaquite Beach is the best beach area and offers lifeguards during the summer months. Surfing is also popular but not allowed on the designated swim beach of Malaquite Beach.

Other water sports such as boating, waterskiing, and sailboarding or windsurfing occur in the Laguna Madre. Small power and fishing boats, and some sailboats, use the Laguna Madre especially during the summer months. In recent years, windsurfing has become another popular activity. Bird Island Basin is now considered one of the best three windsurfing areas in the country. Fishing and shelling are arguably the oldest recreational activities on Padre Island. Visitors fish year round with surf fishing and seining being the most popular. Redfish, speckled sea trout, black drum, and whiting generally come from the Gulf side; sheepshead, croaker, and flounder are found in the Laguna Madre. Visitors also engage in shelling. Long before the establishment of the National Seashore, shell enthusiasts combed the shoreline, sometimes developing significant collections of unique seashells. Shelling continues as a timeless recreational activity for all age groups.

Many visitors to the National Seashore enjoy hiking. The first opportunity in the park is along the Grasslands Nature Trail less than one-half mile after the entrance station. A written guide introduces the hiker to island vegetation, animal life, and barrier island dynamics. Beach hiking is also popular. With the exception of the dunes, hiking along the beach is allowable anywhere in the park. Hiking affords an opportunity to watch for the many native birds on the island and comb the beach for shells.

Camping and picnicking are other island activities. Several campgrounds with facilities are provided, but primitive camping is allowed all along the Gulf beach and in designated areas on the Laguna Madre. Picnic tables are found in several locations, but picnicking is allowed anywhere on the beaches.

Driving along the beach is another popular activity. All "street legal" vehicles are allowed on park roads and the first five miles of South Beach. Four-wheel drive vehicles may continue down island to Mansfield Channel. The drive sometimes includes segments of difficult terrain but visitors may check with the Ranger's Station for driving conditions. Driving is never allowed on the dunes.





Interpretive Activities

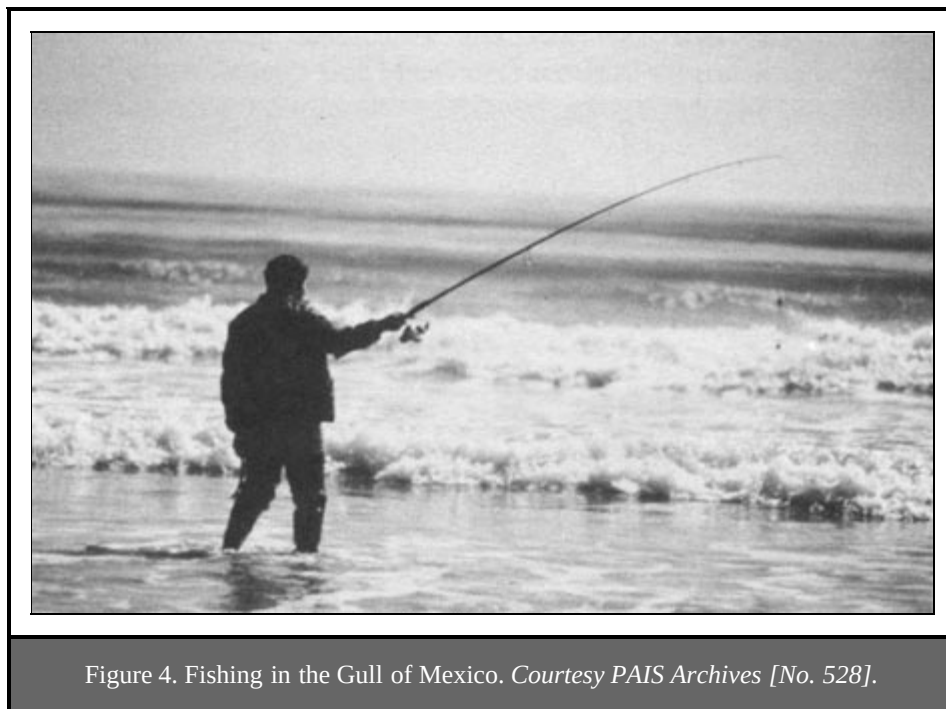
Although the park's principal purpose is recreation, it sponsors year round interpretive activities. Environmental education programs constitute the majority of interpretive work either internal or external. Internal programs include organized nature walks on North Beach, evening campfire talks on North Beach and at Bird Island Basin, and a display and audiovisual programs on Padre Island history and resources at the Malaquite Beach Visitor Center. A special internal program for children introduces environmental issues through a puppet show, and art and writing exercises. Wayside exhibits and the Grassland Nature Trail offer interpretation to visitors in a more passive format. External education programs primarily focus on children and schools. The park's "traveling trunk" show may be used to tell the history and natural resources of Padre Island through selected objects.

A team of permanent park rangers coordinate the interpretive program in the Division of Interpretation. Seasonal park rangers and technicians assist during the late spring and summer months to handle the large number of visitors. In recent years, the Division of Interpretation expanded its educational materials and programs to attract the bilingual public. The Malaquite Beach Visitor Center houses most of the Division of Interpretation staff members and facilities. A small bookstore operates at the Center as well in cooperation with the nonprofit Southwest Parks and Monuments Association.

National Park Service Administration

The National Park Service serves as the guardian and steward of Padre Island National Seashore. Through a network of regional offices, the Park Service administers more than 360 national park units; fourteen are designated as a national seashore or lakeshore. Padre Island National Seashore comes under the direction of the Southwest Regional Office, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and is the only seashore in the region. At the time it was designated in 1962, Padre Island represented the Regional Office's easternmost park unit and remained such until the designations of the Big Thicket National Preserve and Jean Lafitte National Historical Park. It also was one of the few non-desert units balancing recreation with resource conservation in the Southwest Regional Office. Padre Island's unfamiliar or simply unknown characteristics and potential for economic speculation contributed to the delayed recognition of the island as a worthy "national" treasure. After Congress and the president approved the

Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area Study Act in 1936, outdoor recreation became the responsibility of the National Park Service. Over the next 30 years, the Federal government designated its first seashore recreational parks in the consecutive order of Cape Hatteras, Cape Cod, and Padre Island National Seashores. The Park Service then focused on learning about the dynamics of this barrier island and how to manage it simultaneously as a recreational destination and fragile natural resource. These challenges and how they have been met by Park Service employees form the basis of this administrative history.



Since designation in 1962, nine superintendents and hundreds of full- and part-time men and women have promoted and protected Padre Island National Seashore. There are currently approximately 50 full- and part-time employees involved in five administrative divisions: administration, law enforcement, resource conservation, interpretation, and maintenance. Many National Seashore employees transferred to Padre Island from other park units while some began and ended their careers here. All who have worked at the seashore have met a complex environment difficult to understand quickly. Popular architectural designs and building materials deteriorate rapidly in the harsh coastal world of South Texas. Visitor interpretation programs and recreational activities successful in other parks sometimes fail at Padre Island. Even resource conservation practices employed at other national seashores have met an untimely fate at Padre.

In many aspects, the Park Service through its many employees has matured in its management of Padre Island during the first two decades and perhaps even profited from the experience. After several unpredictable storms, environmental catastrophes, and resource losses, the Park Service learned that management of the island required understanding the island's dynamic nature and vulnerability, rather than manipulating it. Management plans for Padre Island National Seashore in the 1990s reflect utilization of the resources and environment that makes human occupation, if not subordinate, at least one of mutual respect.



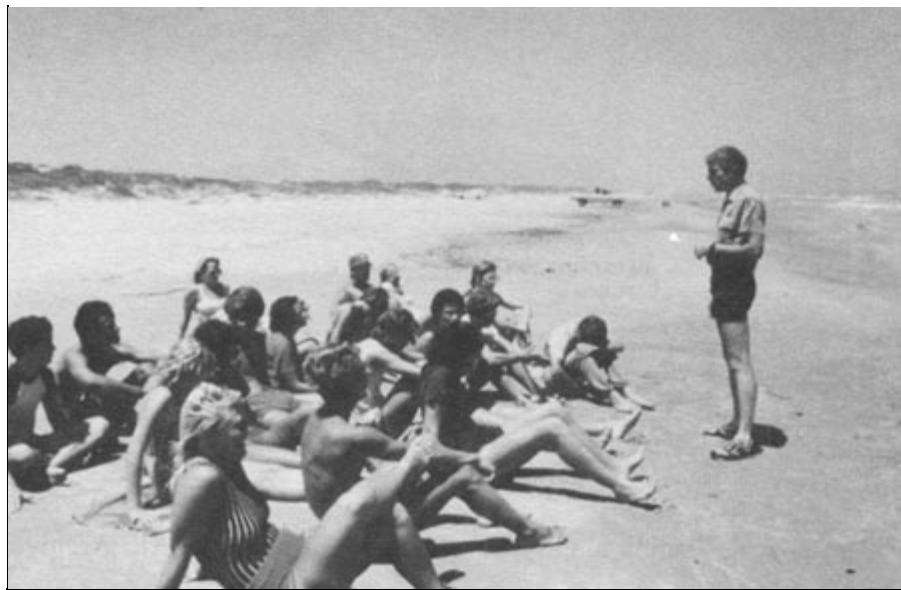


Figure 5. Ranger Program. *Courtesy PAIS Archives [No. 422].*

Popular Images of Padre Island

Although largely uninhabited for much of its history, Padre Island attracted and captivated many people over the years who in turn contributed to the popular image of the island. Sometimes the images were based on fact and other times not. Long-term residents like Louis Rewalt came to know the island through years of close association. After more than 50 years of residence, he amassed a sizeable collection of artifacts combed from Padre's beaches. Editors of the *Saturday Evening Post* magazine labelled Rewalt in a 1948 issue as the "hermit of Padre Island." He, like many others, saw Padre Island as a backdrop for tales of Indian life and buried gold. Another local devotee of Padre was Vernon Smylie of Corpus Christi. Smylie wrote four booklets during the 1960s focusing on Padre Island: *Padre Island, Texas* (1960), *Conquistadores and Cannibals* (1964), *This is Padre Island* (1964), and *The Secrets of Padre Island* (1964). Smylie offered his readers an array of stories surrounded by tidbits of history, all in a folksy tome. After the invention and popularity of metal detectors, a whole new wave of enthusiasts appeared on Padre's beaches. One of these, William Mahan, composed stories of his treasure hunting in a book entitled *Padre Island, Treasure Kingdom*. Much to his chagrin, Mr. Mahan's treasure hunting ended during the 1960s, at least within the boundaries of Padre Island National Seashore, because of Federal laws prohibiting the removal of artifacts from public lands.

Many other writers also found Padre Island charming and inspirational. Dorothy Hogner devoted an entire travel book to the automobile trip from New York to Padre in *South to Padre*, published in the 1930s. Her candid and amusing story, illustrated by her husband and travel companion, brought national attention to the isolated beaches and coastal life of South Texas. Mary Lasswell, native Texan and author of *I'll Take Texas* (1958), mentioned Padre Island's natural resources in her pursuit to educate Texans on their natural wonders. During the 1930s Works Progress Administration (WPA) writers project, the Federal government employed a number of writers to make Padre Island the focus of the only Federal Writer's Project round table in Texas. More than a dozen authors wrote of Padre's history, people, and environment. Although not published until 1950, the writer's round table developed a supportive audience for Padre Island across the State.

Padre Island's captivating landscapes and resources also attracted other talent. Photographers such as Corpus Christi's Doc MacGregor recorded several decades of Padre Island life. Many

of his photographs depict beach scenes, fishermen in seining parties, wildlife, and dune field landscapes. Famed Texas regionalist artist Everett Spruce made an almost annual visit to Padre during the 1950s and 1960s capturing the seashore on vivid canvases and in sketches. His work and that of other artists appeared in a publication in the 1980s revealing the more spiritual side of Padre's coastal life.

For the more serious visitor, Padre Island offered a vast laboratory for investigation. Numerous marine biologists, geologists, archeologists, and historians came to the island with a curiosity but often left in awe of the overwhelming environment. Two master of arts candidates prepared theses on Padre Island's history. Pauline Reeve completed the first history in 1938 at the Texas College of Arts and Industries in Kingsville, Texas; Robert Meixner completed another history in 1948 at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. Corpus Christi marine biologist, Henry Hildebrand, chronicled years of marine life on the shores of Padre and in the Laguna Madre. Geologists F.M. Bullard and W.A. Price studied sediments and development of Padre Island and the surrounding region during the 1930s and 1940s. As these scholars answered one set of research questions, they uncovered another handful that continues to be studied even today.

Whether collecting shells on the beach or scientific specimens from the Laguna Madre, Padre Island is a land of adventure that seems to instill passion for its beauty among visitors. Although not considered a "popular" enterprise as those given above, Padre Island maintained a steady spell on many politicians and community leaders over the years. Oscar Dancy, Cameron County Judge, and William Neyland, Corpus Christi civic leader, are two of those. Ralph Yarborough, United States Senator (1957-1971) from Texas, became the most important supporter. Yarborough receives credit for sponsoring more than four years, and finally passing, legislation to designate Padre Island National Seashore in 1962. After Padre Island, Yarborough promoted other conservation projects in Texas. During his two terms in the United States Senate, Yarborough led the fight for other National Park Service units including Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Fort Davis National Historic Site, the Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, Amistad National Recreation Area, and Big Thicket National Preserve.

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CHAPTER TWO:

EARLY HISTORY AND USE OF PADRE ISLAND

Historical Accounts of Padre Island

Padre Island boasts a long history of human contact and occupation, yet few traces of these activities permanently marked the island. Likewise, few written documents remain to reveal the early development and use of Padre Island. This is especially true of the period immediately before Europeans arrived more than four centuries ago. Some of the earliest accounts of Padre come from Spanish naval expeditions in the 1680s, conducted only to locate a rumored French colony along the coastline. These sailors reported the existence of fore-island and middle dunes and interior grasslands lacking in trees, but otherwise left technical maritime references with scant details. [1] Ortiz Parilla reported almost a century later an island of "red grass" and "three-spined stickleback," sand dunes on the eastern side, a few freshwater ponds, two small groves of "laurel" and "elder," and a beach strewn with driftwood, damaged canoes, and old ship riggings. [2]

In 1828 Don Domingo de la Fuente, surveyor for the Balli family, traveled the length of Padre Island beginning on the southern end. The survey team reported ranch livestock, bays, sand dunes, and a few "pastures" between the Brazos Santiago Pass and the Balli ranch. As the party moved north, they found a handful of freshwater ponds, and in the extreme north, "high banks" covered with grass, plains, sand dunes with grass, anise herb, and groves of willows, laurels, and oaks. [3]

During a visit to Padre in November 1891, William Lloyd traveled the length of the island. His most interesting observation was a grove of oaks on the west side extending for almost seven miles south from the north end. Some of these grew only six to 18 inches high while others reached eight feet. Whooping cranes, wood ibis, and sandhill cranes wintered here feeding on the fallen acorns. He also noted ducks in the Laguna Madre. Although not seen by him, Lloyd mentioned that others on Padre Island saw deer and coyotes swimming across the Laguna Madre. [4]

These brief descriptions suggest a changing landscape. Although difficult to conclude, reports from unnamed sources at the turn of the century point to a decline in vegetation. This probably occurred after a severe drought lasting from 1896 to 1903 plagued the island. Hurricanes in 1919 and 1933 also contributed to the reduction in island vegetation. Most historians, however, believe that sheep and cattle grazing over a long period of time led to the devegetation. [5]

Padre Island underwent significant shifts over the first few centuries of habitation. The absence of valuable natural resources, or at least "valuable" to them, probably deterred European efforts to exploit Padre Island. With the exception of cattle raising, few considered Padre of value given the abundance of land on the mainland and the more promising economic returns seen there. These beliefs did not preclude use by the two Native American tribes associated with Padre Island.

Native American Inhabitants

The Coahuiltecan, who take their name from the region of northern Mexico and South Texas, made good use of the island, at least by the mid-eighteenth century. While initially remaining south of Corpus Christi Bay, they covered a large area of South Texas, moving campsites according to the availability of food and harvest. Their nomadic behavior tended to be more sedentary than many tribes because they returned to the same campsites year after year. [6]

Medium height and solidly built, the Coahuiltecan foraged the land seeking edible roots and prickly pear cactus tunas. They captured small animals and gathered spiders, worm pupae, fish, lizards, salamanders, snakes, and deer dung. As a supplement to this thrifty diet, the Coahuiltecan collected the beans of the Texas mountain laurel and then made a drink called "mescal". Their villages reportedly consisted of clustered bell-shaped huts formed by arched reeds and covered with animal hides like mats. Although located near fresh water sources and arranged in a neat semicircle, refuse filled the campsites and some observers described them as "filthy". [7]

Of the four smaller tribes comprising the Coahuiltecan, the Malaquitas are associated most often with Padre Island. This tribe records its beginnings in Nuevo Leon, Mexico. First called "Malahueco," the name Malaquitas apparently is a later name documented to 1756 as a description for Indians living near Mier, Mexico. In 1766 Ortiz Parrilla recorded the Malaquitas on Isla Blanca or Isla San Carlos de los Malaquitas, the name for Padre Island, in the area now covered by Kleberg County and northeastern Kenedy County. By 1780 the tribe is documented on the coastal islands near Copano Bay. [8] This tribe provided the inspiration for second Superintendent Ernest Borgman of Padre Island National Seashore to name the Malaquite Beach in 1968. [9]

More historical attention is generally devoted to the second Indian tribe, the Karankawa. These natives covered almost the full Texas coastline extending from Galveston Island south to Padre Island, with Matagorda Bay being the preferred area. Karankawa were tall and athletic with a special affinity for living on the islands and lower waterways along the coast. They traveled between the various islands and bays in dugout canoes made from large trees. These canoes often extended 20 feet with a crude appearance, remaining bark covered and hewn flat on one side and blunted on each end. From these vessels, the Karankawa traveled the river bottoms and shallow lagoons in search of food. Typical dietary elements included fish, turtles, oysters, and alligators. Berries, nuts, persimmons, and, when available, sea bird eggs, supplemented this basic diet. For the most part, these Indians lived in camps along the bays usually clustered in groups of approximately 50 hovels. [10]

Although generally described as "fierce" and sometimes "cannibalistic," the Karankawa attracted the attention of many visitors to Padre Island and the Gulf Coast. Cabeza de Vaca is generally credited with first reporting their existence in 1528-1533 on Velasco Peninsula. Other reports appeared over the next few centuries, often accompanied by unflattering descriptions. Despite their reluctance to congregate around the early Spanish missions, the Karankawa survived well into the nineteenth century, leaving remnants of their material culture all over the coastal plains. [11] Several Karankawa camp sites are believed to remain on Padre Island, largely noted by oyster-shell middens that have been discovered by archeologists whenever sites are exposed by the shifting dunes.

European Exploration and Settlement

Spanish contact with both Indians and Padre Island came through exploration and accident. Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda, a Spaniard, first explored the Gulf Coast in 1519 searching for a

suitable location for a new colony. After exploring and mapping much of the coastline, Piñeda traveled up the Rio Grande roughly 18 miles, reported aboriginal villages, and returned from the unsuccessful journey. The Spanish launched several other expeditions between 1520 and 1528, mostly to claim additional territory. The 1528 venture left only four survivors shipwrecked on the Velasco Peninsula on the upper Texas coast. Cabeza de Vaca, the best known, and the remaining three men wandered across the Southwest, ending their long journey in 1536. [12]

In 1554 an ill-fated journey from Vera Cruz to Havana en route to Spain lost all but one ship to a storm off Padre Island. The surviving 300 Spaniards landed near the Mansfield Channel and after a few days began a long trek south to Tampico, Mexico. Most of the survivors perished en route, some from the natural elements and others at the hands of the Karankawa. Several managed to escape and record their story of survival. A few months later, another Spanish expedition located the wreckage and salvaged part of the treasure. Eventually, the wreck disappeared under the sand and water off Padre Island, but was discovered more than 400 years later in 1964. [13]

In 1766, a second Spaniard, Don Diego Ortiz Parrilla, left San Juan Bautista and sailed through the mouth of the Nueces River, naming the bay Corpus Christi. Parrilla sent a scouting party across the Laguna Madre to Padre Island and then down to the southern end. He reported that Padre seemed unsuitable for military purposes or even cattle raising because the island lacked building material, fresh water, and grasses. [14]

The first European attempt to use the island was by the religious leader of Matamoras, Padre Nicholas Balli. A Catholic priest of Portuguese extraction, Padre Balli saw Isla Blanca or "White Island" for its potential as a cattle ranch. Between 1810 and 1820, Padre Balli and his nephew, Juan José Balli, initiated efforts to acquire a grant on the island from Spain. Although historians disagree, land records indicate that he received a grant for 11-1/2 square leagues, slightly more than 50,000 acres. [15] In 1827, Padre Balli and his nephew reapplied for the grant from the State of Tamaulipas, Mexico, being awarded such in 1829, some eight years after Mexico gained its independence. Their grant of 11-1/2 leagues exceeded the typical grant by at least one-half league. This excess, some historians feel, explained the dual title to the land. Padre Balli and his nephew began cattle ranching on the island from Rancho Santa Cruz de Buena Vista, roughly 25 to 30 miles north of the southern end of the island, outside the present National Seashore boundaries. When the Balli family reapplied for their grant, the new survey reported that Rancho Santa Cruz was the only inhabited part of the island. Padre Balli died in 1828, leaving his nephew with a fraction of the island, mostly contained on the southern end. The nephew continued raising cattle on the island until 1844. Afterwards, Juan José Balli left Padre and Texas on the eve of its annexation to the United States.

The remainder of the Balli grant eventually was acquired by José Maria Tovar. Tovar accumulated three leagues on the northern end of the island by his death in 1855. He followed in the tradition of the Balli family, operating his own cattle business. One half of Tovar's land and all but 7,500 acres of the southern end were acquired by Nicolas Guisante shortly thereafter. No information remains on Guisante or his use of the island. [16] If there were ever any physical traces of the Balli or Tovar operations on Padre Island, they have long since been completely obliterated. For many years during and after the Balli ownership, the island was called various names including Isla de Boyan, Ysla del Vallin, and Isla de Santiago. The name that served most people, however, became "Padre Island" in deference to Padre Nicholas Balli, the first permanent settler. [17]



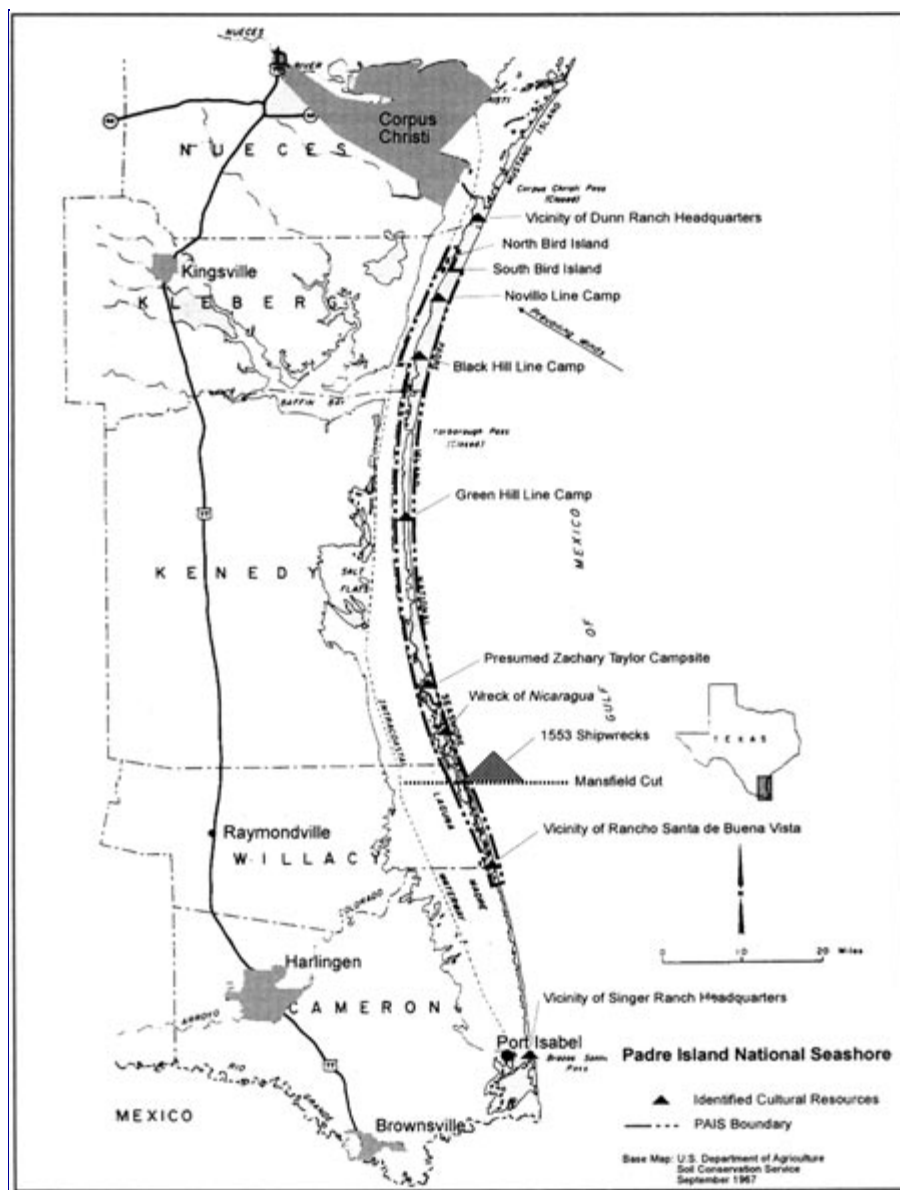


Figure 6. Map of Cultural Resources from Early Occupation and Use. Base map: U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, September 1967. ([click on image for an enlargement in a new window](#))

American Contact and Settlement

In 1838 Henry Kinney left Pennsylvania to invest in the developing cattle industry of South Texas. The following year Kinney and William Aubry established the first trading post near Padre Island on what is now Corpus Christi Bay. Although little is known of Aubry and his later life, Henry Kinney became a successful rancher and made significant contributions to the development of the Corpus Christi area. Several years later, Phillip Dimmitt, James Gourlay, and John Southerland built their own trading post in what is now Flour Bluff on Oso Creek. Both trading posts prospered, though some historians surmise that the post may have served as a center for illegal trade with Mexico. [18]

Because of these trading posts, Padre Island gained attention beginning in 1845 during the Mexican War, after the Republic of Texas was annexed by the United States. General Zachary Taylor and more than 2,000 soldiers camped near Corpus Christi. In February 1846, Taylor sent a reconnaissance party to determine a route to Brownsville. The party returned

finding no suitable way to cross the Laguna Madre at Brazos Santiago Pass. General Taylor then took a mainland route and established a supply base at Point Isabel, and built Fort Texas, later renamed Fort Brown, on the mainland across from the city of Matamoros. [19]

During the Mexican War and the subsequent western gold rush, Point Isabel and Corpus Christi became important supply stations. The trade possibilities in Texas attracted John Singer, brother to Issac Singer of sewing machine fame, in 1847. Singer, his wife, and son were shipwrecked in their vessel the *Alice Sadell* on Padre Island while en route to Point Isabel. The Singers were attracted by the island and bought part of the southern half of the island from the Balli heirs. The Singers established a profitable ranching operation and a home on the southern tip of the island, but they moved to Corpus Christi when the Civil War began in 1861. The Singers left behind a legend of buried gold and ranch buildings made of driftwood to be claimed by the sand of Padre Island. [20] During the mid-twentieth century, several visitors to the island claim to have discovered the Singer and Balli homesteads, calling them the "Lost City." Complete verification of this discovery has never been made.

In the post-Civil War years, the cattle business in south Texas boomed. Plants called packeries for processing cattle for their hides and tallow were built on Packery Channel south of Corpus Christi Pass, which divided Padre Island from Mustang Island. In 1854 Richard King of the mainland King Ranch bought 12,000 acres of the southern part of Padre Island from a Balli heir. In the 1870s, King and his partner Mifflin Kenedy leased more of the island and expanded their island ranching. At the peak of their involvement on Padre, there were nearly 70 people at the island headquarters, located at Santa Cruz, site of the old Balli place some 25 miles north of the southern tip. The King and Kenedy island operation was severely damaged by a storm in 1880 and the partners retreated to the mainland. [21]

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Padre Island was the site of a number of shipwrecks. Near Big and Little Shell Beaches is a slight bend that became notorious for its shipwrecks. "Devil's Elbow," actually the point of tidal convergence, wrecked many otherwise seaworthy vessels. One of these was the *Nicaragua*. This ship, bound from Port Arthur for Tampico, Mexico, wrecked on October 16, 1912. The stern, its engine, and masthead of the vessel remained visible off the island for many years, serving as a landmark for down-island travelers. Many stories arose about the gun running and illegal activities it might have performed, but no one seems to know its true mission that October evening. [22]

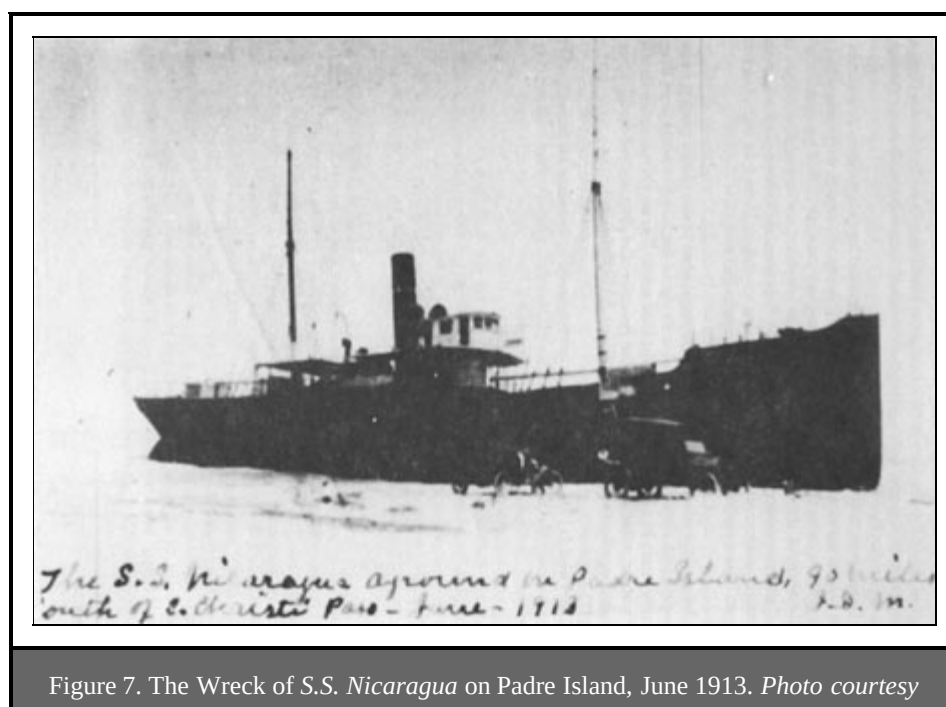


Figure 7. The Wreck of S.S. *Nicaragua* on Padre Island, June 1913. Photo courtesy

Patrick Dunn's Ranching Empire

Patrick Dunn followed the Balli-Singer-King island ranching tradition. In 1879 the island's natural "fences" of water attracted his attention, and he leased part of the northern half of the island. He expanded his ranching operation and by 1926 the "Duke of Padre," as Dunn became known, owned almost the entire island. On two separate occasions Dunn built houses and lived on Padre Island, but his principal residence remained for many years in Corpus Christi. One of these houses was approximately one mile east of the 1927 causeway in a location he called "Owl's Mot."

Patrick Dunn raised mostly cattle, but there is some speculation that early on in his operation he also raised sheep. The livestock roamed over all of the island foraging grass at will. To facilitate rounding up the free-grazing cattle, Dunn built line camps of driftwood at 15-mile intervals the length of the island. He named them Novillo or Novia, Black Hill, nicknamed "Boggy Slough," and Green Hill. Remnants of the Novillo line camp can be seen today in the National Seashore, despite vandalism and the harsh environment of the island. These camps were used as collecting pens as recently as 1970, when the last grazing permit expired. [23] Dunn also built watering tanks, taking advantage of the shallow fresh water table behind the foredunes. He and his mostly Hispanic cattle hands sometimes built special camps giving them names of Campo Bueno, Borregas (sheep), Veneda (deer), and Barretos (saddle). [24]

Dunn's personality and life on Padre Island reached legendary status. Dunn often became the focus of local stories about his cattle drives and penning, encounters with visitors and wildlife, and treasures he collected from the Gulf. In the final years of Dunn's ownership, he became especially resentful of the growing popularity of the island and maintained posted signs along the island. One writer described Dunn's antipathy for fishermen as "Fishermen meant sports, sports meant tourists, and tourists meant civilization coming too close to Padre." In 1927, Dunn lamented to a Corpus Christi reporter what he must have seen as inevitable:

Padre Island was the best cow ranch in the world when I came to it forty-eight years ago! That's a broad statement I know, but it's a good ranch now. Twenty years from now it may be a better cow ranch. If the Lord would give me back the island now, wash out a channel in the Corpus Christi Pass thirty feet deep, and put devilfish and other monsters in it to keep out the tourists, I'd be satisfied. [25]

Patrick Dunn died in 1935 not knowing that tourists would soon occupy his island forever.

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CHAPTER THREE:

PUBLIC PARK OR PRIVATE SEASHORE: THE PADRE ISLAND DILEMMA

By the early 1920s Patrick Dunn's struggle to maintain an isolated Padre Island for his cattle empire no longer seemed possible. Although still largely uninhabited and under his ownership, increasing numbers of fishermen, sightseers, and beach squatters trampled across the island. The lack of vehicular access became less of a problem as visitors and tourists crossed the bays by way of crude, hand-pulled ferries. Dunn, like many others, had not foreseen the popularity and affordability of the automobile, which now contributed to the mobility of thousands. As more and more travelers sought new destinations for leisure time in their automobiles, the demand for good roads and public parks increased. Local, state, and national "boosters" organized into automobile clubs, highway associations, park associations, and statewide "Good Roads" committees. In the final years of the Progressive Era, the demand for good roads and public parks moved from a small cadre of supporters to a national reform priority. Primitive highways, many only dirt and gravel, gradually appeared on the landscape. Community leaders saw auto tourism, parks, and good roads as the future economic development for many cities. [1]

At the same time, administrators of the young National Park Service began to aggressively promote the national park system that in the early 1920s still mostly lay in the West and Southwest. Under a national campaign to "See America First," motorists flocked to the national parks. [2] Park Service authorities welcomed the automobile into the parks by supporting highway associations, such as the National Park-to-Park Highway, and accommodated vehicles by expanding internal circulation. These efforts gave little consideration to natural resource conservation. While the Park Service embraced the automobile age in its existing facilities, state and local parks seemed to either accompany or follow the automobile and highway development. This process developed so quickly and quietly that even the most avid motorists missed the overlapping interests of good roads, auto tourism, and park development that subtly began to appear in public policy at all levels of government. [3]





Figure 8. Automobile Visitors to Padre Island, June 1913. *Courtesy PAIS Archives.*

Texas State Parks Board and Padre Island

In response to the growing trends in auto tourism and good roads, Texas Governor Pat Neff (1921 - 1925) approved legislation to establish the Texas State Parks Board in the spring of 1923. Neff, in turn, appointed five board members, assigning each a region of the state to oversee and encourage park development. Unfortunately, board members received no funding from the Texas Legislature and were largely left to finance their own park pursuits and all expenses. Neff's initial appointment went to David E. Colp of San Antonio. Colp became one of the Parks Board's most fervent and dedicated supporters, serving as chairman from March 1923 until his death in the 1930s. During his chairmanship the Board evolved from a small unfocused group to one envisioning large scenic preserves. This vision eventually set the standard for Texas State Park development with large tracts of land such as Palo Duro Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains, and Padre Island. [4]

Colp's interest in parks developed through his work as a founding member of the Texas Good Roads Association and appointment as the first secretary to the Texas Highway Department in 1917. He also played an active role in several national highway associations in the early 1920s. [5] One of his early positions came with the Old Spanish Trail (OST), a transcontinental route extending from St. Augustine, Florida, to San Diego, California. [6] After leaving the OST, Colp became director of the Glacier-to-Gulf Highway and Puget Sound-to-Gulf Highway. [7] These two highway associations never developed to the level of the OST, but included segments ending in Flour Bluff, near Corpus Christi, now the location of the Padre Island National Seashore headquarters, and another in Brownsville. [8]

Colp first visited Padre Island in June 1924 in the company of Oscar Dancy, Cameron County judge. [9] Dancy, Colp's longtime associate and supporter of various highway associations, became devoted to the multiple public cause of uniting good roads with parks, auto tourism, and ultimately economic development for the Rio Grande Valley. The 1924 visit introduced Colp to the tourist appeal of Padre Island as well as the problems of vehicular access and recreational facility development. Though Colp supported the idea of a park on Padre Island, Judge Dancy embraced the concept so fully that it became a lifelong dream. Many years later, Dancy's dream would be recalled at the dedication of Padre Island National Seashore.

Barely two years after Colp's tour of Padre Island, he was contacted by the Dial Steel Products expressing an interest in supplying park toilets to the three parks operated by the Gulf Coast Causeway Company, as reported in the National Conference of State Parks Bulletin. Padre Island was one of the three parks. [10] The writer for the National Conference article was premature. Although an increasing number of people were aware of Padre Island, it was far from being established as a public park.

In April 1926 the *Dallas News* published a story entitled, "Boom Along South Texas Coast Grows." The author mentioned a number of emerging developments, but the one on which focused was the planned "speedway and state park" to be built on Padre Island. The plan entailed construction of a causeway at each end of the island connected to an automobile speedway of smooth hard beach that reportedly ran the entire 119-mile length of the island. At an undisclosed location along the speedway, a state park of 5,000 acres would be developed. The park was a fraction of the estimated 70,000 acres anticipated for the total development.

The Gulf Coast Causeway Company, formally chartered on October 8, 1925, and consisting of three Harlingen and two San Antonio investors, including Colp's wife, led the campaign for private development with a pledge to invest one-half million dollars in the first year of development and another million in the second. The Company proposed to build toll roads from Corpus Christi to Brownsville via Padre Island, and from Corpus Christi to Galveston to provide access. [11] Expenditures in the first year, however, would largely be devoted to the construction of a hotel to resemble a clubhouse, and more than one hundred summer cottages. Maintenance costs for the roads and properties would be covered by the tolls collected on each causeway. While quoted in several places in the April article, D.E. Colp insisted that after 20 years the 5,000-acre park would revert back to the State Parks Board. He reiterated that the Gulf Coast Causeway Company acted as a trustee for the Parks Board and did so only because the Board could not be chartered. [12] Colp's insistence about the role of the Parks Board was typical of his statements in the 1920s. Because the Board lacked funding and possessed no power of eminent domain, it could not acquire private property but relied on donations or cooperative agreements with privately chartered companies. [13]

A few days after the Dallas newspaper article appeared Colp wrote a member of the State Parks Board in Dallas commenting on the "muddled condition on titles" for Padre Island. [14] Despite the problematic chain of title, Colp proceeded with negotiations involving the Gulf Coast Causeway Company and in July 1926 proposed the purchase of 5,000 acres between Corpus Christi and Point Isabel and deeds to a 200-foot right-of-way across Padre Island, presumably from the owner of Padre Island, Patrick Dunn. [15]

Private Development on Padre Island

Private efforts to develop Padre Island occurred about the same time as Colp's "public" effort. Colonel Sam A. Robertson, Cameron County sheriff in the 1920s, chartered the Brazos de Santiago Pass Ferry Company on August 6, 1925, to operate ferries at Brazos de Santiago Pass in Cameron County and from Flour Bluff to Mustang Island in Nueces County. [16] Two months later, Robertson filed another charter for the Ocean Side Toll Road Company on the same day as did the Gulf Coast Causeway Company, October 8, 1925. Robertson's second corporation included a stockholder from St. Louis, Missouri, two from Hidalgo County, and one from Miami, Florida. The Company proposed to build a beach sand, shell, and *Tarviated* toll road from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Aransas Pass along the Gulf side of Padre Island. [17] There is no explanation for the overlapping dates of the Gulf Coast Causeway Company and Ocean Side Toll Road Company. Each document, however, contains a certificate from the Texas Attorney General giving the date of filing and circumstances surrounding its approval. This implies that the competition to build a road on Padre Island

was intense. One can assume that Colonel Robertson's company eventually won development rights because it indicated a higher amount of capital. [18]

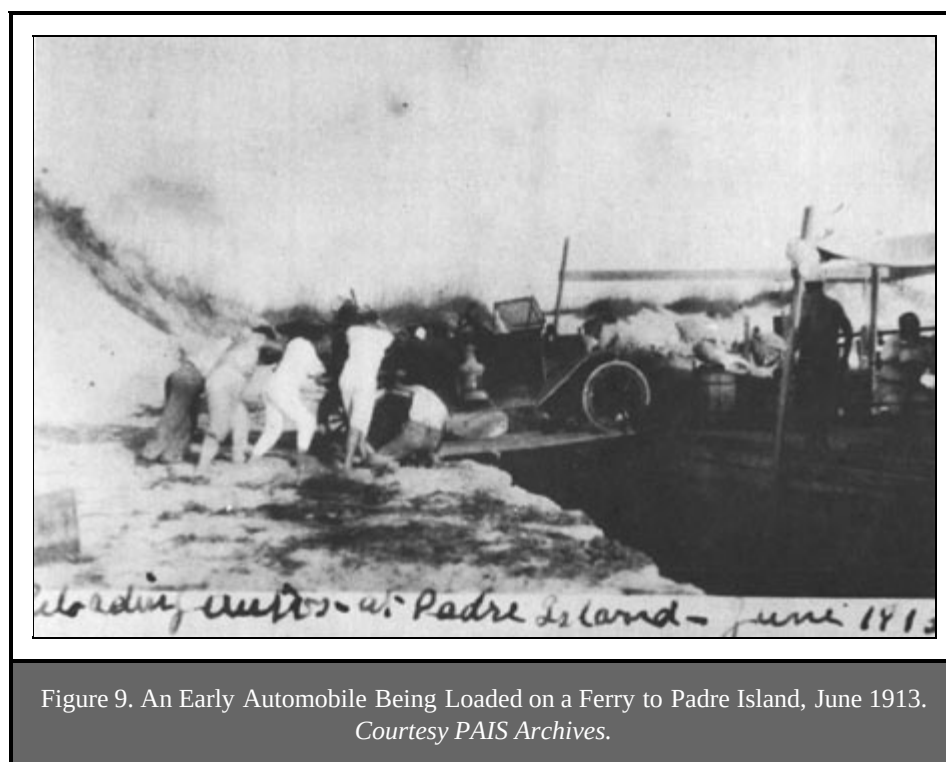


Figure 9. An Early Automobile Being Loaded on a Ferry to Padre Island, June 1913.
Courtesy PAIS Archives.

On February 1, 1926, Robertson put his capital to work and acquired surface rights to Padre Island from Patrick Dunn for an estimated \$125,000. [19] Dunn, however, retained mineral and grazing rights. Robertson immediately addressed vehicular accessibility to the Island by constructing the Don Patricio Causeway in 1927. Named for Patrick Dunn, the causeway consisted of two pairs of trough runners and a low guard rail extending on wooden piers from Flour Bluff to Padre Island. When officially opened in 1927, the daughter of Pat Dunn allegedly was the first to cross the causeway in a Model T Ford. [20] Within the first month of operation, more than 1,800 automobiles crossed the causeway and another 2,500 made the trip the following month. [21] Robertson also provided bridge access to the extreme northern tip across Corpus Christi Pass, and to Port Aransas and the southern end of Padre Island with ferries. [22] Twenty miles of asphalt road, a hotel named the "Twenty-Five Mile Hotel," later sometimes referred to as Surfside Hotel, and a casino were built on the southern end. [23] Five houses also were constructed 45 miles north of the southern end and another built three miles south of the northern end of the Island. [24]

Two additional developments were underway in 1926 approximately six miles north of Point Isabel. Private owners from Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City laid out Buena Vista, a townsite of more than 22,000 acres. Adjoining it, a syndicate called "Hollywood-by-the-Gulf" platted 1,341 acres of housing lots. Two boulevards, a hotel and apartment house, and playgrounds were completed in 1926. A local newspaper story reported that the lots were "selling rapidly." [25]

Little documentation exists to relate how these developments progressed in the late 1920s. However, after the financial collapse of 1929, Colonel Robertson experienced his own financial trouble. In 1930 he sold his interests to Albert and Frank Jones of Kansas City, who operated under the company entitled the Dixie Development Corporation, chartered January 14, 1927. [26] The Ocean Side Toll Road Company apparently disbanded during the early 1930s and officially ended in 1946. Although no longer operating, in July 1933 a hurricane hit Padre Island, destroying almost all of Robertson's development especially along South

Padre. The storm also washed away the Don Patricio Causeway, leaving Padre Island once again largely inaccessible by vehicles.

National Park Service Recognizes Padre Island

In 1933 Roger Toll, then the superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, visited Padre Island while making other site inspections in South Texas. Toll returned an adverse report to Director Horace Albright of the Park Service who in turn issued a denial for further consideration of Padre Island as a new park. [27] Director Albright, however, resigned shortly thereafter, opening up the possibility of new directions for the Park Service under the new Director Arno B. Cammerer.

The District III Office of the National Park Service, now the Southwest Region, studied the Texas Gulf Coast for possible national seashore recreational areas in September 1934. This report, dated December 29, 1934, from Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth, Bureau of Planning, and entitled "Study of National Seashore Recreation Areas, Padre Island, Texas," recommended Padre Island as "the most outstanding beach for such a purpose." [28] The following July Chief Biologist H.P.K. Agersborg, Inspector George Nason, and Regional Wildlife Technician James Stevenson visited the area to make a new report. [29] Agersborg's visit resulted in a somewhat ambivalent report with an opening line, "Padre Island is a sandy waste." He stated that "cattle and horses had completely 'yarded' the border hill" and that "the beach was unwholesome and unaesthetic" because it "was literally strewn with Menhaden, sprinkled with Gulf trout and a few Mullets." [30] Agersborg made a recommendation that the area be considered for a waterfowl and shore bird sanctuary, but only after a complete biological survey was made by a biologist who could spend some time on the island. [31] In conclusion, Agersborg made a final statement that described the results of many years of development efforts on the island, "To me the island seemed depopulated of wildlife due to traffic in cattle raising and through visiting motorists who periodically race along the beach as madmen do." [32] Finally, the chief biologist stated that he believed, based on reports from others, that St. Joseph Island, north of Padre and Mustang Islands, was a better possibility for wildlife. [33] In spite of these reports, Regional Officer Herbert Maier recommended the area as a national beach park in June 1935. [34]

Another report issued in July 1936 from Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth to Regional Officer Herbert Maier of the Regional III Office, rated 49 seashores around the country for their potential as national seashore parks. Authorized by Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, Padre Island overall was ranked as "poor." In specific sections, the Park Service ranked Padre Island as "fair" for the highways leading to the island and "poor" for access to the island. Described as 110 miles long, 300 feet wide, and having a 3 per cent slope, Padre Island became the longest stretch under investigation. Padre earned an "A" for fishing, "B" each for boating and wildlife value, and "D" for forest value. Its estimated 90,000 acres were valued at five dollars per acre, the lowest of any of the 49, for a total value of \$450,000. Many of these facts and the statement that Padre Island had "no mosquito problem" were erroneous. [35]

The July report coincided with the passage of the *Park, Parkway, and Recreation Area Study Act* by the U.S. Congress in 1936. This Act charged the National Park Service with responsibility for Federal outdoor recreation activities and opened up discussion on a type of national park quite different from the earlier designated parks. The emphasis turned more to recreational needs and away from strictly scenic value. [36] One year later, Lake Mead became the first National Recreation Area (NRA) and Cape Hatteras the first National Seashore (NS).

Texas Parks and Politics

While the National Park Service conducted studies of Padre Island and began a philosophical shift toward acceptance of recreational uses, a significant political shift was underway in the State of Texas. James V. Allred won his first statewide election as attorney general in 1930. After taking office, Allred hired Ralph W. Yarborough, a young attorney with the El Paso firm of Turney, Burges, Culwell, and Pollard. As an assistant attorney general, Yarborough provided legal assistance for the Permanent School Fund and University of Texas Permanent Fund as well as actively pursued the State's interest in land and mineral rights. One of his most successful projects became the issue of State rather than Federal ownership of the tidelands and thus the rights to mineral excavation. [37] The tidelands would not be fully resolved until a Supreme Court decision sided in favor of Texas in 1960. [38]

While working for Attorney General Allred and exploring the tidelands legal issues, Yarborough traveled each fall to Willacy County at the invitation of the Game, Fish, Oyster Commission to hunt White Wing doves. Through these hunts and various fishing trips from Port Aransas, he learned of the unique topography and abundant natural resources along Padre Island and the Laguna Madre. Yarborough later recalled being impressed with Padre Island and remembered these trips fondly when proposing Padre Island as a national seashore. [39]

During his tenure as state attorney general in the early 1930s, James Allred became an enlightened progressive and Roosevelt New Dealer. After Allred's election as Governor in 1934, Yarborough left the State government for private practice but remained loyal to Allred's progressive politics and the programs of President Roosevelt's New Deal. These years had a profound effect on Yarborough's political ideology and interest in the environment. [40]

During Allred's first administration, interest in Padre as a state park resurfaced. David E. Colp, who had died in 1936, and Oscar Dancy, who chose not to run for county judge for two years, left a leadership vacuum for the Padre Island park cause. Congressman Richard M. Kleberg of Kingsville and heir of the King Ranch partially filled the vacuum on the national level by speaking on behalf of Padre Island in September 1935. [41] At the same time, William M. Neyland of Corpus Christi filled the remainder of the gap by working in Texas to establish a State park on Padre. [42] At the State Parks Board meeting in October 1935 the Board considered acquisition of Padre Island along with recommending construction of a causeway to the Texas Highway Department. [43] The Board requested that the City of Corpus Christi obtain an option on the island from the Jones brothers of Kansas City for no more than \$400,000. This figure was later raised to \$450,000. The City would issue bonds for payment while the Board assumed responsibility and requested a federal loan to be paid back from park revenues. [44] Four months later, the State Parks Board moved forward in cooperation with the City of Corpus Christi for the purchase of 90,000 acres. [45] Unfortunately, the State Parks Board did not act in time and the option expired in July 1936. [46]

William Neyland regrouped the Corpus Christi leadership and formed Padre Island Park Association in March 1937 to seek State legislation for a park. More than 35 cities in South Texas became members of the Association and contributed to its political backing. Neyland felt that the causeway tolls and park fees covered expenses incurred from establishment of the park and make the project "self-liquidating." [47] On March 25, 1937, Representative William E. Pope of Corpus Christi introduced House Bill 1034 in the State Legislature. [48] The measure passed the House and Senate only to be vetoed by Governor Allred in May 1937. [49]

Governor Allred's veto message stated a number of reservations. While generally seen as a progressive, Allred viewed a toll on the new causeways as a new form of taxation. He politically favored no new taxation but improved property valuation instead. Thus, he was

noted for the number of pieces of legislation vetoed because of insufficient State funds. [50] Governor Allred also felt that the State may own the Island because the original grant to Padre Nicholas Balli specified 11.5 leagues and the current acreage was 30 leagues. He saw no wisdom in purchasing land for a State park that did not include mineral rights, particularly for a sale price of \$500,000. The Federal government would not set up a park where minerals were withheld so why should the State of Texas, he concluded. In his last statement, Allred asserted that the necessity of construction of a causeway, subject to periodic washout, placed undue burdens on the Texas Highway Department. Allred's veto devastated the Padre Island park supporters, and many supporters, including former Assistant Attorney General Ralph Yarborough, felt Allred's decision was a mistake. [51]

In June 1937 Representative William Pope restructured his bill for a Special Session of the State Legislature. Allred still opposed the bill and had now requested an investigation of land titles by the Land Commissioner and Attorney General. The House passed the legislation, but it died in the Senate. A statement allowing the park acquisition to await Allred's investigation essentially killed the bill. [52] Representative Pope promised to prepare legislation for a third attempt in the fall of 1938, but apparently decided otherwise. [53]

Later in 1937, Albert Jones, still the major landowner, approached an Eastern syndicate. New York Senator John Hastings and his associates organized to buy and develop Padre as a year-round playground similar to those in Florida and California. They agreed to pay \$10,000 by December 16, 1937, and then subsequent amounts of \$100,000 by March 1938 to eventually total \$550,000. This price included all surface rights and one-half mineral rights. The syndicate's plans included a causeway to withstand storms and high enough to allow passage of intracoastal waterway traffic, residential subdivisions on both ends of the island, yacht basins, a dude ranch, and a steamship service from Brownsville, New Orleans, and Corpus Christi. The syndicate paid the first \$10,000 then lost its option. William Neyland, Jones' agent, announced in July 1938 that another group formed to take over the option, but it never materialized. [54]

In 1940 all private development options stalled. Texas Attorney General Gerald Mann, who defeated Allred's protege, Ralph W. Yarborough, in the 1939 election, filed a suit on behalf of the State claiming title to the lands on Padre Island. More than 200 persons were listed as defendants, including Albert Jones. The case was tried in 1941 in the 117th District Court and a decision held for the defendants. The State of Texas appealed the decision, but in 1946 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court in favor of the defendants. [55] For the time being, the question of State ownership seemed resolved.




 Figure 10. Entrance to Padre Island Causeway, ca. 1940. *Courtesy PAIS Archives.*

National Park Service Continues Investigation of Padre Island

Congressman Richard Kleberg resumed his inquiries into Padre Island in June 1937. Acknowledging the ongoing State efforts, he seemed confident that Governor Allred would sign a new bill emerging from the summer 1937 Special Session. National Park Service representatives responded to Kleberg that his efforts to establish a national monument were never pursued because of the problems in getting State ownership. These representatives also suggested designating Padre as a State park, implying that a national park might be inappropriate. [56] The problem of public ownership followed the long-held Park Service and Congressional belief that a State government or private philanthropist should donate land in order for establishment of a national park. [57] This of course greatly complicated the Padre Island issue.

The Park Service released a special report on Padre Island in 1937 prepared by George Nason, National Park Service landscape architect. His report, prepared at the request of Mr. Bell and Neyland of Corpus Christi, showed support for the State park initiative. Nason mentioned the efforts for a State park but added some significant details on Padre Island. He stated that "the beach is hard and can be driven on by automobile...construction of roads is hardly necessary." Nason concluded that "To me, its interest is national rather than state." He placed it among the outstanding park areas of Texas mentioning Big Bend and Palo Duro Canyon. [58] In the fall of 1939 and again in winter 1940, National Park Service personnel made visits to Padre Island. Each issued positive reports on the island's wildlife and topography. [59] These reports from the late 1930s and early 1940s proved to be a turning point in recognizing the value of Padre Island by the National Park Service. World War II (1941-1945) became another obstacle to immediate advancement on the park idea.

On the eve of the United States entry as an Allied Power in World War II, National Park Service Director Arno Cammerer resigned. In 1940 Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes appointed Newton B. Drury, executive director of the Save-the-Redwoods League in California, as the new Park Service Director. Drury's 11-year administration faced some of the most difficult challenges in the history of the Park Service. The wartime constraints on financial, human, and natural resources brought repeated attempts to open park land for grazing, logging, and mining. Drury, however, devoted his administration to preservation of the park resources over use. His stalwart attitude and determination repelled most of these efforts. Director Drury did forfeit the barrier island Santa Rosa Island in Florida, now part of Gulf Islands National Seashore, to the Navy. He also removed Shasta Recreation Area in California from the park system and returned Lake Texoma Recreation Area to the Army Corps of Engineers. The lack of commitment to these park units reflected Drury's dislike for the seashores and reservoir-based recreation that emphasized outdoor recreation. He simply felt that these did not belong in the park system. [60]





Figure 11. National Park Service Visitors to Padre Island, May 1937. *Courtesy of The Dr. Fred'k McGregor Photo Collection of the Corpus Christi Museum.*

Director Drury's apprehension about seashores may be responsible for the National Park Service unofficially "stalling" on the Padre Island park issue in the late 1940s. Immediately after the end of World War II, a significant event triggered the reconsideration of Padre Island for national park status. On May 29, 1946, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the claims of the State of Texas for its ownership to Padre Island. [61] This decision eliminated the long confusion over public versus private ownership of the island. Albert Jones and the hundreds of other defendants were free to pursue their investment interests, which at this point was largely for oil and gas exploration.

In response to the Supreme Court decision, Corpus Christi leaders rekindled interest in the national park proposal. The local newspaper carried a story on August 23, 1946, reviewing the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce some eight years before and stating that the Park Service approved a \$400,000 appropriation at that time but dropped it because of the oil activity on Padre Island. [62] Several community leaders in Corpus Christi, however, queried the Park Service Director on the status of Padre Island as a possibility for designation as a national monument. Their letters implied that the Park Service agreed to make Padre Island a national monument if the State purchased it for a park. [63] John M. Davis, acting director of Region III, responded to Director Drury in a memorandum on the consideration of Padre Island. [64] He stated that the Park Service investigated and reported on Padre Island from December 1934 to January 1940. The concepts of a "national beach park," "national seashore area," "national parkway from Mexico to Louisiana," national monument, and national park were all considered at some point. Davis concluded with four statements: (1) the recreational possibilities for Padre Island were of national importance; (2) construction and maintenance of roads and a causeway would be major problems; (3) adjoining islands were stronger for wildlife refuges; and (4) land ownership would probably be the key factor (and problem) in further consideration. [65] Once again, Park Service personnel seemed ambivalent about the use of Padre Island as a national park unit. Corpus Christi leaders remained persistent, so the Park Service resumed its investigations.

Within a month of the internal Park Service communication, Naval Air Station leaders contacted the National Park Service about the Navy's use of Padre Island. The letter mentioned that only one bombing range was retained on the island and, as of November 1946, it was being released. [66] Although never overtly mentioned before this point, Park Service officials must have known of the military use of Padre, which may have been similar

to the use of Florida's Santa Rosa Island released to the Navy during the War. The Navy's use and the current status of Padre Island needed to be explored first-hand. In January 1947, Park Service officials from Santa Fe prepared to visit the island one more time. [67]

On Friday, February 7, 1947, four representatives of the National Park Service toured Padre Island. Minor R. Tillotson, director of Region III, which encompassed Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, Arkansas, southern Colorado, and Nevada, led the visiting team. John E. Kell, a park planner, Milton J. McColm, regional chief of lands, and Victor H. Cahalane, biologist from Chicago, accompanied him. Jeff Bell, manager of the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, Bob Taylor, assistant manager, Elliott R. Betts, division manager of Southwestern Bell and longtime friend of Tillotson's, and a newspaper reporter, accompanied the party. After boating across Corpus Christi Bay from Port Aransas, the visitors boarded a Navy command car with four-wheel drive. The party reportedly stopped a number of times for investigations but spent considerable time investigating a Navy bombing and machine-gunnery range. Victor Cahalane, considered by some to be the most productive biologist ever employed by the Park Service, dedicated his time to photographing and recording the island's wildlife. [68] The visitors reached Big Shell Beach, then turned around to return north. Final stops were made at the old Don Patricio causeway crossing to discuss access. On the following day, the Park Service representatives met with the Navy and Corpus Christi Chamber. [69]

Tillotson made no promises to the Chamber of Commerce representatives. He mentioned, however, that Cape Hatteras in North Carolina was being "considered" as a national park. [70] Legislation designating Cape Hatteras actually passed Congress on August 17, 1937, but no agreement had been reached with the State of North Carolina on deeding land to the Park Service nor any land acquired from private interests. [71] This comparison resurfaced later in the discussions of Padre Island National Seashore.

In April 1947, Milton McColm issued the report from the February Padre Island visit. Victor Cahalane issued his ecological report on March 19, 1947. McColm's remarks addressed the comprehensive aspects of the park and in the opening paragraphs stated that there was great confusion over what Padre Island might become and that "very few people in Texas have ever heard of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore project." His intention was to highlight the muddled understanding of what national parks were and that a national seashore designation for Padre might be unappreciated. [72] McColm also discussed the variety of uses proposed for Padre over the years, including exploring the idea of a parkway. [73] One of the most insightful aspects of the report acknowledged for the first time military activities on the island during World War II:

Padre Island was used as a bombing target range (latitude 27-36"-00; longitude 97-14"-00) and actual combat activities. The island was continuously patrolled, its entire length by the Coast Guard. Patrol stations were located every six miles on the island, connected by a continuous telephone line from one end to the other and the Coast Guard stations at Port Isabel and Port Aransas. Many survivors from ships (tankers mostly) torpedoed by German submarines landed on Padre Island. A few abandoned life rafts were seen at the northern end. [74]

McColm then turned to the ever-present problem of acquisition of the island for a park. His statement hinted at a problem that would recur in more threatening tones later, "The possibility of obtaining the entire island as a national seashore area, although not an impossibility, even now can be considered only as a probable expectation." [75] McColm then explored possible scenarios for acquisition of parkland, thus introducing another issue that recurred in future discussions, an island roadway. William Neyland of Corpus Christi mentioned to the Park Service visitors that "Albert Jones said he would be willing to give

600-800 acres. . . If a road should be built down the island after the Corpus Christi causeway is constructed he would be willing to give two or three additional public park sites consisting of about 200 acres each at different places down the island." [76] While ostensibly generous, the projected acreage of the entire island was still at least 70,000 acres and even the State park activities had included a minimum of 5,000 acres. Jones clearly envisioned the development potential of Padre Island over public benefit.

By 1948 National Park Service officials apparently dropped their interest in Padre. Local officials turned to another strategy. The City of Corpus Christi endorsed a bond package of \$300,000 to develop a "Gulf park." Development proposals included extensive grading and shaping of sand dunes, landscaping of palms, oleanders, and salt cedars, small bathhouses and concession stands, fishing piers, playgrounds, and eight acres of paved parking. A large bathhouse and pool located at the center of the development, designed to reflect the Spanish influence, were included in the overall design but not in the bond. [77] On December 18, 1948, citizens of Corpus Christi defeated the package putting an end to the local struggle for Padre Island's recreational development for the time being. [78]

Private Development Affecting Park Proposals

While residents of Corpus Christi debated the Gulf park proposal, the United States Army Corps of Engineers resumed work on the intracoastal waterway along the South Texas coastline. By August 1948 45 miles of dredging through the Laguna Madre on Padre Island's western shore remained. This final stretch completed the waterway from Carabella, Florida, to Brownsville, in 1949 and opened up a full Gulf coast freight shipping lane. [79]

In 1950 the Corpus Christi residents completed the causeway from Flour Bluff to Padre Island. Begun in February 1949 and financed through a public bond, the 4.5 mile causeway took 18 months to complete, opening June 17, 1950. Bauer-Smith Dredging Company of Port Lavaca constructed the causeway and a network of roads on Padre Island. [80] In the mid 1960s, area leaders named the causeway after former President John F. Kennedy. Four years later, crews completed Queen Isabella Causeway between Point Isabel and Brownsville. For the first time Padre Island became accessible by vehicle almost year-round from both the north and south ends.

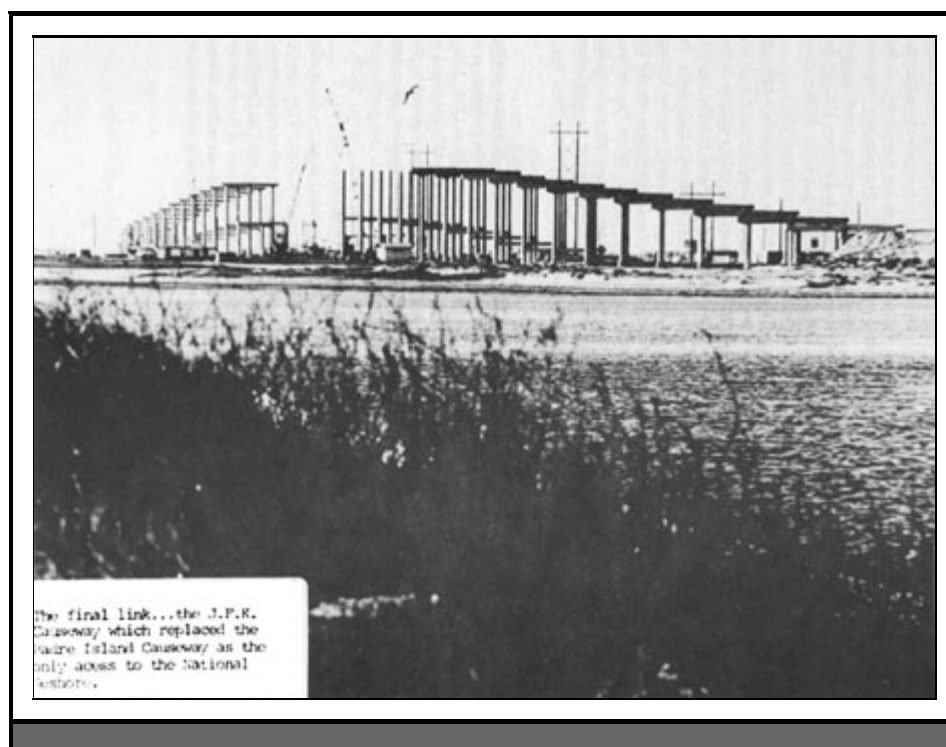


Figure 12. JFK Causeway, ca. 1950. *Courtesy PAIS Archives.*

Two other private developments also affected Padre Island. In April 1941 the United States Army Corps of Engineers dredged a pass between the Gulf and Laguna Madre in order to reduce the salinity in the north-central area of the Laguna Madre. Yarborough Pass, as it is now known, closed within five months because of natural deposits from the long-shore drift. The pass was reopened in November 1942, May 1944, and November 1944. Each time natural processes closed the pass within four to ten months. A final attempt to open Yarborough Pass began in February 1952 by the Texas Game and Fish Commission. The Commission dredged the pass 60 feet wide. Within three weeks, it was only three-foot wide putting an end to plans for opening the pass again. [81]

Mansfield Channel, however, a few miles south of Yarborough Pass, proved to be a different story. The Army Corps of Engineers began another channel across Padre Island in the early 1950s from the Gulf to Port Mansfield in Willacy County. Engineers designed it to reduce salinity in the Laguna Madre as well as provide a corridor for fish to go between the Gulf and the lagoon. Commercial and recreational vessels also could take advantage of the channel on a daily basis. In 1957 engineers began construction by placing precast concrete blocks directly on the bottom sediments. The northern blocks formed a jetty extending out 1,600 feet and the southern one did the same for 900 feet. Within a few months, the jetties began to drop and fell below the surface. Natural processes began to work just as they had at Yarborough Pass. Engineers replaced the concrete jetties with granite blocks, which helped to stabilize the channel but at the same time contribute to other destabilizing processes on Padre. [82]

National Park Initiative Develops. 1950-1959

During the 1940s, the national parks received little attention from Congress during appropriations. Park facilities deteriorated to a point of real concern. On top of these problems, post war park visitation steadily climbed from 22 million in 1946 to more than 50 million in 1955. Many national parks suffered so much from the heavy visitor traffic that Park Service officials began to explore proposals for new areas and types of parks. [83] The long World War II years, followed by the Korean Conflict in 1950, placed many demands on Director Drury. Finally, the financial constraints and repeated requests to use park resources led to Drury's demise. In January 1951, Director Newton Drury resigned. Arthur E. Demaray became director for a few months, then Conrad Wirth, a longtime employee of the National Park Service, assumed the position in December 1951. [84]

Wirth's administration completed the lingering Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area land acquisition. Since legislative approval in 1937, the Park Service encouraged the State of North Carolina to donate the land. These efforts languished because of ongoing oil exploration and indifference toward the park by North Carolina officials. In 1952 the Avalon and Old Dominion Foundations, both connected to the philanthropist Paul Mellon, donated one-half of the funds for acquisition. The State of North Carolina matched the grant providing more than one million dollars toward the purchase of Cape Hatteras. Over the next five years the Park Service acquired more than 25,000 acres. [85] The Park Service also dedicated \$1.4 million for beach erosion and sand stabilization at Cape Hatteras. Park Service officials and Congress noted the impact and cost of this work and often compared it to Padre Island over the next few years. [86]

Acquisition and management of Cape Hatteras in combination with the growing use of national parks overall led to a second comprehensive study of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts in 1954-55. Funded by Paul Mellon and his family, the Seashore Recreation Area Survey or National Seashore Study compared existing seashore conditions to the 1935 study. [87] The

researchers summarized the findings in a brochure entitled *Our Vanishing Shoreline*. The popular publication depicted a grim picture: public acquisition of shoreline was woefully inadequate and what remained was rapidly disappearing into private ownership. Conservationists now held information needed to substantiate what was commonly known. The alarming disappearance resulted in the Park Service listing 54 seashore areas and recommending 16 as high priorities for acquisition. [88]

The National Park Service found Padre Island much as reported in the 1935 study. Padre Island's 113-mile length remained the longest undeveloped stretch of beach in the contiguous United States. Although private developers worked on the extreme ends, no development appeared on more than 100 miles in the center. Change, however, appeared imminent. Tourists now visited over causeways at both ends of the island. Several oil companies maintained active oil and gas exploration and recovery programs as well. Park Service officials saw mineral rights and access to minerals as the major obstacle to Padre Island becoming a national park in the traditional use of that term. [89]

The 1955 study reported that approximately 100,000 acres could be obtained on Padre Island with an estimated acquisition cost of \$3.4 million. Special attention focused on natural resources. White pelicans were reported as "vanishing" and other resources were felt able to be restored if the island were left to itself. The report continued by stating that passenger cars could drive the full length of the island and since World War II plans for a scenic "Blue Water Highway" had been discussed. A new issue appeared in the report as well. Offshore, the survey stated, the outline of a "Texas tower" marked one of the radar installations of the new coastal interceptor defense system. The concluding sections covered land ownership and the problems of title and acquisition. [90]

The release of *Our Vanishing Shoreline* revived the issue of Padre Island becoming a national park. Since the 1935 report, Park Service officials repeatedly turned to the Padre Island issue but never seemed able to overcome the prevailing concepts that national parks were reserves only established on land gifted to the Federal government by a State or private interest, exempt from mineral extraction, and existing for more than just outdoor recreation. Local supporters were mercurial depending on local priorities and intervening national interests. In 1957 supporters of Padre Island resurfaced. These men and women seemed intent on Padre Island receiving a national designation of some type. Supporters wrote inquiring letters to Fred Seaton, Secretary of the Interior, Conrad Wirth, Director of the National Park Service, and Senator Lyndon Johnson. [91]

Director Wirth received what was to become the most important letter in January 1957 from John D. McCall of the firm McCall, Parkhurst, and Crowe in Dallas, Texas. McCall stated outright that he and associates had acquired an interest in Padre Island and wanted to discuss the park and recreational uses for the land. Hugh M. Miller, Director of Region III in Santa Fe, New Mexico, responded. Miller and William (Bill) L. Bowen, Regional Chief of Recreation Resource Planning, followed up by arranging a meeting with McCall on October 15, 1957. [92]

Ten months lapsed between the initial letter from McCall and Regional Director Miller's visit. Bill Bowen later explained that Miller delayed responding because he wanted to know how Director Wirth felt about revisiting the Padre Island issue. During the annual Superintendent's Conference in Yellowstone National Park in September 1957, Miller set up a 30-minute conference with Director Wirth, Associate Director Eivind Scoyen, Chief of Recreation Resource Planning Ben H. Thompson, and Chief of National Park System Planning Leo Diederich. All present felt that Miller should meet with John McCall. Wirth, who had himself reported on Padre Island in 1934, felt strongly that if the Park Service could not "secure mineral rights" then he would not be in favor of proceeding. Again, the concept

of a national park or seashore with active mineral extraction seemed infeasible. Bowen reflected on this meeting almost ten years later, "It should be borne in mind that in 1957 the Recreation Area classification was not generally accepted in conservation circles, the Congress, or for that matter within the Service." [93]

On October 18, 1957, Regional Director Miller and Bill Bowen met with John McCall in Dallas. McCall indicated that the owners he represented could not afford to donate the land, but if the Park Service was interested in establishing a national seashore, the owners would not put a speculative value on the property. In a memorandum to Director Wirth and largely drafted during the return automobile trip, Miller speculated that if 30 to 50 miles of the central part were acquired, the Park Service would have a "workable and acceptable unit." [94] This acreage was comparable to that obtained for Cape Hatteras National Seashore a few years earlier. Miller continued his report by offering two future directions for the project. First, he stated that if Padre Island could not be considered without acquisition of oil rights, then the whole matter should be dropped. Miller believed that the acquisition of mineral rights was not possible. Second, Miller and Bowen recommended that if the area could be considered for a National Seashore Recreation Area, then a group should study the island and propose boundaries. These boundaries should then be proposed to McCall to try to reach a compromise, seek appraisals, and explore funding options such as State or private contributions. He concluded that the alternative, abandonment of the project, would be regrettable. [95] On December 5, 1957, Conrad Wirth responded to Miller giving him the authority to proceed with a study "in order to determine definitely and finally the feasibility of such a project." [96]

With full authorization to proceed, Region III faced a real challenge. For the first time, the Region faced the possibility of a seashore park rather than the mountain and desert parks so familiar to its personnel. Regional Director Miller dispatched Bill Bowen and the Regional Chief of National Park System planning, Leslie Arnberger, to conduct a reconnaissance trip before planning a full scale investigation. Bowen and Arnberger left in January 1958 making one of their first stops at the Naval Air Training Station in Corpus Christi. The Commanding Officer was forewarned with a letter stating that the Park Service wanted to explore "preserving sections of unspoiled seashore" on Padre Island where they maintained aerial bombing ranges. Bowen remembered the meeting as initially tense; however, when the Navy learned that the primary reason for meeting was to get free transportation over the island during a future visit, relations improved. Bowen credited this first positive meeting as the beginning of a cooperative relationship between Padre Island National Seashore and the Navy. [97]

Two months later, March 17 and 18, John McCall and M.E. Allison, representing some of the landowners, Jackson Price, Assistant Director of the National Park Service from Washington, and Hugh Miller, Jerome Miller, Bill Bowen, and Leslie Arnberger, all from the Regional Office in Santa Fe, flew over the island and drove approximately 40 miles on the north end. The group reported that a full scale study should be conducted with an eye toward determining what part of the island should be part of a "national" area. [98]

The professional team conducted their work between May 21 and 26, 1958. Thomas Vint, chief of design and construction in Washington, Gordon Fredine, Biologist, Washington, Ray Schenck, Park Planner, Washington, Jerome Miller, Landscape Architect, Southwest Region, and Leslie Arnberger, Park Planner, Region III, investigated the island. They unanimously agreed that the major portion should be recommended as a National Seashore. Regional Office personnel recommended 35 to 40 miles; Washington staff wanted a larger area. In July 1958 the team forwarded drafts of the report to Director Wirth, but the Park Service held the final report until February 1959. It showed boundaries of the central portion of Padre Island consisting of 88 miles leaving out the northern 10 miles and southern 15 miles to allow for

expansion of tourist development. They recommended an eastern boundary beginning at the two-fathom depth in the Gulf of Mexico, to allow for a possible dock, and the western one at the eastern edge of the Intracoastal Canal. These boundaries included North and South Bird Island, owned by the State of Texas with the northern one leased to the Audubon Society for a bird sanctuary. [99]

The February report included few surprises. Acquisition of mineral rights seemed infeasible, so the emphasis was on recreation and natural resources that would benefit all citizens. The straightforward handling of the mineral extraction issue proved wise in eliminating some anticipated objections. Another statement in the report, however, became a major point of contention. One sentence in the recommendations suggested that a central section of the island should remain roadless in order to preserve the island's primitive character. By April 1959 the Park Service released the Padre Island investigative report to the public. [100]

A number of positive events preceded the release of the report. In April 1958 the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments supported Padre Island for National Seashore designation and recommended additional study. Major Texas city newspapers also supported the seashore proposal with the exceptions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley newspapers in Brownsville and Harlingen. The owner of both newspapers personally objected to Federal involvement in the State and especially to the Padre Island issue. Finally, the Texas Congressional delegation gradually began to support the idea. Congressman John Young (Democrat, Corpus Christi), Congressman Joe M. Kilgore (Democrat, Harlingen), and Harry McPherson and Bill Brammer of Senator Lyndon Johnson's office took a special interest in the Padre Island proposal. On June 27, 1958, these representatives met with Thomas Vint and Leo Diederich of the National Park Service to discuss the investigative study underway and Park Service plans. During the meeting, Representative Young's staff interrupted the discussion to announce that Senator Ralph Yarborough had introduced S.4064, "A Bill to provide for the establishment of the Padre Island National Park, in the State of Texas." When introduced on the Senate floor, Yarborough changed the title of the bill to state "National Seashore" rather than "National Park." [101] On July 14, Representatives Young and Kilgore and Senator Johnson wrote to Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton to encourage the Park Service to proceed with its study of Padre Island as a national park. [102]

The Padre Island issue fit neatly into the National Park Service's postwar park planning programs. Since the mid-1950s the declining state of the national parks caught the attention of journalists. One of the most famous articles appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, entitled "Let's Close the National Parks," by Bernard de Voto. [103] On a more local level, Ronnie Dugger, founder and editor of *The Texas Observer*, wrote editorials on the unsettled nature of Padre Island to prod Texas Congressmen into action. [104] De Voto's article criticized the deplorable physical facilities and visitor conditions at national parks contributed to a national program designed by Director Conrad Wirth. "MISSION 66," launched in 1956, became a ten-year, eight-point program to improve and expand the national park system. [105] Conrad Wirth later commented that the "seashore study was part of MISSION 66, studying a comprehensive plan of what land would be desirable for the Nation by 2000." [106] Dugger's editorials stressed conservation and emanated from the liberal wing of the Texas Democratic party that was generally in opposition to the more conservative wing led by Senator Lyndon B. Johnson and supported by Representatives Young and Kilgore and later the governor of Texas, John B. Connally. In response to his statements on Padre Island, Dugger reached Austin attorney Ralph Yarborough who became the key figure in the liberal wing of the State's Democratic party. In April 1957, Yarborough's several unsuccessful bids for governor of Texas turned into a victory for the remaining term of the United States Senate seat of Price Daniel. This election placed Yarborough in a commanding position to support the idea of a park on Padre Island at the national level, but put the conservative Price Daniel in a position

to oppose such on a State level. [[107](#)]

At last, the time seemed to have arrived for Padre Island. The nation needed public recreation areas in the 1950s and the National Park Service coveted the nation's seashores in order to satisfy the need. Public awareness on the value of Padre Island also became heightened. Texans as well as citizens outside the State learned of the disappearance of undeveloped shoreline. The most important development, however, proved to be political dynamics and political will. Several years later Senator Yarborough reported on the time before he proposed legislation for Padre Island in an article in *The Texas Observer* entitled "The Bounty of Nature":

I remember the *Observer's* editorial for a national park on Padre back in 1958. The late Bob Bray, my press man, (formerly the *Observer's* associate editor), brought it in. Bob and his father once owned a newspaper on the Texas coast. He wanted me to introduce the Padre Island bill, and he advocated it strongly. He was very fond of fishing. I didn't introduce it at first, but he buttressed the editorial with other ones from the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* and the *Houston Press*. I knew something about the Padre Island fight of 1936, when James Allred was governor, and wanted to look into that and study the legislation over title to Padre Island that went to the Supreme Court. We finally pitched the bill in the hopper on the 27th of June, 1958, in the 85th Congress. [[108](#)]

Although the Senator later learned even more about the special qualities of Padre Island through his constituents in South Texas, he already knew what private developers intended for Padre Island. [[109](#)] In December 1958 the Southwest Edition of *The Wall Street Journal* featured a full-page advertisement for real estate investment on South Padre Island. The headline said everything, "For Real Estate Investors Who Wish They Had Bought Property in South Florida 20 years Ago, South Padre Beach, The last major undeveloped subtropical beach area in the United States." [[110](#)] The future of Padre Island appeared to be at a critical crossroad: Would Padre Island be developed by private interests or held as a public resource?

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Padre Island

Administrative History



CHAPTER FOUR: LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Legislative Efforts Begin: 1958

In the same year that the Park Service sent the investigative team to Padre Island, United States Senator Ralph W. Yarborough of Texas introduced S.4064, providing for the establishment of a Padre Island National Park (later changed to "National Seashore"). Senator Yarborough quoted the earlier Park Service survey, *Our Vanishing Shoreline*, in introducing the bill to the Senate on June 27. Calling the island "a place of undying historic charm, . . . one of the most desirable semitropical rest spots in the world," the Senator lauded "the golden sands of Padre Island and the white-capped blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico." Along with the text of the bill, Senator Yarborough requested that an editorial from the *Texas Observer* of June 13, 1958, be printed in the *Congressional Record*. The article, written by editor Ronnie Dugger, cited the shoreline survey's recommendation of Padre Island and claimed that the island "could be bought for \$3.5 million." Despite the Senator's persuasive arguments, the 85th Congress took no action on the bill. [1] On the first day of the 86th Congress, January 9, 1959, the undaunted Senator Yarborough introduced an identical bill, S.4. This bill fared better and was referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, which in turn gave the bill to its Public Lands Subcommittee. [2]

In June 1959, the Texas Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution No. 16 consenting to the establishment of a National Seashore Area on Padre Island. It was sponsored by Representatives Benton Murray and Roger Daily and Senators Hubert Hudson and Bruce Reagan. H.C.R. No. 16 consented to a National Seashore only in Willacy and Kenedy Counties between the Mansfield Channel and Yarborough Pass--far less than the amount recommended by the Park Service and advocated by Senator Yarborough. A second point in the resolution, not addressed by the Park Service report, was the control exerted by the Willacy County Navigation District over the land, spoil banks, easements, and right-of-way of the Mansfield Channel. The Texas Legislature did not want these to be part of a National Seashore. Included in the resolution was a condition with which the Park Service agreed: that any acquisition of land should not affect the mineral rights or the extraction of minerals. [3] This resolution fulfilled the stipulation in S. 4 that, if the bill were to pass, the Secretary of the Interior might take no action until the State of Texas gave consent through legislative action. [4]

H.C.R. No. 16 took the place of an earlier attempt by Representative Daily in April 1959 to pass a bill "authorizing the State Parks Board to acquire Padre Island for park purposes, and authorizing the State to convey such land to the United States for establishing a National Park." [5] This bill, H.B. 469, was defeated in the State Affairs Committee, probably because of the persuasive testimony of John D. McCall, representing six companies owning land on Padre Island. This was the same man who in October 1957 had met with Regional Director Miller to discuss federal purchase of land for a National Seashore. McCall had not changed his mind about the desirability of the project, but disagreed with the wording of the bill in the matters of size and mineral rights. McCall's testimony implied that all 120 miles would be

included despite development at both ends of the island. He suggested a much smaller area and said that he had "good reason to believe that the Government would be happy with less . . . thirty miles has been discussed." [6] McCall was recalling his October 1957 conversation with Regional Director Miller who had casually suggested, before any studies were done, that 30 to 50 miles might be appropriate.

McCall reminded the committee that developed land was tax producing, but park lands were not. Realizing that the costs would be prohibitive, neither the Park Service nor Senator Yarborough ever considered the acquisition of mineral rights. Yet McCall repeatedly mentioned the astronomical cost of mineral-right acquisition and said that the State would apparently be required to "deed to the Government the very valuable offshore mineral rights now owned by the State and which are so dearly coveted by some of the administrative agencies of the Government." [7] This was the first documented mention of the rumor of the potential loss of State mineral rights, something the Park Service never desired anyway.

Another action taken by the 56th Legislature of Texas that had potential impact on recreational use of Padre Island was the Texas Open Beaches Act (TOBA), passed in the second session. This act guaranteed public access to the ocean-fronting beaches. The area between mean low tide and mean high tide was now public property. The area between mean high tide and the vegetation line might be privately owned, but the owners could not erect any barrier to public access and use. [8] Texans rejoiced in this affirmation of what they considered a basic recreational right, but this would prove to be a point of disagreement between the public and the Park Service, which would consider vehicular access to the beaches damaging at the very least.

Region III Evaluation and Leadership: 1958-1959

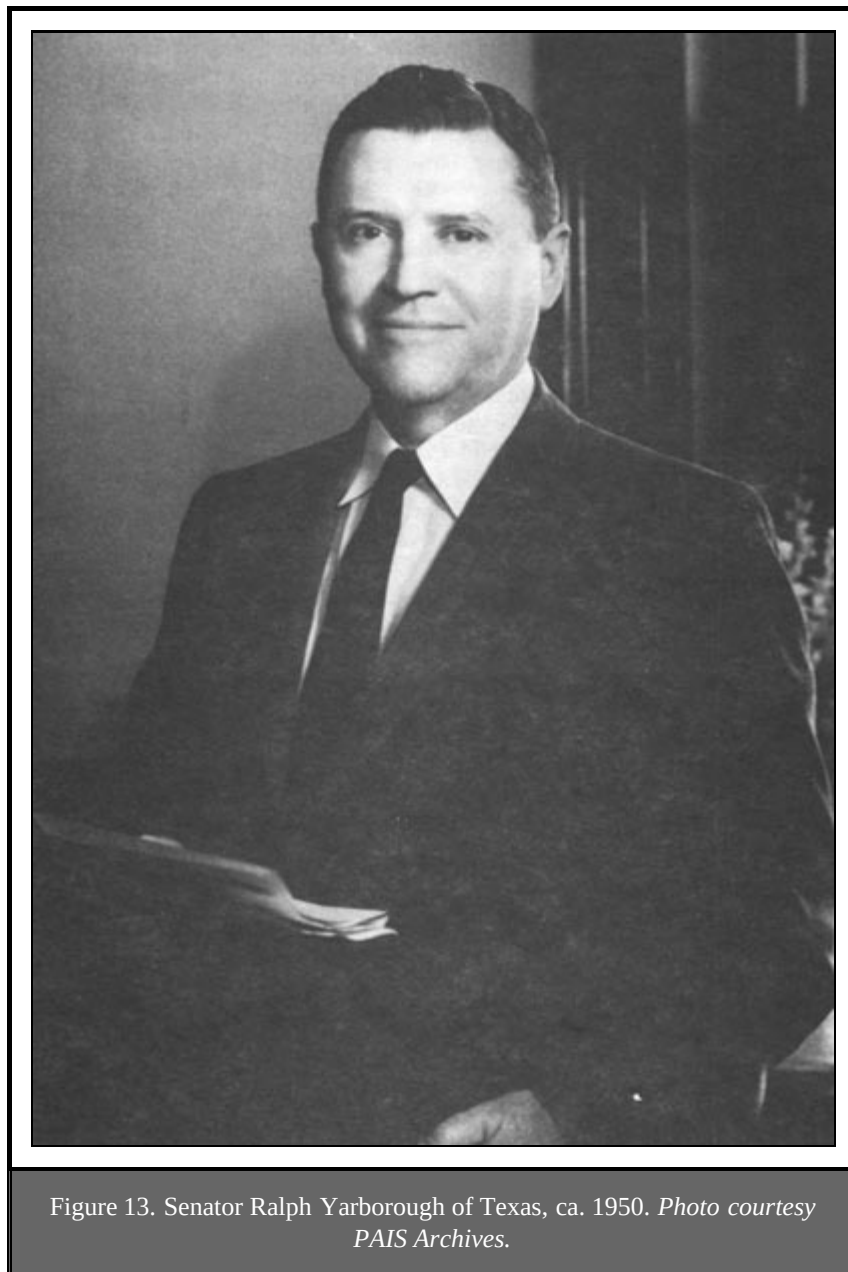
Hugh Miller, the Regional Director, first learned of H.C.R. No. 16 in late April. In a memorandum to the Director of the National Park Service, Miller reported that he had refrained from taking any position on the legislation, then known as H.B. 469, other than saying that if S.4 became law such action would be necessary. To the Director, however, Miller commented on the limitation placed on the Seashore at the Mansfield Channel by the Texas Legislature. He stated that his office did not consider the stipulation disastrous and, indeed, could "perceive logic in establishing the channel as the south boundary of the park. We would not be disturbed if the Willacy County line should ultimately be proposed as the south boundary." [9] This was the second time Miller had promoted the acceptance of a smaller area for the seashore.

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments met in April 1959 and suggested approval of Congressional bills to acquire Padre Island, as it had at its annual meeting the previous year. The Advisory Board added two stipulations to its approval. First, Padre Island should be designated a Shoreline Area, or National Seashore, rather than a National Park. Second, oil and gas activities should be eliminated immediately upon passage of the bill because "any such hostile use ... renders Padre Island inappropriate for preservation as a unit of the National Park System." [10] This was the only organization that recommended that all mineral extraction cease with the inclusion of Padre Island in the National Park Service system. All others realized the impracticality of such a demand, however ecologically and aesthetically desirable it might be.

In May 1959 the Board of Trustees of the National Parks Association adopted a resolution on Padre Island. The Association found Padre Island to be nationally significant and of suitable quality for inclusion in the National Park Service system of reserved land. The board noted the detractive aspects of the oil and gas activities present on the island, but felt that these activities could be limited and controlled by agreement and that they would be relatively

temporary and unimportant in the long run. The Association agreed with the position of Senator Yarborough and the Park Service that the area should include all of the undeveloped parts of Padre Island. [11]

Senator Yarborough kept his bill before the Senate throughout 1959 by monthly reminders such as his speech printed in the August 11 *Congressional Record*. In this address he cited increasing attendance at Cape Hatteras National Seashore as evidence of public interest in national seashores. After mentioning H.C.R. No. 16, Senator Yarborough pointed out that the biggest danger to the project was the attempt by "certain private developers" to limit the size of the park to a small part of Padre Island. [12] The Senator, obviously aware of McCall's testimony in Austin, declared his opposition "to making it a little honky-tonk beach which would deny visitors the elbow room they need to really enjoy the beauty of this fabulous area of the Gulf." [13]



First Subcommittee Hearings: 1959

By September the Senate Public Lands Subcommittee scheduled a December public hearing on S.4 in Corpus Christi. The Park Service too began to prepare its proposals for the first

public forum on Padre Island. Regional Director Miller wrote Conrad Wirth, Director of the National Park Service, and suggested that Wirth represent the Park Service at the hearing. Miller urged Wirth to inspect the island and proposed a two-day visit: the first day for an aerial view by airplane and helicopter, the second day for a ground tour. In a final paragraph, Miller changed the subject and expressed a desire to get "Senator Johnson on the bandwagon in favor of a Padre Island proposal." [14] It undoubtedly seemed strange to Miller that the other senator from Texas had not joined Senator Yarborough in his public lobbying for a National Seashore. Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton also noticed Senator Lyndon Johnson's reticence on the subject. He would soon remark that "Johnson could push through the legislation at any time if he wanted." [15] Senator Johnson's absence, however, was related to his antipathy toward the junior Senator Yarborough as well as his deep seated opposition to the whole national seashore idea.

With the Director's approval, Region III arranged with the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station for air transportation during an inspection tour by Wirth on December 10, 1959. [16] The change of the hearing date to December 14 prompted Wirth to change the inspection date to December 13, as his schedule allowed only a two-day trip to Corpus Christi. [17]

The Public Lands Subcommittee changed the date of the hearing, and, because of the amount of public interest, found it necessary to change the location from the Driscoll Hotel to the larger Exhibition Hall in Corpus Christi [18] Assisted by Senator Yarborough and Representative John Young of Corpus Christi, the subcommittee chairman, Frank E. Moss of Utah, conducted the hearing at which proponents of the National Seashore greatly outnumbered the opposition. Representing the Park Service was Director Wirth, his Special Assistant Frank E. Harrison, new Regional Director Thomas J. Allen, Regional Chief of Recreation Resource Planning William L. Bowen, and Regional Chief of NPS Planning Leslie P. Arnberger, who had participated in the Park Service's 1958 field investigation of Padre Island. [19]

Forty-two of the 44 witnesses testified in favor of S.4 by reading or presenting statements and by introducing petitions signed by a total of 9,376 Texans from 297 cities and towns. [20] Especially valuable was the testimony of Director Wirth to inform the public on the Park Service's stand on the extent of the proposed seashore, oil and gas activity on the island, and development plans for the seashore, particularly in regard to roadways. He assured the audience that the Park Service did not intend to exclude private development by using the entire island that indeed the Park Service wished to omit land at both ends of the island from the seashore in order for private enterprise to develop visitor accommodations and commercial facilities. [21] On the oil and gas recovery question, Wirth informed those present that policies applied to National Seashores were more flexible than those for National Parks, and that the Park Service would attempt to work with the oil companies to lessen the "interference with scenic and recreational values." [22] The only part of Wirth's testimony that may have distressed many National Seashore proponents was his belief in the desirability of keeping a central portion of the island roadless to preserve a part in a primitive state. [23] He concluded by giving an idea of the possible effect of a National Seashore on the local economy by citing a study made of the area in the vicinity of Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina. According to the study, tourism increased more than 300%, deposits in local banks more than doubled, and the increase in value of the surrounding property more than compensated for the tax loss due to the removal of National Seashore lands from the property tax rolls. [24] Wirth later commented that he had never seen such an overwhelmingly favorable endorsement at a public hearing of a park project similar to the proposed National Seashore on Padre Island. [25]

Typical of the private citizens supporting the seashore were Mel and Erna Niquette. Perhaps in view of their tireless correspondence promoting the National Seashore, the Niquettes were

far more than ordinary proponents. Early in the 1950s the Niquettes vacationed on Padre Island, fell under the island's spell, and bought a South Padre Island lot from developer John L. Tompkins. Owners of a busy vacuum cleaner shop in Victoria, Texas, the Niquettes found the time to maintain an extensive correspondence with anyone interested in Padre Island becoming a National Seashore, in particular Senator Yarborough. The senator in turn kept the Niquettes informed of all developments. This correspondence and articles they clipped from newspapers and pasted in a scrapbook are now in the archives at the Flour Bluff Headquarters of the National Seashore. In common with many of their fellow proponents, the Niquettes strongly favored Park Service construction of a road the length of the island; if the Park Service were unwilling, they thought that construction of a through road should be required in the enabling legislation. Although Senator Yarborough originally agreed with the idea of a roadway and maybe tourist development on the island, he eventually believed in the preservation of the island. [26] On this point, the Niquettes and Senator Yarborough later disagreed. [27]

S.4 received scant legislative attention during 1960, the year of the Kennedy-Johnson Democratic ticket for the Presidency, yet lobbying continued for a National Seashore on Padre Island. The Niquettes wrote repeatedly to Senator Yarborough, Senator Johnson, Governor Price Daniel, and Texas Senator Murray urging passage of the bill. Senator Yarborough wrote to the Niquettes to encourage them to recruit "more 'helpers' to 'push' "for the Seashore, more letters, and more support." [28] The Niquettes wrote Senator John F. Kennedy, who was busily campaigning, and "told him Padre Island is Texas' New Frontier," in the hope that he would "throw his weight in." [29]

Kennedy-Johnson Era Begins: 1960

The Kennedy-Johnson victory in November 1960 raised hopes for passage of the seashore bill. With a Texan as vice-president, National Seashore proponents thought success would be guaranteed. At the opening of the 87th Congress, January 5, 1961, Senator Yarborough again introduced S.4. He cited the widespread support for the seashore, from private citizens to an impressive list of organizations that had passed resolutions favoring the project. Trying to establish a sense of urgency, Senator Yarborough pointed out that the number of possible areas for national seashores became more limited with each year due to private development, and that, with the passing of each year, the cost of Padre Island would become greater and the area available smaller. In closing, he invoked President Kennedy's New Frontier:

In urging the establishment of Padre Island National Seashore, . . . I am not speaking for the New Frontier. Instead, I plead for what many conservationists, many Americans, consider and what really is, geographically, the last frontier. Unless we act now, it will be the lost frontier. [30]

In the United States House of Representatives on February 28, Representatives Joe Kilgore (Democrat, Harlingen) and John Young (Democrat, Corpus Christi) introduced H.R. 5013 and H.R. 5049, respectively, for the establishment of the Padre Island National Seashore. These identical bills contained everything mentioned in S.4 with two important changes and three additional—and limiting—sections. [31]

In common with S.4, the House bills set forth specific boundaries to the area to be included in the Seashore, but these boundaries were well inside Senator Yarborough's proposed area. The total length of the National Seashore was reduced to 65 miles in the House versions, down 23 miles from the 88 of S.4. The northernmost boundary of the House bills placed the Audubon Society sanctuary on North Bird Island well outside of the seashore rather than within its area, as in S.4. [32]

The second change was in the amount of money that the bills would authorize the appropriation for the purchase of the proposed area. S.4 authorized no more than \$4 million for the 88-mile seashore; H.R. 5013 and H.R. 5049 authorized no more than \$5 million for the smaller area. The Park Service recommended that a specific amount not be included in any bill, since the land had not been appraised recently. The island had not even been completely surveyed in recent years, and as a barrier island, Padre was subject to fluctuations in acreage. [33]

The major differences between the House and Senate versions of the Seashore bills were included in three additional sections in both House bills, each of which attempted to satisfy factions among the supporters of the Seashore. The first special interest section of the House Bills, Section Six, concerned jurisdiction over any highways that might be affected or altered by the establishment of the Seashore. This section could have made it impossible for the pro-road forces to push through county road proposals, which, after passage of the bill, would put the Park Service in the position of being forced to accept a through road down Padre Island, even though the Park Service would be allowed to change the location of such a road. [34]

Section Seven of the House bills called for construction and maintenance of a roadway from the northern seashore boundary to the southern boundary to provide public access to the full length of the seashore area. This section also required the Service to provide public access to the full length of the seashore area and roads connecting the park road to access highways from the mainland. [35] One way or another, Representatives Kilgore and Young tried to satisfy road proponents by forcing the Federal government to bear the cost of a Corpus Christi-to-Brownsville island highway if it wanted to establish a national seashore on Padre Island.

The third difference between the House and Senate versions of the Padre Island bill concerned the use of Padre Island as a target range by the Navy. Section Eight of the House bills stated that the Secretary of the Interior must assure the Navy that the Department of the Interior would not interfere with Navy use of aerial gunnery or bombing ranges located in the vicinity of Padre Island. [36] This section would have provided for a most disruptive secondary use of a national seashore and was opposed by the Park Service and seashore advocates, regardless of their position on a through roadway or the size of the seashore. It is difficult to understand why such a stipulation appeared in both House bills, unless it had been requested by Corpus Christi businessmen fearful of the closure of the Naval Air Station if the Padre Island ranges were closed. These fears were overstated; the Navy had no intention of abandoning Corpus Christi even if it had to utilize alternate target sites. The Park Service had already sounded out the Navy in 1958 about the matter. At that time, the commanding officer expected Naval use to continue "for the foreseeable future," although the leases on the ranges were due to expire in 1964. [37]

Second Subcommittee Hearings: 1961-62

Initial action on all three seashore bills was delayed. The Public Lands Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs scheduled its hearing on S.4 for April 11 and 13 in Washington, D.C. The House Subcommittee on National Parks scheduled a hearing for out-of-town witnesses on April 13 for H.R. 5013 and H.R. 5049. [38]

Chairman Alan Bible of Nevada presided over the Senate hearing. Twenty-seven witnesses presented statements to the seven Subcommittee members present. A large number of letters, editorials, and resolutions increased the amount of testimony presented to the Senators. Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, the first witness before the Subcommittee, testified enthusiastically in favor of the bill. He reiterated the Park Service's previous assurances that mineral rights were not going to be acquired due to the prohibitive cost, and suggested that

the situation would offer the oil and gas industry an opportunity to demonstrate that it could extract minerals without permanently damaging the land and destroying wildlife habitats. Secretary Udall also expressed a hope that no restriction would be added to S.4 that would force the Park Service to build a roadway through the length of the seashore, and said that development of the seashore would be carefully planned by the Park Service to provide access as needed. [39]

After Secretary Udall summarized his prepared statement for the Subcommittee, the members questioned him thoroughly on three items: cost of the seashore, present ownership, and mineral development. Senator Bible wanted a firm estimate of the acquisition cost of the land from the secretary, but the only answer was that the 1958 figure, \$4 million, was too low. Senator Gordon Allott of Colorado took up the same subject when allowed to question the witness. The senator first asked what part of the proposed seashore was owned by the State of Texas. Tom Bryan of Sun Oil Company of Dallas answered that the immediately adjacent gulf side and all of the Laguna Madre submerged lands were state-owned. The senator then questioned Secretary Udall closely on the cost of two other proposed seashores: Point Reyes, California, and Cape Cod, Massachusetts. After receiving the answer of \$22 million for the former and \$20 million for the latter, the senator asked if the secretary thought that \$4 million was a realistic estimate of the cost of Padre Island lands. Secretary Udall admitted that the actual cost may have doubled since 1958. Senator Gordon Allott, also a member of the Appropriations Committee, responded by predicting that the final total would be double the secretary's admission of \$8 million. [40]

Senator Allott continued his examination of Secretary Udall by asking how the State lands would be acquired. The secretary answered that he was sure the State would recognize the value and public interest in the seashore and would be willing to negotiate with the Department of the Interior. Senator Allott's response revealed the reason for his close cross-examination; he had received "quite a few letters" from people in Texas opposed to the bill, "which I cannot quite believe in myself." [41] Senator Allott had earlier referred to the cost of Padre Island as "a pig in a poke"; that remark became clearer after this statement further illustrated his bias against the project. [42]

Senator Allott then questioned the secretary on the intent of the phrasing in the bill concerning mineral development. He first wanted clarification on exactly what minerals would be reserved and allowed development by the owners of the mineral rights. In a lengthy dialogue, Secretary Udall assured the senator that mineral development would be limited to oil and gas. After being told by the chairman, Senator Bible, that such a limitation was in the Department of the Interior's report on S.4, Senator Allott replied that he did not notice the limitation and did not believe one was in the report. [43] Secretary Udall was able to answer that the Department had set up a liaison committee with conservation organizations and representatives of the oil and gas industry to provide an opportunity for creative solutions to any problems. He also assured the senator that the Department would not propose regulations that would prevent normal oil and gas development. Senator Allott accepted this and requested that the word "reasonable" be inserted before the word "regulation." [44]

The second witness of the morning, Senator Yarborough, also testified at length in favor of the seashore, but limited his statement to the issue of the size of the seashore and the question of road construction in the area. He pointed out that his first two bills to establish a National Seashore on Padre Island, S.4064 in 1958 and S.4 in 1959, did not limit the size of the seashore. In the present bill before the subcommittee the area had been reduced to what Senator Yarborough called "compromise island" in the hope of lessening opposition and for the purpose of avoiding conflict with development. [45]

Senator Yarborough stated that the question of the size of the seashore had been principally

raised by the major island property owners who wished to limit the seashore to a length between 20 and 65 miles in the middle of the island. The senator admitted that if the proposed northern boundary were moved more to the north, he might agree to a 65-mile length. The middle of the island, he stressed, was not as suitable for recreation due to its narrowness, limited passing ability by vehicles, and hazardous rough shell beaches. To limit the seashore to that area would, in the senator's opinion, "cut the heart out" of the bill. [46]

To substantiate his testimony as to the physical condition of the middle of the island, Senator Yarborough offered for the record a statement by Cash Asher of Corpus Christi, president of the Corpus Christi Outdoor Club, executive board member of the Texas Conservation Council, and longtime recreational user of Padre Island. This statement described the beaches of the proposed 88-mile seashore, section by section, in terms of accessibility and recreational opportunities. According to Mr. Asher, the best area for all forms of recreation was the first 17 miles, where the hard-packed sand formed a broad, driveable beach that gently and safely sloped into the Gulf. The House bills would remove this area from the National Seashore. The beach in this area was composed of shell banks, making four-wheel drive vehicles imperative. At Little Shell Beach, and for the rest of the proposed National Seashore area, the steeper slope of the beach and swifter offshore currents made swimming hazardous, although fishing improved in this area. Mr. Asher's statement went so far as to say that the public would be better off without a National Seashore than to accept only the middle of the island, as proposed in the House bills. Senator Yarborough said that in view of the lack of beach recreation area in the 65-mile proposal there was no justification for accepting less than the 88 miles proposed in his bill. [47]

With this explanation of his insistence on an 88-mile-long National Seashore completed, Senator Yarborough turned to the issue of mineral development and offered an amendment to his bill that would clarify protection of oil and gas rights. Senator Bible questioned him for a brief period to ensure that the amendment would indeed clarify the matter. Senator Yarborough assured the chairman that the mineral rights held by both individuals and the State of Texas would not be abridged. [48] He concluded discussion of the removal of oil and gas by pointing out that such production "is a transitory thing . . . The minerals are exhaustible, and will be used, but the inspirational appeal of the natural seashore, unchanged by bulldozers and man, is inexhaustible." [49]

The last point raised in Senator Yarborough's statement was the issue of a through highway down the length of the island. The senator told the subcommittee that the Texas Highway Department had surveyed the island as to the feasibility of such a project, but abandoned the idea due to the excessive initial expense and the continued cost of rebuilding after storms. Senator Yarborough maintained that if the State of Texas had not found the project feasible, then the Federal government should not be required to build one. [50] To require the construction of such a road in the enabling legislation, in Senator Yarborough's view, would "straightjacket" the Park Service. [51]

At the close of Senator Yarborough's statement Senator Henry Dworshak of Idaho cross-examined him thoroughly on two points: the lack of a state park on Padre Island and the compatibility of recreation and oil and gas development. Senator Dworshak first wanted to know what Texas had done to develop recreational opportunities on the island. When told that the counties at the north and south ends of the island, Nueces and Cameron, had developed small parks, while the State of Texas had done nothing, Senator Dworshak asked why not, especially in view of the millions of dollars in revenue from offshore oil and gas production. Senator Yarborough had already testified that no money from the offshore production to the State of Texas was dedicated by law to the permanent school fund, but repeated himself, adding that those funds could not be diverted to fund park development. He said that it was not a case of the State of Texas being unwilling to develop a state park, as

Senator Dworshak implied in his question, but that the area would be better off in the hands of the National Park Service. He insisted that an area such as Padre Island was a national treasure, and deserved to be protected as a resource of national, not simply local, importance. [52] Senator Yarborough added later in his testimony that when potential tourists:

start out and look on the map and see a national park--they will know they will have national park rangers, comfort stations, proper policing. You might have it on the State park and might have it better. But the people of the other forty-nine states don't know it. [53]

The second line of questioning Senator Dworshak pursued was the compatibility of recreation and oil and gas development. After examining Senator Yarborough on how much of the proposed seashore was being developed as oil-producing land, Senator Dworshak asked if tourism and oil production could be mixed, adding that "probably you can't have both concurrently." [54] Senator Yarborough asserted that the two could be mixed, and were mixed, judging by the number of current visitors to the island. He added that these visitors only wanted regulations that would "prevent oil from being turned loose in there," meaning regulations that would ensure non-damaging exploration and production. [55] Senator Dworshak misunderstood the answer and asked, "Who is going to stop this oil development? Do you people in Texas want development or tourism?" [56] These questions reflected a common misunderstanding by the general public, who saw the issue of the compatibility of oil and gas development and recreation as an either/or situation. Either there could be production or there could be recreation, but certainly not both, since oil and gas wells, in the public mind, meant oil spewing from derricks and despoiling the countryside. Senator Yarborough explained that there need not be conflict between development and recreation. Barnacles and other food sources found on the offshore platforms attracted fish and both conventional and spear fishermen who found that offshore platforms provided excellent fishing. [57]

Despite this assurance as to the compatibility of the two activities, and despite the amendment to the bill to protect oil and gas rights within the proposed National Seashore area, Senator Dworshak persisted in his belief in the incompatibility of development and recreation. Senator Dworshak continued that mineral exploration was not allowed within the boundaries of national parks. Senator Yarborough admitted that this was true in conventional national parks but that Padre Island would be an exception. [58]

Senator Yarborough did not attempt to explain that this exception was due to the difference between the stated missions of national parks and national seashores or national recreational areas. He undoubtedly realized that Senator Dworshak had a conviction that Padre Island should be a state park. This was borne out by Senator Dworshak's return to the idea in his final questions before being cut off by the chairman due to the scheduled noon recess. Senator Dworshak's low opinion of the necessity for a National Seashore was established in his comments after Senator Yarborough submitted in corroboration of his testimony telegrams from the Texas State Parks Board and the chairman of the Legislative Beach Study Committee, State Senator Robert W. Baker. [59] Senator Dworshak commented that:

with all that influence, you could probably very easily get the creation of a State park there with all those big shots ready to support that for recreational purposes. You don't need any Federal assistance. You can establish a State park in a few days. [60]

The testimony of the afternoon session witnesses progressed more rapidly than the morning session testimony. To accommodate as many of the witnesses from Texas as possible, Senator Bible requested that prepared statements be summarized, not read, and that the

statements and additional information be given to the subcommittee for insertion in the hearing minutes. The questioning of the afternoon witnesses was brief and lacked the hostile tone of some of the morning examinations, perhaps because these witnesses were private citizens and local government officials who were removed from any frictions within the Federal government.

The first witness of the afternoon was Ben McDonald, the newly elected mayor of Corpus Christi, accompanied by two city councilmen, W.R. Roberts and Jose DeLeon. All three men enthusiastically supported S.4. They agreed that the National Seashore should be 88 miles long and that the Park Service should not be restricted by a legislated requirement for a through roadway. Mayor McDonald stated that it was difficult to find any controversy in the city on the project. In the recent election in Corpus Christi for mayor and councilmen, 21 of the 22 candidates favored the National Seashore as proposed in S.4 and favored leaving all development plans to the National Park Service. Mayor McDonald added that the main objection the city had in the past to the National Seashore designation was the possible interference with the Navy's use of the area. When the Navy assured the city in 1959 that a National Seashore would not hinder Naval activities, this objection was removed. [61]

Oscar Dancy, county judge of Cameron County almost continuously since 1920, was the next afternoon witness; his colorful testimony reflected his support for Senator Yarborough's bill. He denounced the move to require road construction through the National Seashore. He further claimed that if the road were a requirement, the park would never be built because "nonresident speculators will boost the price." [62] He presented two resolutions offering qualified support to the seashore from the Commissioners Court of Cameron County, over which he presided. Judge Dancy pointed out that he abstained from voting on the second resolution, which contained the qualification that a road be required in the enabling legislation and if it were not, the resolution recommended that the State of Texas refuse its consent. [63] At the close of his written statement, Judge Dancy inserted an example of what he feared might happen if the National Seashore were shortened and a road required:

Since the [1959] hearing in Corpus Christi, these greedy, nonresident speculators have got in their work and to show how greedy they are, they would have us take just fifty miles, leaving Cameron County out and if they could just put their proposition over, they would make such a killing that Florida's boom would look like chicken feed. One of these landowners has already divided up his tract in Cameron County and sold it without any access road. The only way to get to these lots is up the beach. [64]

Judge Dancy also adamantly opposed the House version of the park bill to reduce the size as supported by Representatives Kilgore and Young. He would later become an outspoken critic of the House version and wholly support Senator Yarborough's proposal. [65]

Armand Yramategui, president of the Texas Conservation Council, livened up the proceedings with his testimony. While presenting an additional 5,486 signatures to add to the 12,300 presented in 1959, he emphasized that these signatures, when added to the numbers represented by organizations supporting S.4, totaled around 100,000 citizens. Mr. Yramategui then attacked the 65-mile proposal in the House bills as a special interest project favored by a few speculators, compared to the thousands of citizens in support of S.4. When he accused Representatives Young and Kilgore of "trying to scuttle the whole proposal," he had to be cautioned by Senator Yarborough that Congressional rules protected members from attack. [66] Senator Bible ordered that certain sections of Mr. Yramategui's testimony be deleted, and added that he thought "it would help the committee if we did not go into the motives of those who might be interested in this bill." [67]

Mr. Yramategui restrained his hostility toward speculators for most of the remainder of his testimony and concentrated on suggesting alternatives to reducing the National Seashore area to permit private development. With an 88-mile long seashore, he pointed out, there would still be around 45 miles on Padre Island and adjoining Mustang Island available for development, but that tourist facilities established on the mainland would be best for all concerned. If built on the mainland, these facilities would not be exposed directly to Gulf storms and "the uncertainties" of Gulf beach installations. The public would be spared the expense of million-dollar seawalls. Hotels, restaurants, and entertainment facilities for the thousands that would use the public area in the proposed National Seashore do not require unique Gulf beach areas." [68]

After submitting resolutions supporting S.4 from 14 additional organizations, Mr. Yramategui lapsed back into a condemnation of the House bills. He claimed that the road requirement in those seashore bills was directly in line with the objectives of the promoters and speculators, a fact which many Texans viewed with disgust. He concluded, "certainly, not by the widest stretch of the imagination, do the Young and Kilgore bills represent the expressed wishes of the people of Texas." [69]

The last S.4 partisan of the afternoon session, Mrs. Esther Goodrich, a board member of the Texas Conservation Council, raised two good points, which had not yet been brought to the attention of the subcommittee. Both points addressed the need for a larger National Seashore with room for a central roadless region. Mrs. Goodrich suggested that the larger area would not only provide space for recreational purposes but also allow ample room for scientific study of seashore plants and wildlife and room for refuges for shore creatures. [70] Mrs. Goodrich reminded the Subcommittee members that when the first national parks were established, they "seemed extremely large and ample for generations," yet now suffered from overcrowding. [71] She predicted that "our National Seashores will find themselves inevitably in the same situation a few years hence" and once the seashore was set up it would be impossible to increase the size. [72]

The last two witnesses of the afternoon represented two groups favoring the House versions of the seashore bill. The first, Art Baughman of Raymondville, Texas, represented the Willacy County Commissioners Court. The second, David M. Coover, an attorney from Corpus Christi, represented the individual landowners who held 40 percent of Padre Island. [73]

Mr. Baughman presented a resolution from the Willacy County Commissioners Court in support of a National Seashore on Padre Island. This resolution included a recommendation to the State of Texas that it not give the permission required by law unless a road requirement were added to any enabling legislation. The commissioners requested that paved roads, bridges, and ferries be provided to make the entire length of the park accessible from Corpus Christi to Port Isabel "for the safety and convenience of the public," and that a causeway be constructed from Port Mansfield to Padre Island. [74] Mr. Baughman emphasized the safety aspect of the road requirement, rather than the convenience of a through road. He pointed out that during major storms the danger to the public on unprotected Gulf islands was immense, especially without quick evacuation routes, and gave as an example the 1935 Key West storm that claimed 365 lives. [75]

The last witness of the first day of the hearing, David M. Coover, a lawyer from Corpus Christi, represented the owners of 40 percent of the surface of Padre Island and the owners of 90 percent of the mineral rights. When asked how many people owned land on Padre Island, Mr. Coover replied that six individuals and three corporations owned the surface land and that mineral rights were divided among perhaps as many as one hundred people. [76] Mr. Coover failed to mention that he and Burton Dunn, Patrick Dunn's son, owned the cattle that

grazed on Padre Island, which they would continue to do through 1970. His testimony centered on three points: the need for a road through the National Seashore, the desirability of the shorter stretch of Padre Island for the seashore, and the importance of the Naval Air Station to Corpus Christi. Mr. Coover emphasized the need for a road through the National Seashore for safety and convenience. He said the danger of tourists being caught by a hurricane was not the only hazard to exploring the island by car; tides were also hazards. He was often called upon to aid motorists and tourists stuck in the soft sand on the beach. [77]

In order to give the Committee a better reason for a shorter National Seashore, other than the economic benefit to his clients, Mr. Coover praised the beauty of the middle stretch of Padre Island. He told the Committee that people like to hunt shells on that part of the island because the shells are larger and less likely to be broken. He claimed that it was a cleaner beach with cleaner water than to the north and south because it was a shell beach, not a sand beach that muddies the water. [78] These claims ignored the fact that the sand beach areas of the island were safer for swimming, and the fact that shell beaches do not fit the beach image in the public mind. Mr. Coover would state in 1970, when negotiations on renewal of his grazing permit were under discussion, that he much preferred the northern end for grazing because of better corrals and that a four-wheel drive vehicle was not necessary for access. [79]

Mr. Coover pointed out to the Committee that many businessmen in Corpus Christi were concerned about the effect of the National Seashore on the Naval Air Station. Expressing the fear that if the Navy were not allowed targets on Padre Island, it might close the base, he said that Corpus Christi was dependent upon the Navy payroll, and called it "our lifeblood in that community." [80] Senator Yarborough addressed this concern by citing the 1959 correspondence between Senator Johnson and the deputy chief of Naval Operations, Vice Admiral Ralph E. Wilson, on that topic. The final letter assured the senator that if the Navy were permitted to gradually phase out use of the Padre Island targets while phasing in replacement targets, it "would result in only a loss of convenience... The potential benefits that the public will realize from this National Seashore park are such that the Navy will not object." [81] Mr. Coover asked that those statements be investigated to insure that the Navy had not reconsidered; Senator Dworshak concurred, noting that the statement was two years old. [82] Again, David Coover failed to mention that he was one of the owners receiving lease payments from the Navy for its use.

Senator Dworshak closed the day's hearing with one final question addressed to Mr. Coover. Again he questioned the compatibility of oil and gas development and recreation. Mr. Coover replied that with "the exception of curiosity of people... if people conducted themselves properly," the two activities would be compatible, just as they had proved in the past on Padre Island. [83]

The hearing continued on the afternoon of April 13. Three of the five witnesses were representatives of groups with economic interests in Padre Island: a lawyer from Sun Oil Company; a lawyer from Standard Oil Company of Texas; and a lawyer representing the three land-owning corporations. Also appearing before the Committee was State Representative Ronald Bridges from Corpus Christi, who co-authored the enabling legislation, and the president of a sportsman's organization.

Tom E. Bryan from the Legal Department of Sun Oil opened his testimony with an assurance to the committee that, with the changes made by Senator Yarborough in the wording of S.4, Sun Oil was satisfied that its operations in the Laguna Madre were protected. [84] Mr. Bryan told the senators that the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service had been "very cooperative with us in discussions." [85] He was confident that a mutual understanding of problems existed and that these problems could be worked out without affecting the operations of the seashore or the industry." [86]

C.W. Proctor of the Land and Legal Department of Standard Oil of Texas testified as to the extent of Standard Oil's operations on the island. He described the drilling sites on the island as unobtrusive and showed pictures of a typical site. [87] Mr. Proctor also described Standard Oil's condensate recovery plant and storage facilities on a 100-acre Padre Island site. Saying that Standard Oil considered the field fully developed as far as the extent of area was concerned, Mr. Proctor saw no need for ever increasing the size of the facilities. [88] When Senator Bible asked if another installation would be required if another field were opened to the south, Mr. Proctor replied it would depend on practical economics, but they would probably use the existing plant. [89]

Senator Dworshak once more brought up the feasibility of having recreation and oil and gas development, this time questioning Mr. Proctor. The senator asked Mr. Proctor if he was opposed to the development of "this park," and whether the area was "more desirable for recreation development or for continued exploration for oil and gas production." [90] Mr. Proctor reiterated his earlier support for the National Seashore and added that Standard Oil was confident it could "live within the regulations and without interference with the use to which it will be put." [91] Senator Dworshak then inquired if it were "feasible and logical to have picnickers and oil people hobnobbing together." [92] After Mr. Proctor expressed his belief that the two could coexist, Senator Dworshak yielded, saying "I know they do a lot of peculiar things in Texas. I am open to conviction." [93]

John D. McCall, a lawyer from Dallas, appeared next before the subcommittee both as a representative and a stockholder of the three corporations organized for the purpose of owning land on Padre Island: Laguna Madre Corporation, Baffin Bay Corporation, and South Padre, Incorporated. These corporations owned one-half interest in land in Kleberg, Kenedy, and Cameron Counties, most of which would be within the boundaries of the National Seashore as proposed in S.4. [94]

Mr. McCall pointed out to the subcommittee that he favored the establishment of a National Seashore; he had met with the Park Service several years ago to discuss the possibility. He objected to the length of the proposed seashore, saying that he had always been of the opinion that "a very substantial part of the Island should be reserved for private development." [95] Mr. McCall said that he was aware of the suggestions that private development could expand northward onto Mustang Island, but explained that the corporations planned "a different type of improvement" for Padre Island, with more public parks and "more landscaping and beautification." [96]

The road issue came up in Mr. McCall's testimony, as expected. He maintained that the public originally assumed that a through road would be a part of the seashore and many withdrew their approval when they found there were no plans for such a road. Indeed, as Judge Dancy testified, several civic organizations made their approval contingent upon a legislated road. [97] Senator Bible asked about the frequency of hurricanes in the area, and wondered about the feasibility of establishing a National Seashore park where hurricanes were common occurrences. Mr. McCall assured the senator that if there were a road down the island there would be little danger, and pointed out that due to the geographical location of National Seashores, all fell into a similar category of risk. [98]

State Representative Ronald Bridges of Corpus Christi testified after Mr. McCall. As coauthor of the pending enabling legislation required by S.4 at the state level to authorize the creation of a National Seashore, he came to plead for the full 88-mile length. He claimed that both tourists and Texans would be disillusioned and disappointed to find that the better beaches, swimming, and camping areas were outside the National Seashore. [99] In stereotypical Texas politician style he said:

I would feel, as I think most South Texans would feel, like the poor Mexican boy who for Christmas wanted a leather jacket, but had to settle for a tattered sweater. And I would submit that the 65-mile area or anything less than 85 miles, would be more like the tattered sweater. [100]

Representative Bridges stressed the point that the very qualities making the central portion of the island suitable for beach recreation were the qualities that made it suitable for a roadless wilderness area. [101]

The National Park Service Re-evaluates. 1962

The Senate and the House hearings produced no immediate legislative action in the following months, nor did the July continuation of the House hearings. The Park Service busily gathered information to answer questions raised in the hearings, particularly in the area of estimated acreage and acquisition cost. Proponents of S.4 continued writing letters of support and Senator Yarborough continued to insert pro-National Seashore speeches into Congressional proceedings.

The acreage contained in the proposed 88-mile seashore proved difficult to pin down to an exact number. The barrier island shifted constantly, and much of the acreage counted in surveys were mudflat barrens, subject to periodic inundation. Using the United States Geological Survey maps, the Park Service estimated that the proposed area covered approximately 328,000 acres: 57,000 of dry land, 124,000 of mudflats, and 147,000 in water. Only the dry land and part of the mudflats, a total of about 120,000 acres, were privately owned; the remainder belonged to the State of Texas. [102]

In an initial memorandum on the topic of acquisition costs it was pointed out that the figure of \$100 per acre had been mentioned in the original meeting with Mr. McCall in 1957. By 1961 land outside the proposed boundaries was selling for as much as \$600 an acre. It would not be reasonable to use the speculative price of land near developments and roads as a guideline for estimating seashore costs, and Park Service personnel realized this. Yet even at the 1957 figure, the cost of 120,000 acres would be \$12 million, far more than price limits in any existing legislation. [103]

Additional time was spent by Park Service personnel in July verifying rumors of land transactions and interest in Padre Island by a rocket manufacturer. The land transactions' rumor was founded in truth: parcels of land in Kenedy, Willacy, and Cameron Counties, totaling almost 25,000 acres, were transferred from the Padre Corporation to the South Padre Investment Corporation. Very little money changed hands in the transfer, and an area attorney suggested to Park Service personnel that the transaction was generally thought to be a method of establishing a purchase price for acreage within the National Seashore area. [104] The transfer would later pose significant problems in acquiring land for the new National Seashore.

The rumor of interest in Padre Island by Aerojet General Corporation also proved to be true. In response to the Park Service query Aerojet admitted its interest in acquiring a 10- to 15-mile stretch with a northern border being the Nueces and Kenedy county line in addition to a mainland site. The Padre Island site would be used to conduct static test firings of large rocket motors two to three times a week. The area would, naturally, be posted to keep out intruders, yet the response concluded that Aerojet believed their operations "would not seriously affect the plans of the Park Service for the development of Padre Island." [105] Aerojet's interest, however, depended on further studies and on the company receiving additional contracts from the Department of Defense and the National Aeronautics and Space Agency. [106] The area that Aerojet described as ideal for its purpose was also the most

desirable part of Padre Island. The Regional Director speculated that "it would be a bit surprising if this [area] could be acquired for rocket testing as it would be much more profitable to subdivide and sell this part of the Island for residential and business purposes." [107] The Aerojet interest died shortly after the initial letter confirming the rumor.

In late June Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Director Wirth, and several Federal and Texas legislators inspected Padre Island by helicopter and by car. Newspaper reports indicated that Padre Island favorably impressed all in the group. The chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, Senator Clinton Anderson, who participated in the tour, told reporters that he wanted to see a bill to establish a National Seashore passed in the current session. [108]

The inspection tour spurred legislative movement; by the first of September the Public Lands Subcommittee sent S.4 to the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. [109] However, Hurricane Carla hit the Texas coast in the second week of September and gave cause for delay in Washington. Senator Dworshak, whose prejudices against the proposal showed during the senatorial hearings, seized the opportunity to ask for, and get, a deferment in action by the committee until January 1962. [110] Senator Yarborough pointed out two weeks later that with modern hurricane tracking there was ample warning and no loss of life. He also took the opportunity to mention that such storms illustrate why a through road would be unfeasible. [111]

State and Federal Differences, 1962

August and September marked the start of a growing controversy in Texas over whether Padre Island should be a national or state park. State Land Commissioner Jerry Sadler began claiming that a National Seashore that took over state-owned tidelands would prohibit the removal of oil and gas, thus depriving Texas of millions of dollars in revenues dedicated to the permanent public school fund. Using emotionally charged phrases such as "summarily stripped of such great wealth," Commissioner Sadler persuaded Governor Price Daniel to appoint a statewide committee to study the feasibility of a state park in place of the National Seashore. [112]

The Governor's committee consisted of the County Judges from the five counties in the Padre Island area, representatives from the five state agencies primarily concerned with the proposal, and five members-at-large representing the public. The committee met for the first time October 2. Governor Daniel's remarks to the committee made it clear that his main concern was with the possibility of the hampering of hunting, fishing, and oil and gas recovery in the waters surrounding Padre Island if Texas ceded these areas to the Federal government. A representative of the State General Land Office claimed a possible loss of \$1 billion to the public school system, but these were the only direct remarks against a National Seashore. All other State and County committee members expressed doubt that the Texas Legislature would furnish adequate funds. Governor Daniel appointed four subcommittees to study various aspects of State development of an island park. [113]

At the November meeting of the Governor's committee, Leslie Arnberger of Region III had the opportunity to contradict Commissioner Sadler's allegations of attempted robbery of the school children of Texas. During the Commissioner's statement, it was pointed out to him that the bills in Congress provided for the continued ownership of minerals by the present owners, both private and State. Mr. Sadler refused to believe that the Department of the Interior would be reasonable in its regulation of mineral development. After the meeting Mr. Arnberger submitted a report to the Park Service recommending that consideration be given to further concessions on the submerged lands and the road question. If the State-owned submerged lands were excluded, possibly an easement could buffer the National Seashore

from intrusive uses, but the through road could not, in Mr. Arnberger's opinion, be justified due to the excessive costs of construction and maintenance. [114]

Governor Price Daniel met privately with Leslie Arnberger after the November meeting. Although publicly Daniel stated he was opposed to giving the State's submerged land in the Laguna Madre and mudflats to the Federal government, the Governor later said he might support an easement on such but suggested that the Legislature would not go along with deeding the submerged lands without a through road. Daniel continued to tell Arnberger that he would be in favor of a long seashore, maybe 75 miles, and questioned Arnberger on the pending Senate bill that would award grants to State governments for parks. The Governor was probably referring to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill, designed to provide assistance for acquisition and development of park land. The Bill, developed and supported by Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, seemed directly related to Padre Island and other state areas such as the Big Thicket, of special interest to Daniel. [115] Arnberger remarked in his report on the meeting with Governor Daniel that it was clear to him that Texas could not manage a State park on Padre Island and that it was necessary for the Federal government to intervene. [116]

Within a week of the November meeting, Governor Daniel wrote to Director Wirth. Most of his letter focused on the comparison of Cape Hatteras to Padre Island. He pointed out that the National Park Service built a road through Cape Hatteras National Seashore, and then proceeded to remark on the expenses incurred there to develop and operate it as a National Seashore. Daniel then asked the Park Service to provide statistics on how much more would be spent on Cape Hatteras through 1966. [117] Director Wirth responded within a month saying that he conceded to reduce the size of the proposed National Seashore and would discuss the road issue after knowing the area designated by Congress. Wirth then supplied Governor Daniel with information on operating and developing Cape Hatteras. This comparison continued to arise in discussions on Padre Island, but the full extent of fiscal data had never been repeated. Wirth calculated that more than \$4 million was spent between 1953 and 1961 on development and operation, with \$1.725 million on land acquisition, \$88,000 in appropriations, and the remainder from the Avalon and Old Dominion Foundations and State of North Carolina. The Park Service estimated that \$888,000 would be spent between July 1, 1962, and June 30, 1966. [118] The Governor's inquiries and statements fell in line with the opinion of the conservative wing of the State's Democratic party. He remained publicly ambivalent about the size and content of the Padre Island National Seashore, similar to the positions of Representatives Kilgore and Young, but privately he seemed to favor Federal action on the proposal in order to eliminate the necessity for State action.

Senate Hearings and Passage of S.4. 1962

By January 1962, Senator Yarborough faced the reality that after years of working for the Padre Island designation there was little to show for the effort. Former Senator Lyndon Johnson, now vice president in the Kennedy administration, continued to assert his power to prohibit Congressional approval of Yarborough's legislation. At one point, Senator Johnson approached Yarborough with a compromise for approving the legislation. If Yarborough agreed to a small park on Padre, he would work to name the park for him. Senator Yarborough declined the compromise. [119] Within a short time, however, a break appeared in the Johnson-Yarborough disagreement. White House officials announced that Vice President Johnson would be leaving for a tour of Southeast Asia. Richard, Senator Yarborough's son and Legislative Assistant, approached the senator with a strategy for getting the Padre legislation approved. With Johnson absent from Washington for an extended period, Senator Yarborough and his supporters had the time to work without interference. Yarborough immediately implemented the strategy within the Congressional network. [120]

On March 6, 1962, the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs issued its long-awaited report on S.4. The Committee changed the bill slightly by amendments that were, on the whole, of a perfecting nature, designed to clarify the language of the bill. The only specific changes called for by the Committee were the limitation of mineral development to oil and gas, the provision for the fullest possible development of oil and gas, and the continued recognition of existing wildlife refuges. [121] The minority views on S.4., signed by five members led by Senators Dworshak and Allott, contained those points to which the two Senators kept returning in their cross-examination of witnesses. These points included the perceived need for a legislated through road, the potentially hazardous weather conditions, the lack of specific development plans by the Park Service, the questionable compatibility of recreation and oil and gas development, the advantages of a shorter length, the ongoing controversy within the State government on a state park versus a National Seashore, the military need for use of Padre Island, and the inadequacy of the authorization for acquisition costs. [122] Despite these views, the will of the majority of the Committee prevailed and the bill, as amended, came before the Senate for consideration on April 10, 1962. [123]

The presence of S.4 on the floor of the Senate sparked considerable debate. The new junior senator from Texas, John Tower, affiliated with the Republican party who won Lyndon Johnson's seat in a special election, joined with Senator Allott in speaking out against passage of the bill. They first requested that it be sent back to the committee and when this was defeated, they repeated the minority views put out in the report in an attempt to convince the Senate of the validity of their viewpoints. [124] Senator Allott then presented an amendment to the entire Senate to force the Park Service to build a road through the length of the National Seashore with causeways to the mainland at both ends. The Senate rejected this ploy by a two-to-one margin. [125] He then attempted to add [...text missing...] [126] and on April 11, 1962, was referred to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. [127] Richard Yarborough's legislative strategy worked.

The House Committee reviewed S.4 and on August 13, 1962, referred the amended bill to the Committee of the whole House for passage. [128] The amendments recommended by the Committee did not change S.4 drastically. The first amendment reduced the length to 80 miles. The second moved the western boundary from the Intracoastal Waterway to 1,500 feet west of the line surveyed as the edge of dry land, thus excluding most of the Laguna Madre and State-owned mudflats. The third amendment increased the acquisition appropriation from \$4 million to \$5 million. The fourth eliminated the provision to allow permits granting life estates to those whose property would be within the seashore. [129] After much debate, the amended bill passed the House and returned to the Senate. [130]

In the Senate, these amendments were read and explained. Both Senators Bible and Yarborough agreed to the amendments added by the House. Senator Yarborough said that although the size of the National Seashore was reduced, it was an acceptable compromise. The Senate concurred with the amendment of S.4. [131] On the next day, September 19, 1962, both Vice President Johnson and the Speaker of the House examined and signed S.4 and sent it to President Kennedy.

On September 28, 1962, in the presence of Senator Yarborough, President Kennedy signed S.4, establishing Padre Island National Seashore. [132]





Figure 14. President John F. Kennedy Signing Legislation for Padre Island National Seashore, 1962. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

Despite President Kennedy's signature on S.4, the National Seashore still faced opposition from interested parties in Texas, where the State Legislature had not yet approved S.4. Commissioner Sadler fought on throughout the remainder of 1962, and tried continually to claim that the State would lose millions, that the school children of Texas would be robbed, and that S.4 had caused a drop in oil bonuses. [133] Oilmen disagreed with these statements, and Nueces County Judge Noah Kennedy was quoted as saying that "I feel sure in the future everything. . . will be blamed on the Seashore bill by Mr. Sadler." [134]

This persistent and vigorous opposition by Commissioner Sadler made his announcement at the end of January even more surprising: in an abrupt about face he claimed to have been many times misquoted and misunderstood and offered his cooperation and support for the bill in the Legislature. [135] The bill passed through both chambers and went to Governor John Connally in March. On August 23, 1963, Commissioner Sadler, Governor Connally, and Attorney Waggoner Carr signed the deed giving the State-owned lands to the Federal government. [136]

Except for later bills to increase funds available for acquisition costs, the legislative action on Padre Island National Seashore was complete. To make the Seashore a reality rested in the hands of the National Park Service. Senator Yarborough and the thousands of National Seashore supporters had prevailed.

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Padre Island

Administrative History



CHAPTER FIVE:

PADRE ISLAND BECOMES A NATIONAL SEASHORE 1963 - 1970

When William L. Bowen arrived in Corpus Christi on July 1, 1963, to serve as the first superintendent of Padre Island National Seashore, he knew as well as anyone what Padre Island offered to the national park system. During his days as a recreation planner with Region III in Santa Fe in the 1950s, Bowen visited Padre Island on several occasions becoming familiar with its natural resources and local supporters. Likewise, during his tenure in Washington in the early 1960s, he saw first-hand the political struggle for Padre Island's designation and knew that more struggles might lie ahead. He also knew that as one of the first national seashores designated in the country and the only one in the Southwest, Padre Island had special challenges. Whether through chance or careful planning, Superintendent Bowen brought to Padre Island National Seashore a combination of experience with the National Park Service and vision that would prove useful in the initial years. [1]

Park Establishment

The first month of operation passed rapidly. Bowen secured temporary offices in the Chicago Building at 3105 Leopard Street in downtown Corpus Christi. Shortly thereafter, he hired, Gertrude Murdoch, as a secretary and secured Allen C. Staggers as land acquisition officer from the Army Corps of Engineers in New Orleans. Staggers brought years of experience in acquiring land for public agencies and seemed ideal for the entangled land titles everyone knew awaited the Park Service. On August 23rd, a week after arrival, Superintendent Bowen and Staggers drove to Austin for an official ceremony acquiring the State's portion of Padre Island. In an ironic display of pomp and ceremony, the State of Texas, whose elected officials had been opposed to the National Seashore, conveyed 33,545.41 acres of beach and submerged lands to the Federal government. These were largely tidelands stretching from the mean high-water line to the two-fathom line whose ownership had been so hotly debated and finally settled in favor of Texas by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1946. Senate Bill 6, which had passed during the 58th Texas Legislature in 1963, authorized the transfer of title. In the largely symbolic gesture, the State School Land Board, comprising Land Commissioner Jerry Sadler, Governor John Connally, and Attorney General Waggoner Carr, conveyed all of the right, title, and interest of the State of Texas in the surface estate of lands owned by the State within the boundaries of the National Seashore. Although the deed included no buildable land, it symbolically served as the start of a full-scale land acquisition program on Padre Island. [2]

As land acquisition officer, Alan Staggers faced as many as half a dozen surveys of Padre Island and scores of overlapping claims and titles. The earliest ownership records of Padre Balli estimated 11.5 leagues, or approximately 50,000 acres, on Padre Island. The 1941 survey conducted by J.S. Boyles at the request of the State of Texas, doubled that amount to as many as 100,000 acres. Over the years, several oil companies, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey produced maps with some indicating as

many as 150,000 acres on the island. With these conflicting survey reports, loss of land on the Gulf shore, and accretions in the Laguna Madre, Staggers and Bowen knew that a new, up-to-date survey was vital to setting a value for the land and settling claims with various property owners. In 1963 Staggers issued specifications for a new survey to be conducted during spring 1964. By April 24, 1964, the Park Service contracted with Tex-La Engineering Service, Inc., of Houston, Texas, for \$19,875, with Thomas R. Godley of the Corpus Christi branch serving as the principal civil engineer. [3]



Figure 15. Superintendent William L. Bowen (left) and Second Superintendent Earnest Borgman (right) in front of New Padre Island National Seashore Headquarters, ca. 1960. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

Staggers needed a high degree of accuracy and a clear, clean set of tract records in order to be persuasive in the upcoming negotiations. For these purposes, Tex-La Engineering prepared an aerial mosaic on Mylar that overlay the tract maps from the 1939 land survey. Staggers wanted to be able to refer back to the 1939 survey by locating and identifying on an aerial map the permanent coast and geodetic monuments set during that earlier survey. The National Seashore also needed clearly delineated boundaries on the surface and requested Tex-La to place permanent concrete monuments at regular intervals to mark the north and south

boundaries of the park and offer detailed metes and bounds for each identified tract. [4]

Godley's updated survey delineated 16 tracts of land under private ownership, exclusive of the formerly State-owned land. These private owners held 100,372.82 acres ranging from six to more than 66,000 acres. [5] Private landowners retained all oil, gas, and other mineral rights as protected by the Texas and Federal legislation for the National Seashore. The State also retained its own oil, gas, and other mineral rights, but granted surface estate or rights to the Federal government. Under Texas property law, ownership of subsurface minerals is determined by surface property lines. The location of property lines subsequently evolved into a bitter dispute between the State and private landowners. Although the Federal government now owned the surface rights to part of Padre Island, the intergovernmental transaction left open to debate the exact location of some property lines, and thus the mineral rights. Staggers predicted that this issue would eventually have to be settled by special agreement or through the courts. [6]

Alan Staggers also uncovered another land title issue. Congressional authorization for the National Seashore had reserved for property owners "the oil and gas minerals and other minerals that can be mined in a similar manner under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior." This statement allowed the Federal government to acquire any minerals other than oil and gas and those mined in a dissimilar manner. While everyone now seemed to accept that oil and gas would be mined in the National Seashore, there was little discussion of other minerals. The main problem came from the direct conflict set up in the State of Texas authorization, Senate Bill 6, which allowed all minerals to be extracted. Although Staggers identified this problem, he did not attempt to resolve the potential conflict. [7]

The enormous task of acquiring land and the complexity of the land ownership occupied a great deal of time for the park staff during its first few months. In November 1963 Staggers and Bowen added a secretary, Annette Medina, then in March 1964, they hired a staff appraiser, Samuel McBurnett. McBurnett's employment complemented the work of Alan Staggers by allowing one Park Service employee to concentrate on verifying and reviewing appraisals contracted with and completed by private title companies. For the Federal government's part, McBurnett completed his own appraisals for each tract in the National Seashore. With their own appraisals, Staggers and McBurnett set priorities for land acquisition. The northern one-third became Priority I because it was the first to be developed for visitor facilities beginning in Fiscal Year 1966. The southernmost acreage of approximately 12,000 acres became Priority II. This left the central portion with more than 65,000 acres as Priority III. [8]

While the Padre Island staff dealt with the problems of establishing a new park, Congress argued over a new conservation bill to fund park acquisition that many in the National Park Service and the Texas Congressional delegation thought could benefit the Padre Island acquisition program. The bill, later called the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964, became the favored child of Secretary of the Interior Stuart Udall. Udall proposed that admission fees to national parks and a portion of the highway taxes be combined for Federal park acquisition and grants for state and local parks. [9] When the Conservation Fund stalled in Congress, the Park Service sought a special appropriation for Padre Island that passed on September 17, 1964. The additional \$3.5 million appropriated combined with the original \$1.5 million for land acquisition at Padre, finally granted the staff authority for negotiating land purchase prices. [10]

On September 18, 1964, Superintendent Bowen, Land Acquisition Officer Staggers, and other staff members met with the owners of Tracts Two through Six and Eight through 11 to secure options on the land. Negotiations now became quite difficult. Two of the owners, Albert R.

and Lawrence R. Jones, were deceased, and their estates undivided, and the remaining owners were a group of mortgage bankers incorporated under the name Laguna Madre Corporation and based all over the United States. The Corporation later hired a Houston law firm, Reynolds, Bracewell and Patterson, to represent them because they could not agree on a price. These tracts became even more difficult when Staff Appraiser McBurnett and the appraiser under contract with the Park Service reached different values for Tracts 11 and 12. In an effort to break the stalemate, the Park Service contracted for a third appraisal in October 1964 scheduled for completion in January 1965. Shortly after the new appraisal was commissioned, McBurnett left the National Seashore staff for another Federal government position in Corpus Christi leaving future negotiations up to Stagers. [11]

During a second meeting with the same property owners in February 1965, the owners reported that their appraisals were still incomplete and they could not negotiate for another 60 days. Stagers informed the owners that the Federal government intended to proceed with condemnation proceedings in ten days. In an effort to allow the owners plenty of time to still negotiate, Stagers added that after filing at least 60 days would be required before it went into effect. This time frame allowed the property owners some flexibility in spite of the approaching new fiscal year when construction was scheduled to begin in the Priority I area. [12]

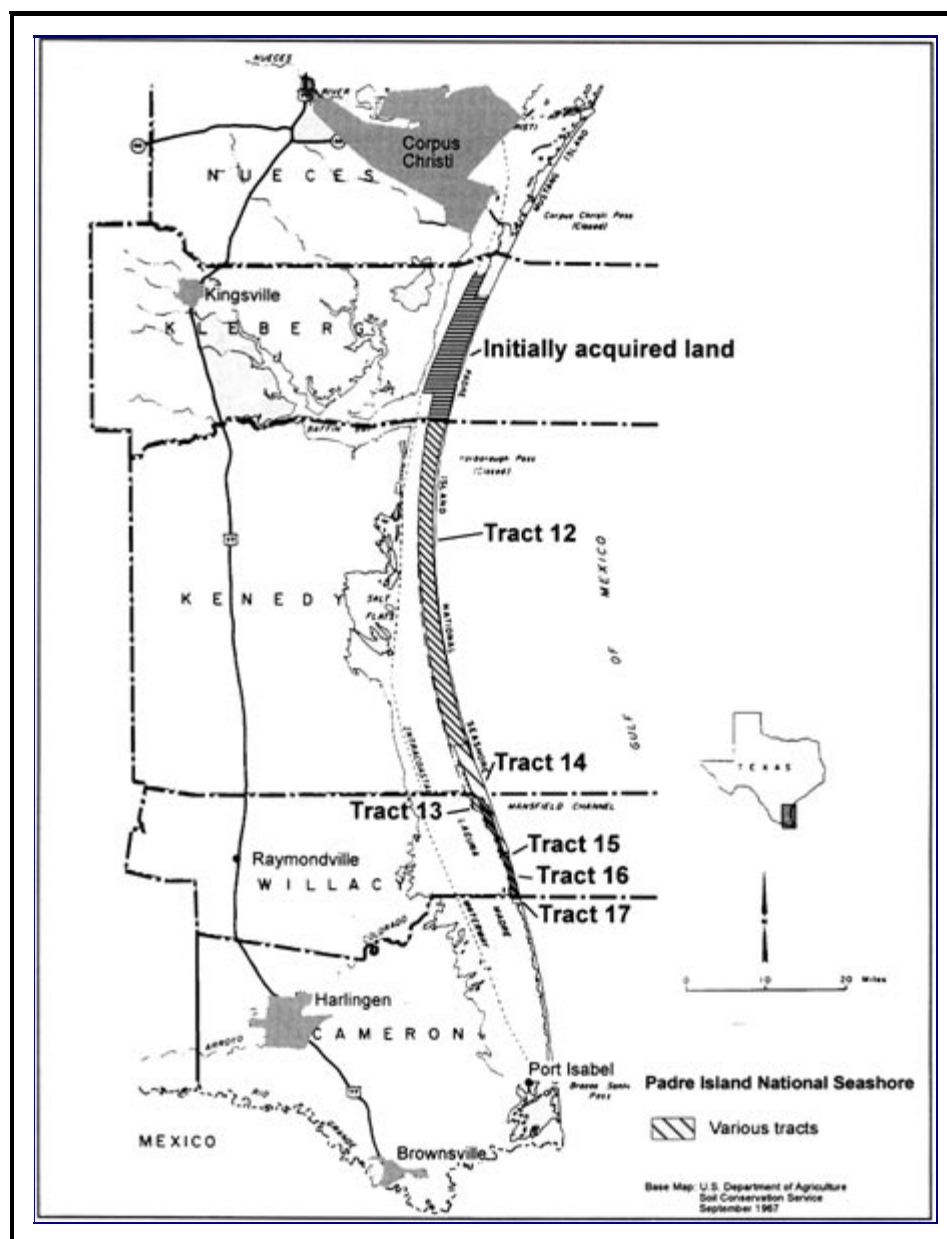


Figure 16. Map of Land Acquisition. Base map: U.S. Department of Agricultural Soil Conservation Service, September 1967. *(click on image for an enlargement in a new window)*

On the following day, Staggers met with representatives of the South Padre Investment Corporation for negotiations on Tracts 14 and 16 at the Sea Island Motel on South Padre Island. He made purchase offers for both tracts. The Corporation's officer immediately rejected the proposal promising a counter offer shortly. Staggers repeatedly stressed the urgency of acquiring these tracts and that a prolonged delay would probably result in the Park Service filing condemnation proceedings as it was doing on the northern tracts. [13] In spite of Staggers suggestion, the representatives of South Padre Investment Corporation remained stalwart. In retrospect, the Corporation probably never intended to negotiate an agreement with Staggers preferring instead to seek higher land values through the conservative and sympathetic courts of South Texas.

During March 1965, Alan Staggers resumed negotiations for Tract Eight owned by the heirs of F.S. Lovenskiold. Although a purchase price was still under negotiation, he felt that some compromise might be reached before proceeding with a condemnation. If not, condemnation proceedings had to be initiated by July 1965 for the tract to be available for development in Fiscal Year 1966 as projected. [14]

The most serious problem for acquisition, however, centered on Tract 13. The title companies investigating ownership in Willacy County discovered that this tract consisted of accretion developed since the completion of the 1941 Boyles Survey. The Willacy County Navigation District acquired this tract from the State of Texas when dredging for Port Mansfield in the 1950s. Staggers and the title company felt that the South Padre Investment Corporation needed to grant a quit claim before the Park Service could proceed with acquisition of this tract from the Navigation District. The acquisition, however, was complicated because the Park Service lacked authority to acquire land from other government agencies except through a purchase. When Staggers and other Park Service officials examined Tract 13, they began to reconsider acquisition. To them, the accretion provided little value for projected park uses especially since it reportedly flooded during heavy winds. With such obvious problems, Park Service officials decided against acquisition allowing Tract 13 to become the first of several projected areas removed from the acquisition program. [15]

Two other tracts required even more consideration than Tract 13. Tracts 15 and 17 fell at the extreme southern portion of the National Seashore area. South Padre Investment Corporation, now reluctant to sell to the Federal government, had sold these tracts prior to final authorization for the National Seashore. Tracts 15 and 17 were on the south side of the larger Tracts 14 and 16 still owned by the Corporation and under debate. Without Tracts 14 and 16, the smaller tracts were useless. Staggers decided to delay negotiations on the extreme southern tracts until the Corporation and Park Service resolved their other disagreements. He hoped this delay would not jeopardize negotiations for the more important Tracts 14 and 16. [16]

By June, negotiations for the purchase of Tracts Two through Six and Eight through 11 stalled indefinitely. The owners of Tract Seven, consisting of 693 acres, however, agreed upon a price and settled before condemnation proceedings began. [17] The urgency to begin development of park facilities in Fiscal Year 1966, meant that tracts on the northern end of the island needed to be acquired immediately. Therefore, Park Service officials through the United States Attorney General's office filed its first condemnation suit for the 22,680 acres found on the remaining nine Priority I tracts in Kleberg County on June 16 and took possession on June 28, 1965. Two days later Staggers transferred to Ozark National Scenic

Rivet-Ways and his secretary, Annette K. Medina, later rehired, was released from employment under a reduction-in-force program. [18]

The Laguna Madre Corporation, Virginia Jones Mullin, Gilbert Kerlin, and five representatives of the McCampbell family appeared in various combinations as the owners of Tracts Two through Six and Eight through 11 of condemned land. Using appraisals conducted during the prior year, the Park Service offered \$1,212,350 for all of the property. [19] Over the next year the Park Service and property owners debated the appraised values in and out of court. In October 1966, a five-week condemnation trial ended with \$5,562,875 awarded by the jury to the owners. [20] The \$5.5 million award reached almost five times the original projected value and by itself exceeded the \$5 million limit on acquisition costs set when Congress established the park. Because Tracts 12 through 17 were still to be acquired, Congress needed to authorize a higher limit for acquisition and appropriate more money in upcoming budgets in order to meet the needs of the National Seashore. [21] The remaining tracts (Tracts 12-17) constituted the largest blocks of land needed to complete the 80.5 mile park authorized by Congress. Most of the acreage fell in Kenedy County and Priority III, but the most controversial sections were in Willacy County and a small part that crossed into Cameron County. The problems with the southernmost sections reflected the long-term opposition to the National Seashore raised by investors and developers on South Padre Island.

In December 1965 the U.S. Attorney General filed two new condemnation suits with a declaration of taking for all remaining lands in the proposed park except 70 acres of mud flats in Tract 13 still owned by the Willacy County Navigation District. [22] Once again the condemnation resulted in a court battle over appropriate appraised values. The jury award for Tract 12, more than 66,360 acres, exceeded \$4 million. This verdict and the earlier one for property in Kleberg County totaled to more than \$9 million. In October 1968 Congress passed special legislation to appropriate an additional \$6.8 million for court imposed values. A third condemnation suit for 10,000 acres south of Mansfield Channel resulted in a jury award of \$9.8 million. [23] The presiding judge, however, determined that this award was so "excessive" that it "shocked the conscience of the court," and then reduced the amount by \$2.5 million. By December 1968 the National Park Service, U.S. Attorney General, and presiding judge reached an accord. The Park Service would reduce its original park acquisition goal of 80.5 miles to 66 and extend from seven miles south of Bob Hall Pier to the Mansfield Channel. This left approximately 10,000 acres north of the Channel with a court set price of \$5.7 million. It also returned 1,638 acres to the South Padre Investment Corporation and the accompanying beach and tideland to the State of Texas. The judge directed the defendants, South Padre Investment Corporation, to either accept the awarded amount and compromise, or return to court. [24] The following July 1969 Congress passed another appropriation of \$4.1 million to complete the purchase of park land with the judge's compromise. [25]

Development of Park Headquarters

In 1963 Superintendent Bill Bowen began the search for a permanent headquarters building, almost immediately after arrival. By September 1964 the Park Service and General Services Administration announced that a location for a permanent headquarters was selected on an estimated 200-foot tract of land on Island Drive in Flour Bluff between Lexington Boulevard and the Island Drive intersection. Consolidated Investment Properties agreed to finance the headquarters; McNeil Construction Company agreed to construct it. The projected office building covered 2,715 square feet with 11 offices and a lobby-reception room. A shop and storage building held another 2,631 square feet and a fenced parking area adjoined. McNeil Construction targeted January 1, 1965, for completion. [26] McNeil's plans changed and construction began in December, 90 days after originally projected, and March 1, 1965,

became the new date for occupancy. [27]

The National Park Service finally occupied the office building at 1001 Island Drive in late March 1965 and hosted an open house in early April. Superintendent Bowen announced in the Corpus Christi newspaper prior to the opening that the office building would serve as the main contact point for visitors to the National Seashore until construction of a headquarters building on the island. He added that the staff would be available to the public from eight to five each day. As Bowen prepared the new headquarters to reflect the presence of the seashore outside the park, he set up displays of the park and commissioned a painting by local artist John Deane to hang in the new building. The superintendent and seven other staff members based at the headquarters now occupied a permanent facility and began for the first time since the park's establishment to wear the traditional park uniforms. [28]

Park Planning and Public Relations

With the arrival of Superintendent Bowen to Corpus Christi in mid 1963, the National Seashore became a reality and speculation arose about what might be future facilities and development on Padre Island. Local citizens, who eagerly supported the National Seashore for its potential recreational use, now regularly quizzed Bowen when he made public appearances. But Bowen was largely at a loss for specifics. Although Park Service officials in Washington started a master plan in early 1964, nothing concrete appeared for public dissemination. Everyone knew that a master plan required completion before actual construction could begin, but because of the delay in planning, the request for funding preceded the plan and received approval in President Lyndon Johnson's Fiscal Year 1966 budget. By January 1965 Bowen reported that four chapters of the first master plan were complete or in draft form, but as the new Fiscal Year 1966 approached the need for planning and engineering specifications became urgent. In order to use the \$647,300 allocated for construction in the president's budget, completed plans were required. [29]

Demand for a completed master plan increased as 1965 unfolded for the new park. Park Service officials as well as community leaders at the north and south ends of Padre Island recognized that a plan would help with political acceptance of the park. In lieu of a plan, however, the park staff, especially the park rangers, became the public relations arm of the National Seashore. Civic clubs, schools, and all types of local organizations offered opportunities for park staff to talk about the new National Seashore. When an opportunity arose, park staff generally accepted and served a vital role in establishing a presence for the Seashore. [30]

As the initial plans to place a park ranger in the North District and another in the South District began to unfold in late 1964, public relations took on a broader audience. Art Partin became the first district park ranger hired, and for political reasons, Bowen placed him in the South District at Port Isabel beginning October 1964. Partin's presence boosted public relations there and helped to dispel the long-held resentment there against the National Seashore.

The public relations efforts began to pay off, but local residents seemed most interested in how the new park would benefit them. Park Service officials responded by releasing parts of the *1964 Master Plan* and discussing recreational development in the context of resource conservation. The plan set two zones of intensive development, one near the northern end and another at the southern end. Because Bowen and the park planners believed that the northern entrance from Corpus Christi would attract the most visitors, land acquisition and development concentrated on this section first. In July 1965, Superintendent Bowen reported that an initial step had been made in this direction with a private interest developing and leasing to the Park Service boat dockage and storage, and an 800 square foot residence. [31]

This facility, located at the end of Laguna Shores Road in Flour Bluff, would later become the Laguna Madre Ranger Station until the early 1980s. It was the first ranger facility completed in the National Seashore. Several months later, Bowen mentioned that plans were underway to designate a beach area for visitors, build lifeguard stands, and provide temporary toilets. [32]

As the National Seashore turned into a reality, public relations improved throughout the area with occasional problems occurring on South Padre. In July 1965 Superintendent Bowen reported that "concern is being expressed by the south end (Cameron and Willacy Counties) that all construction is going on the north end. Land acquisition problems, access, etc. indicate that this may get worse before it gets better. A change in Service thinking may be required, i.e., much as we might like to schedule all construction on the north end for 1966-1967 and 1968, cold, hard political facts-of-life may indicate some readjustment." [33] A few months later, Bowen reiterated the point that activity on the south end must match that on the north. [34]

In the same report as he lamented the lack of planning and the problems on South Padre, Superintendent Bowen expressed frustration over acquiring power and water from the mainland to the National Seashore. Central Power and Light Company agreed to provide all the electricity needed, but only after access roads and a utility right-of-way were completed. The Park Service also tried to persuade Central Power and Light to bury the power lines, but failed. Despite the delays, the agreement with the Power and Light Company seemed to be one of the few steps forward for the National Seashore. The City of Corpus Christi officials, however, were less cooperative. They reluctantly agreed to a four-mile extension of water lines to the northernmost boundary of the park, but would go no farther. Park Service funds and personnel would be required to extend the water from that point. Bowen predicted that 800,000 gallons through a four-inch line would reach the northern boundary in ample supply for the park, but an "elaborate system" would be necessary to provide adequate supplies eight miles south to the principal development areas. All development of public utilities depended on the construction of roads that were neither funded nor planned for in the Fiscal Year 1966 budget. [35] The urgency of road development required Superintendent Bowen to advance funds from Fiscal Year 1967 to 1966 for construction of a 5.7-mile entrance road to the North District Headquarters. [36] Work on an internal road, however, depended on another road being built by the State of Texas to the park's northern entrance. The latter were completed in late 1966 and plans were executed for the internal roadway soon afterwards. [37] Completion of the State road allowed for the water and electrical systems to be funded and completed for the North District development. This work began in spring 1967. [38] In spite of all the utilities planning completed or underway, none mentioned sewage disposal. This later proved a critical oversight by the Park Service.

Work on the internal road system began in late summer of 1967. B&E Construction Company of Corpus Christi contracted for the internal roadway, a 1,200 car parking area, and three miles of spur roads within the National Seashore. [39] Aerial photographs provided a layout of the island surface allowing each proposed roadway to be sketched in before construction. While expedient on paper, this procedure failed to take into account the constantly shifting sands in the middle section of the island. Early park staff recalled years later the problems of constructing the road to the North District development because of the sand. [40] By August a shell roadbed was in place but not open to the public. [41] Although on schedule for completion in December 1967, Hurricane Beulah on September 23rd came inland near South Padre Island washing away shell from the new parking area and flooding the unpaved roadway. [42] Hurricane Beulah delayed park development plans on the north end by only a few months, but provided a serious lesson on the impact of hurricanes on barrier islands. Some park employees began to acknowledge for the first time that development plans for the south end would need to be altered. Beulah's force devastated parts

of South Padre Island washing all the way across the island to the Laguna Madre in places. The relatively low topography without high foredunes gave no protection to the storm's waves. [43]

By October 1968 information on the contents of the National Seashore master plan began to reach residents of the area. In an unusual display of enthusiasm, U.S. Representative John Young of Corpus Christi issued a statement indicating that the Park Service planned to emphasize recreational facilities rather than the more natural state as implied during Congressional hearings. Young told Corpus Christi residents of a planned marina approximately 30 miles south of the northern boundary that stretched between the Laguna Madre and the Gulf. This project "fits just hand in glove," Young stated, with suggestions for passes across the island into the Laguna Madre to aid fishing and desalinization of the bay. The Laguna Madre plan appeared similar to projections made by the Texas State Board of Parks and Wildlife in 1962. Young applauded the development plans adding that it seemed a likely candidate for Federal funds from the new Land and Water Conservation Act, based on outdoor recreation plans of the State. Another smaller development two miles inside the north end of the park included a camping area with cabanas and picnic facilities. [44] Representative Young's comments echoed the longstanding local interest in intensive recreational development on Padre Island. This interest, Young knew, also had political support, and he intended to become closely aligned with the future National Seashore. Over the next few years, everyone, including Young, recognized that these ambitious plans would not be financially feasible and maybe even desirable for the fragile barrier island ecosystem.

As plans for the National Seashore developed, Bowen turned his attention to providing ranger housing and headquarters on the island in addition to that already provided on the Laguna Madre. The first Park Service plans had called for two district ranger headquarters within the park: one north, one south. The North District headquarters was needed as soon as possible because of construction work scheduled for Fiscal Year 1966. The Park Service, faced with expensive acquisition costs and trouble with facilities' development overall, arranged for an inter-agency transfer of the Navy Target "Caffey" barracks already positioned near the north end of the acquired park land. [45] Caffey barracks remained from World War II when Navy personnel lived on the island to monitor the bombing targets and outside use. Plans for the barracks included adapting and rehabilitating it for a temporary ranger headquarters, information and service center, and as the center for maintenance facilities. Bowen added two house trailers near the barracks for temporary residences, one for the North District ranger and the other for a second park ranger. Park personnel scheduled occupancy for July 1966. [46]

In contrast to the urgency for ranger facilities at the north end, staff planned no facilities for the South District headquarters. The difficulty in acquiring park land at the south end slowed plans for that District. In the meantime, the South District ranger, Art Partin, operated out of temporary facilities at Port Isabel. In 1970 the eventual demise of the park's south end and compromise to not extend beyond the Mansfield Channel terminated the plans for a permanent South District headquarters.

The lack of a south end facility, made access to the central part of the National Seashore increasingly difficult. To offset the problem, park rangers built a small building across from the wrecked *Nicaragua* (a well known early twentieth century shipwreck) for a down-island patrol cabin in the early 1970s. The cabin provided overnight facilities for rangers conducting patrols or research down island as well as an occasional retreat for a ranger and family. The frame building proved useful until destroyed by Hurricane Allen in 1980. [47]



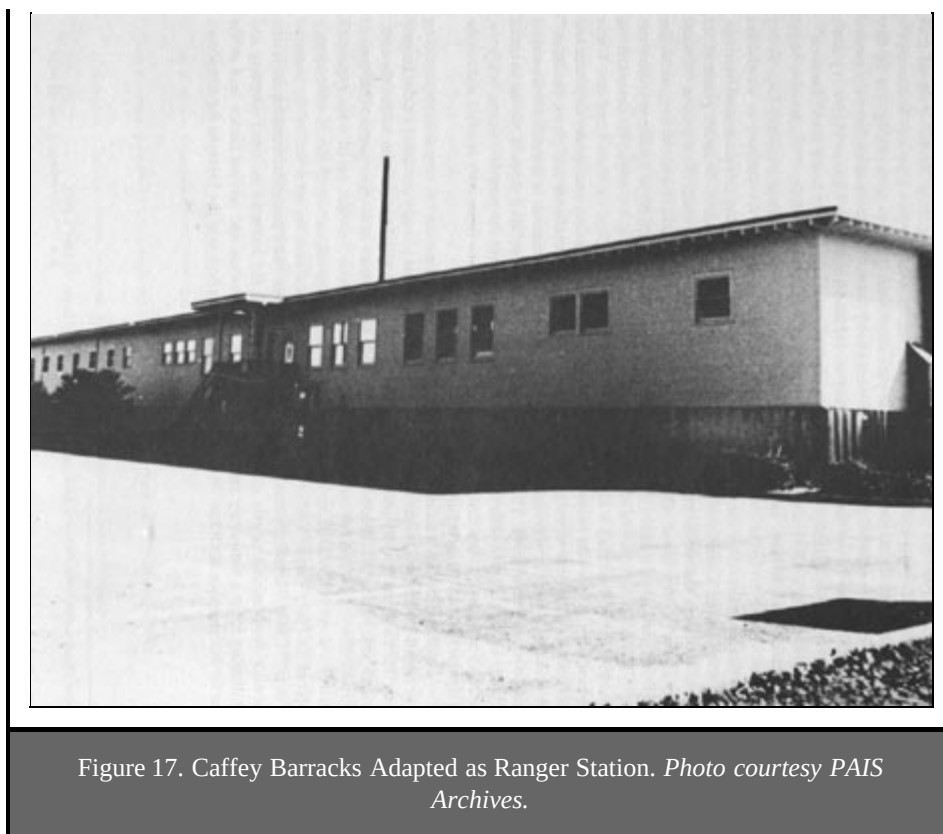


Figure 17. Caffey Barracks Adapted as Ranger Station. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

Malaquite Beach Facilities

As promised in 1965, Superintendent Bowen designated a beach area and initiated plans for permanent facilities on North Padre Island. The selected area fell approximately 12 miles south of Bob Hall Pier along what became known as North Beach. Superintendent Ernest Borgman, the second park superintendent, named the area in 1968, "Malaquite Beach," for the Coahuiltecan tribe, Malaquitas, who once lived on Padre Island. [48]

Malaquite Beach offered an ideal setting for permanent park facilities. A wide sandy beach, large dunes, and close proximity to the northern end of the park meant that permanent park facilities would be used by thousands of tourists now projected to visit the new National Seashore. After selecting the site, Borgman and others retained the Corpus Christi architectural firm of Brock and Mabrey to design the facilities. The firm's experience with the conditions on Padre Island seemed essential to the project's success. Brock and Mabrey first evaluated the climatic and geographic features of Padre Island. Because of the extreme heat, blowing sand, and intense light on the island, the architects devised a bi-level concept with extended and raised boardwalks connecting enclosed levels of various buildings, thus allowing visitors to escape the varied beach conditions as needed. The architects then selected a site on the foredunes overlooking North Beach. All the buildings faced the ocean with a north-south alignment and connected to a parking area below the foredunes on the western side. A bi-level camping area would be located to the north with one level on the beach and the other on the foredunes. Eleven separate buildings or structures were planned: public use building (locker rooms, concession sales, a coffee shop), information and exhibit building, restaurant, administration building, multi-use building (water reservoir and viewing tower), employee residences, group picnic shelters, utility building, kiosks, cabanas, and boardwalk concessions. The facilities accommodated 5,000 visitors. Of the 11 planned buildings and structures, only the public use building, multi-use building, boardwalk concessions, ramps, and parking lots were built. [49]

Although the architects completed their plans in 1967 on schedule, no development seemed

possible in January 1968. Superintendent Borgman expressed his frustration in his midyear Fiscal Year 1968 report:

Concentrated endeavor and a lot of hard work has gone into an attempt to achieve some modicum of success in arriving at goals which have periodically been set in the past... A visitor facility, though minimal, was expected to be completed at Malaquite Beach in the spring of 1968. It cannot now be completed in time to be of any significant value for visitor use during 1968 ... A speedy response and clarity of purpose in establishing reasonable and realistic new goals is called for. Necessary corrective measures are reflected now in non routine goals proposed as follows. [50]

As the year passed, small steps were made on the development plan. A \$2.2 million dollar appropriation finally came from the National Park Service for construction of permanent facilities including a proposed sewage treatment plant. After the letting of construction bids, however, the estimates exceeded the Park Service appropriation. Borgman in consultation with other Park Service officials chose to proceed with building the permanent facilities, but in order to stay in budget, they decided to remove the sewage treatment plant from the current year's project. By fall 1968 work began on the permanent facilities at Malaquite Beach including paving roadways and a parking area. The absence of a sewage treatment plant, however, caused problems. No additional funds were available for the 1969 season and Borgman delayed plans for opening the National Seashore. During the fall Congressional session of 1968, Congressman John Young of Corpus Christi, now committed to the project, sought some solution to the problem. He and Superintendent Borgman explored a number of alternatives including portable chemical toilets and trailer comfort stations. Borgman disliked all of the temporary solutions discussed. He saw the problem worsening with a growing need for visitor facilities and so little funding forthcoming from the Park Service. The national political scene seemed to disfavor additional appropriations for Padre. Senator Ralph Yarborough lost his bid for reelection in the 1968 Democratic primary, and the now senior Republican Senator John Tower was adamantly opposed to the National Seashore. Moreover, President Lyndon Johnson, a friend to Padre funding requests in the past, did not seek reelection and a new administration occupied the White House. It became obvious to Borgman as the time neared for the 1969 visitor season that permanent facilities could be fully in place and able to be operated except for a method of sewage disposal. Congressman Young encouraged Borgman to take advantage of all temporary solutions promising to secure the needed \$300,000 to \$400,000 appropriation in Fiscal Year 1970 that would begin July 1, 1969. [51]





Figure 18. Malaquite Beach Facilities. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

Superintendent Borgman continued Park Service plans for opening Malaquite in spite of these problems. In December 1968, Borgman released the first *Prospectus* for a concessionaire to operate the Malaquite facilities. The following July, the Padre Island National Seashore Company received a contract to operate concessions in the National Seashore for 20 years. The Corpus Christi company, formed solely for in response to the Park Service solicitation, agreed to occupy the Malaquite facilities within four months and have exclusive concession rights at all north facilities. The Company announced that umbrella, chair, and float rentals would be available by Labor Day, and food and souvenir concessions, and eventually cabanas would follow by the end of 1969. An annual rental fee and 3 percent of the annual gross receipts would return to the National Park Service. [52] Within two months, Padre Island National Seashore Company reported a fire in the concession area which delayed opening the concessions until January 1970. [53]

Construction work ended in late 1969 on the Malaquite Beach facilities. After the sewage treatment plant received an appropriation in Fiscal Year 1970 as Congressman Young promised, the first phase of the park facilities was complete. With a critical milestone reached, Superintendent Borgman in October 1969 accepted the superintendency of Mt. McKinley National Park and Katmai National Monument in Alaska. Borgman, who arrived at Padre Island in 1964 as the first Park Ranger, and replaced Superintendent William Bowen in February 1966, continued the struggle to develop the park. [54]

After seven years, the Park Service held title to the majority of proposed park land and established a physical presence both inland at Flour Bluff and on the island. Through the impressive work of Superintendents Bowen and Borgman and enthusiastic park employees, Padre Island National Seashore represented a viable public entity in the region that seemed destined to grow. Full operation of the park, beginning with the 1970 season, now remained with the park staff and a new superintendent as they anticipated an ever-increasing number of visitors.

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Last Updated: 14-Jun-2005

Padre Island

Administrative History



CHAPTER SIX:

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING ISSUES 1970 - 1980

Malaquite Beach Pavilion and Facilities

Shortly after completion of the Malaquite Beach facilities in late 1969 problems arose with the construction. Small hairline cracks appeared along the concrete pillars supporting the public use building, boardwalk, and view tower. When the new superintendent James McLaughlin arrived in May 1970 from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, park personnel already reported the pavilion as a maintenance concern. Within a few years Superintendent McLaughlin and staff redefined the beach facilities as a long-term problem. [1]

In 1971 the Texas Society of Architects honored Victor Brock and Leslie Mabrey for their design of the Malaquite Beach facilities. Brock and Mabrey brought years of experience with the coastal environment to the design of the facilities. They knew of the extreme temperatures, strong winds, salt spray, and the strength and destructive force of hurricanes. For the incorporation of these concerns with the design, the architectural firm also received recognition from the Corpus Christi Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1973. [2]

The award-winning status of the facilities complicated early recognition and publicity on the maintenance problems. Newspaper reports emerging in June 1973 blamed neither the architects nor the construction company, but concluded that all problems were typical of pre-stressed concrete buildings along the coast. Superintendent McLaughlin repeated the "no blame" story yet described the problems as "long-term." He added that the Padre Island problems were the most severe conditions seen by the Park Service at any of the national seashore parks. [3]

McLaughlin's public statements conflicted with comments in his fiscal year 1972 annual report. He cited two reasons for the maintenance problems: location in the foredunes and construction defects. Regarding the location, McLaughlin stated one of the most insightful comments yet made by a Park Service authority, "The Gulf Coast environment is deceptive in ways which we have yet to understand." In short, McLaughlin acknowledged the complex environment of Padre Island and that its intrinsic nature eluded the Park Service management. Regarding the construction defects, he said that a construction oversight allowed the steel reinforcement bars to be placed too close to the surface of the concrete in the walkways and supporting columns. This mistake caused rusting and swelling from the salt and moisture which in turn caused the concrete to crack and break away. [4]

In May 1972, Paul Gerrish, the new maintenance supervisor, reported additional problems with the Malaquite Beach complex. Hurricane shutters around the windows of the concession portion of the public use building disintegrated and rusted beyond repair. Drinking water dispensers on the outside of buildings also rusted. Light fixtures along the boardwalk made of aluminum disintegrated. Each light fixture cost over \$100 to replace, amounting to over

\$8,000 for all 72. Gerrish made two important statements on the facilities:

It is unfortunate that when this building was planned, an adequate study was not made to provide a building plan that could be adequately maintained without having to replace so many costly fixtures every three years. In the master plan, it is planned to extend the present Malaquite development which I think would be a mistake. Take a long look at the problems we are facing with the present building and you may want to change a lot of things. We are falling behind in trying to maintain what we have now and with more maintenance in this corrosive atmosphere, we would be incapable of doing it. [5]

The reports of Superintendent McLaughlin and Gerrish drew the attention of Park Service personnel, making the Padre predicament "one of the most unusual maintenance problems in the National Park System." [6] When Bob Pozol of the Southwest Regional Office visited the National Seashore in August 1972 for an his own inspection, he added new structural problems to the list. The center stairway of the concrete walkway leading to the pavilion had broken away from its foundation. Two kiosks in front of the pavilion fell from their foundations because of the high winds. Finally, the 300,000-gallon concrete water reservoir underneath the View Tower showed hairline cracks and seepage like the other concrete structures at Malaquite Beach. [7]

By 1973 the Malaquite facilities attracted attention from outside the Park Service. Local newspapers carried stories on the deterioration, noting that the cracks posed no harm to visitors. [8] As the public and Park Service became increasing sensitive to the problems, the budget for maintenance improved. Superintendent McLaughlin reported in 1973 that the National Seashore received \$50,000 for a pilot program to start repairing or stabilizing the deteriorated concrete. After consultation, Park managers chose to chip and fill the exposed spots as a means of stabilizing the structure. This project became known as the "Malaquite Stabilization Project" and proved to be laborious but inexpensive. [9] Stabilization efforts begun in 1973 intensified in 1974-1975. In 1974, a new Chief of Maintenance, Sheldon Smith, created an epoxy-type process to hold the concrete together. The epoxy application worked well, and after a full-time concrete finishing foreman was hired in February 1975, work progressed rapidly. By the end of 1975, he completed approximately 50% and by 1976, 95% of the work on Buildings A and L was completed. [10] Two years later, the Park Service recognized Sheldon Smith with a commendation estimating that his epoxy process saved approximately \$94,792. [11]

In spite of the Maintenance Division accomplishments during the late 1970s, the Malaquite Beach facilities never seemed to reach their full use or capacity. As Buildings A and L neared stabilization in 1976, the View Tower deteriorated rapidly. Park personnel reported that funds set aside for the Malaquite facility were exhausted by the end of Fiscal Year 1978 and nothing remained for the repairs on the View Tower. Without funds, park staff decided to perform a load test on the structure before proceeding with any work. [12] Without a decision, the following July 1979, unusually strong winds eroded sand below walkways and along the platform supports of the Malaquite Pavilion, creating new maintenance and structural problems. Although repaired with "mudjack," the pavilion's foundation remained vulnerable to the island's natural processes. [13] The Malaquite Beach complex continued to be a problem into 1980, but the Park Service remained unable to resolve its structural problems.





Figure 19. Aerial View of Malaquite Beach Pavilion. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives [T1056].*

Grazing Permits

In the summer of 1970 Superintendent McLaughlin met with David Coover, a representative of the Dunn ranch, to discuss the continuation of cattle grazing. A "gentleman's agreement" between Senator Ralph Yarborough and National Park Service Director George Hartzog in 1965 allowed grazing permits to continue on Padre Island for five years, ending December 31, 1970. [14] By midyear 1970, McLaughlin and the cattle owners either needed to bring an end to the agreement or negotiate a new one. Although Dunn's cattle empire had existed for over a hundred years at that point, environmentalists and resource conservationists demanded that it end. One conservationist reported that "the mosquitoes drive these cattle onto the beaches to sleep at night and in the morning these public beaches look like the holding pen for a slaughterhouse." Other environmentalists argued that the cattle rooted up young, tender grass that led to the de-stabilization of dunes and thus the island. [15] McLaughlin and his staff increasingly found themselves in a difficult position. While public sentiment might support the environmentalists' position, Coover and his ranching associates knew of Federal policy on public lands in the West that allowed grazing and offered a plausible argument and response for every public comment expressed. [16]

Coover detailed his position in a letter to McLaughlin on July 17, 1970. He asked for an extension through the fall of 1973 for complete removal and hinted at a full two-year lease agreement. The working pens below the first set at the Novillo Line Camp, he explained, needed extensive repair and required expensive four-wheel drive vehicles to work the area. A partial lease at the northern end of the island would be acceptable to him for the short remaining period. Because of the poor calf crop produced on the island, losses from hurricanes, and poor grass quality, Coover added that a continuance of the lease rate or at most 25 cents per unit was reasonable. In response to public comment on the detriment of cattle droppings, he reminded McLaughlin of the many parks full of wildlife and that to some visitors the cattle became an added attraction. He responded differently to the charge that the cattle led to denudation of grasses and dunes. Coover argued that camping, vehicular traffic over dunes, and Navy bombing resulting in grass fires left more problems than cattle grazing for over 150 years. [17]

McLaughlin delayed a response to Coover's July 1970 letter so that he could study the

situation. Coover, however, became impatient with McLaughlin's delay and took his case to a deputy director of the National Park Service in Washington, DC. In a report from Washington in late summer 1970, the Park Service indicated that negotiations were underway with David Coover for a new two-year lease but with some restrictions on "free-roaming cattle" and a progressive reduction in their numbers. [18]

As the deadline for the grazing permit neared, the issue received more public attention. In a news release on September 4, 1970, Secretary of Interior Walter J. Hickel ended the controversy by denying a request to continue the lease. He continued that "cattle grazing is not compatible with preserving the natural values of the Seashore nor with its full enjoyment by the public." On December 31, 1970, the days of cattle grazing on Padre Island officially came to an end. [19] By late fall 1970, local newspapers reported that most of the 1,200 head of cattle were removed. Park Rangers, however, remembered that four cows remained through the 1970s with the last one being removed in the early 1980s. [20]

Master Plan Development

Within two years after arriving at Padre Island National Seashore, Superintendent McLaughlin initiated a new master planning process. The *Master Plan Brief* released in 1965 no longer seemed applicable for the development of the National Seashore and new Federal legislation required all units of public land to evaluate the potential for wilderness protection. Because of funding limitations and property owner court settlements, the Park Service reduced the size of the National Seashore from that authorized in 1962. It also became clear that both the physical plant projections and operating policies needed adjustments. In the fall of 1971, McLaughlin and staff welcomed a special planning team from the Denver Service Center. Led by park planner Marc Malik, the team members included a wilderness specialist, sociologist, ecologist, and interpretive planner. The remaining park staff, concession manager, and a research associate offered consultation as requested by the team. [21]

In large part, the planning team found many of the old issues involving Padre Island still unresolved. North Padre Island supporters sought more restrained development of the island, while the southern end wanted development that would benefit Rio Grande Valley residents. The southern supporters repeatedly pointed to the Malaquite Beach facilities and park headquarters as an indication that the northern end received preferential treatment. Both ends, the park planners pointed out, already had extensive state, county, and city park facilities. In short, the planners seemed sympathetic to the concerns of area residents but wanted their needs to be met in a manner that would not destroy the natural resource of Padre Island. This, of course, had to be done in light of what appeared to be the growing popularity of the National Seashore. The planners reviewed visitation records showing an increase from 361,000 in 1968 to 904,000 in 1971. For the time being, it seemed, the National Seashore was attracting a growing and unlimited number of visitors. [22]

The planners stated early in the draft that the underlying concept for recreation on the island was "to give the visitor a broad range of opportunities to experience the various features of the island in a manner that is not available to him at the existing seashore parks in the region." In other words, the planning team wanted to see diverse uses on the island away from the existing "high-density bathing use, with easy access and many concessioner services." The greatest value of the National Seashore, they determined, was its "endless stretches of primitive beach and interior lands." Similar areas outside of the park were expected to disappear as the north and south ends continued development like the present. [23]

Several aspects of the new plan seemed to repeat parts of the plan from the 1960s. Malaquite Beach development would continue to expand, Laguna Madre access would be improved, and

recreational facilities would be provided at the southern end. Other parts of the plan, however, differed from the earlier version. Although recreational facilities on the south were planned, all beach facilities, camping provisions, and a boat dock would be immediately south of Mansfield Channel. Since this land was not owned by the Park Service, the plan suggested a property swap with the two parcels still owned farther south to gain some 200 to 300 hundred acres. [24]

The most radical changes involved transportation routes and systems. The plan called for the road system, at this point ending north of Little Shell Beach, to extend 15 miles to a trailhead at Yarborough Pass. This extension allowed Little Shell Beach to be closed to vehicles for 12 miles. At the southernmost end of Little Shell to the Mansfield Channel, approximately 45 miles, the plan envisioned no development except what would be required for a beach bus system. Under this scheme, buses traveled the length of the island and provided visitor access to the remote sections, especially Big Shell Beach. Planners felt that this route and a short-term one from Malaquite Beach to Little Shell Beach expanded the average visitor's experience on Padre Island. In an accompanying development, the plan called for boat access west of Malaquite Beach, now known as Bird Island Basin, at Yarborough Pass, and finally on the Mansfield Channel. The planners also requested that areas south of Big Shell Beach to Mansfield Channel be managed as a Class V primitive area allowing only primitive campsites, shelters, and sanitary facilities. [25]

While the Denver Service Center team worked, the Wilderness Planning Team responded to Public Law 88-577, passed in 1964 establishing a National Wilderness Preservation System. Under this law, Federal planners evaluated all roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more within national parks or national monuments for "wilderness" designation by 1974. A wilderness designation exceeded current administrative planning designations for outdoor recreation areas ranging from a Class I high density area to a Class V primitive area and Class VI historic and cultural area. The Wilderness Planning Team's main points became to reduce development and set restrictions for public use. Padre Island National Seashore held over 5,000 acres in its central portion and thus required consideration of its wilderness potential. [26]

In 1972, the National Seashore released and disseminated to the public the *Master Plan*, *Environmental Impact Statement*, and *Wilderness Proposal*. Padre Island supporters stepped forward to review the proposed plans. The Resource Conservation and Open Space Development Committee of the Coastal Bend Council of Governments became one of the first public entities to comment. At two February 1972 meetings, committee members discussed the new park proposals with Superintendent McLaughlin at length. The committee's discussions turned to the old question of mineral extraction on the island. McLaughlin, favoring the Park Service recommendation to leave the area 35 miles south of Malaquite to the Mansfield Channel as "primitive," felt that as long as the Park Service allowed mineral extraction, a "wilderness" designation was prohibited. In response, members of the committee, apparently wanting "wilderness" designation, asked if an exemption might be requested to change the Park Service policy. The committee voted to request an exemption for the mineral extraction and seek wilderness designation. In a final request, the committee added that they would like to recognize the small oak groves on the Laguna Madre as an "outstanding natural area." [27]

Within a month, on March 23, 1972, the Park Service received a different opinion of the National Seashore's use in a public hearing in Brownsville. South Texas supporters wanted the area south of Malaquite Beach to Mansfield Channel, roughly 35 miles, to remain as a "primitive" area, not "wilderness." However, the roughly 25 to 30 Brownsville citizens present seemed most interested in the proposed development adjacent to the Mansfield Channel. Once again, the Park Service presented a conceptual plan for development south of

the channel but had neither funds nor the land acquired to follow through with the concept. South Texans, however, seemed willing to accept the concept and allow the Park Service time. Other than general comments on the plan, the group voiced almost no opposition to the planning documents. [28]

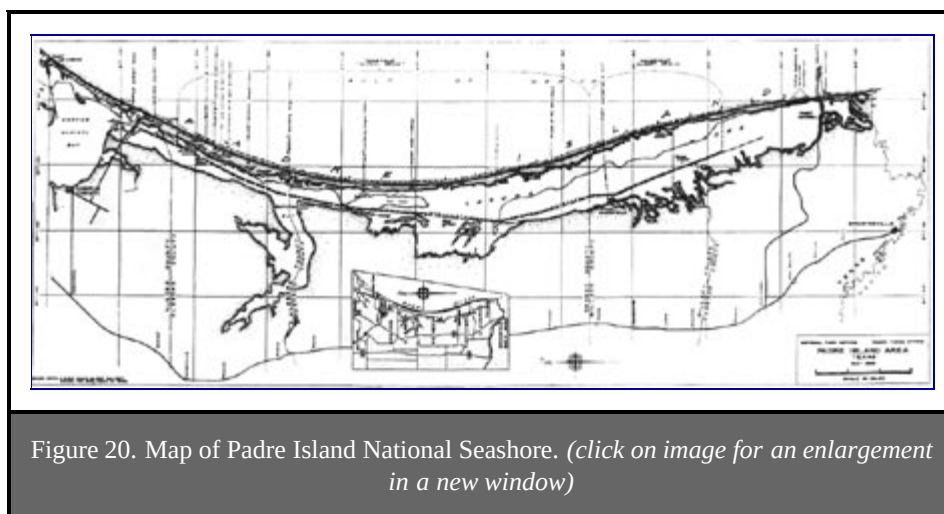


Figure 20. Map of Padre Island National Seashore. (click on image for an enlargement in a new window)

On March 25, 1972, McLaughlin and staff opened similar discussions in Corpus Christi. While the Park Service planned its discussion and formal public hearing, a vocal group of citizens banded together to oppose the *Master Plan* and wilderness designation. The owner of an arguably "illegal" cabin on the island, Leslie Chappell, urged citizens to come to the hearing and oppose the *Master Plan*. Chappell, who found the provision to close vehicular traffic on Little Shell Beach and divert traffic particularly objectionable, would later reveal that his cabin was very close to the proposed closed beach, thereby eliminating his access. [29] As the discussion and hearing unfolded on Saturday, March 25th, the cabin owners and conservationists separated. [30]

While the discussion ensued over the cabins, the Park Service proceeded with its plans. On September 21, 1972, the president reported to the Congress the Park Service recommendation: Padre Island was unsuitable for wilderness designation. In its final statement, the Park Service included all land south of Yarborough Pass as a Class V "primitive" area under the existing outdoor recreation land classifications. By the end of calendar year 1972, the Park Service approved only the *Wilderness Proposal*. [31]

In 1973 the Denver Service Center returned to the *Master Plan* for revisions. At the same time, park staff revised and forwarded to the regional office and Washington a new *Environmental Impact Statement*. The National Park Service, however, required the Environmental Protection Agency to accept the work before the *Master Plan* could be formally approved and adopted. In the meantime, South Padre Island Development Corporation offered to give the Park Service 200 acres adjacent to the Mansfield Channel on the south side in exchange for the 18 acres owned by the Park Service farther south. By the end of the year, the company retracted its offer because the Park Service would not begin development on the southern end as proposed in the *Master Plan*. [32] During the next year, the *Environmental Impact Statement* and *Master Plan* were approved on May 22nd and October 21, respectively. The approval of these documents allowed the Park Service to continue development in Padre Island National Seashore.

Spoil Islands Cabins and Chappell Cabin

The problem of the spoil islands cabins and the Chappell cabin had emerged in the weeks prior to the public hearing in March 1972. Newspaper stories, editorials, and countless

accusations led to the inevitable public confrontation. While the discussion centered on vague statements, development and use of the cabins had begun a number of years ago. As a result, great pride and loyalty existed among the various owners.

Dredging in the Laguna Madre for the Intracoastal Waterway in 1939 left a series of small landforms called "spoil islands" or "spoil bank islands." These extended south from immediately below South Bird Island in Nueces County into Kleberg County on the eastern side of the Waterway. Because the boundary of the National Seashore as authorized extended to the eastern edge of the Waterway, the spoil islands became Park Service property when the majority of park land was acquired by condemnation in 1966. These man-made islands, unlike the natural North and South Bird Islands, consisted of various combinations of sand, mud, and shell acquired from the adjacent channel. All of them changed under the forces of wind, rain, and wave action regardless of composition. Some developed ponds of water and vegetation. Many became habitats for water fowl and wildlife. [33]

Between construction of the Intracoastal Waterway and the 1960s, a handful of fishermen and island enthusiasts from the Corpus Christi area built small wooden frame cabins on the spoil islands. Although estimates varied in 1972, approximately 200 such cabins offered weekend vacation homes for the owners. Many of these were constructed over water and none provided sanitary or fresh water facilities. In a July 1972 survey, 75% or 115 of the total number of cabins fell within the boundaries of the National Seashore. An increasing number appeared run down and uninhabited. [34]

The issue of what to do with the cabins plagued the Park Service from the beginning of land acquisition. In order to placate owners and in the absence of the time or money to devote to the endeavor, Padre officials allowed the owners to continue their use by granting special permits. By 1972, Superintendent James McLaughlin could no longer sidestep the presence of these cabins. In a series of meetings on the proposed *Master Plan*, the two opposing views emerged to debate. Environmentalists declared in public testimony that the cabins must go. Cabin owners retorted that they owned the cabins long before the park appeared and did not intend to relinquish their hold without a fight. Adding to the cause of the cabin owners, Leslie Chappell, Nueces County building superintendent, owned a cabin across from the Nicaragua wreck at the 30-mile marker down-island. [35] Chappell's cabin became a companion in the case, with some arguing that it appeared after defined park boundaries and therefore deserved even less support from the Park Service.

By summer 1972 environmentalists added another argument. Because the cabins had no plumbing, they were a potential health hazard. A special study by the Park Service followed, but they detected no unusually high levels of coliform. [36] As the battle raged in local newspapers, Superintendent McLaughlin requested that the Secretary of the Interior provide a judgement. The National Park Service officially declared its position to allow all special permits to expire. With the position stated, McLaughlin sent letters to all cabin owners stating the new position. As a follow-through measure, he instructed the Laguna Madre District Ranger to begin to clear off all islands. The ranger prepared detailed files with photographs on each island. One by one owners of the cabins removed them or the ranger burned them. The Chappell Cabin immediately became the property of the Park Service and was destroyed. By 1975 all permits expired, with the last 90-day grace period ending on April 1, 1976. At last, the spoil island cabins within the park were gone. [37]





Figure 21. Typical Spoil Island Cabin. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

New Headquarters Building

The 1974 Master Plan recognized a number of management issues that troubled Padre Island administrators, including the restrictive size of the National Seashore headquarters building in Flour Bluff. In March 1965 when the headquarters building opened, the 2,715 square feet seemed generous for the small staff and new park. By the early 1970s, however, the building at 1001 Island Drive no longer met the demands of the park staff and a visiting public.

Almost a year before the lease on 1001 Island Drive (10025 South Padre Island Drive) expired, the General Services Administration began to negotiate a new lease. Despite repeated attempts to reach an agreement for expansion or modification to the existing building, none could be reached. General Services Administration personnel faced a dilemma of whether to move the headquarters somewhere within the Corpus Christi area or relocate to the island as originally planned in the 1960s. As the park staff and General Services Administration explored the latter idea, it became apparent that relocating to the island was impractical. The Malaquite Beach facilities suffered from the extreme environment of the island and the park lacked funds to construct a new headquarters. The General Services Administration decided the more acceptable approach was to locate or build a building in Flour Bluff that allowed direct access to visitors who might be headed toward the seashore. By midyear 1975 the General Services Administration and park administrators agreed on the remodeling of a building at 9405 South Padre Island Drive, roughly two to three blocks from the first headquarters. Architect Joe Williams and contractor Cliff Zarsky, both from Corpus Christi, directed and completed the work on the new building. W.R. Anderson of Corpus Christi became the new leaseholder.

The new building opened onto South Padre Island Drive with a small visitor and interpretive center. To the rear, offices lined the perimeter of the building with sliding glass doors facing onto a courtyard covered with skylights. The courtyard housed a number of plants, many provided by the architect from his own greenhouse. Storage rooms were at the far back with access to a partially covered parking lot. [38]

The Park Service dedicated the new headquarters on May 22, 1976, at three in the afternoon. Superintendent John Turney led the ceremonies with the mayor of Corpus Christi, Jason Luby, and Associate Regional Director Monte Fitch cutting the ribbon. [39] This building continues to serve as the headquarters.

Negotiations with Concessionaire

When the Malaquite Beach facilities finally opened in 1970, Padre Island National Seashore Company, as the sole concessionaire, offered a full complement of visitor provisions including a food and beverage service, vending machines, legal alcoholic beverages, miscellaneous merchandise, beach and camping equipment, and locker rental services. [40] The Company, operating under a 20-year agreement with the National Park Service, seemed to have an unlimited ability for profit. They, however, began to report annual losses almost immediately. In 1973 the Company announced its first profit of \$7,420 showing a gross income of \$167,632.24 from \$160,212.03 in 1972. As was becoming an annual request, the Company still sought a waiver on its franchise fee because of an overall loss in revenue of \$48,770.97. This request prompted an audit by the General Accounting Office to determine the cause of the Company's losses. [41]

Park staff seemed ambivalent about the Company's financial problems. Reports from the early 1970s indicate an awareness of the financial problems, but a growing concern over the poor maintenance and sanitation practices of the Company. By 1973, the Park Service prepared and implemented a Maintenance Agreement with the Company to ensure better practices. [42] The following year the Company again reported a loss. This time the Park Service granted some relief on the franchise fee but realized it was hardly enough to offset the Company's losses. [43] The 1975 *Annual Report* reflected the demise of the Padre Island National Seashore Company by stating that approval of a prospectus for a new concessionaire was expected soon from Washington. [44] In spite of the effort to seek a new concessionaire, the National Seashore Company remained in the Malaquite Beach complex until discontinued in 1979. [45]

Visitation and Law Enforcement

In 1970 National Park Service officials voiced high expectations for Padre Island National Seashore. With the Malaquite Beach facilities operable, visitation seemed sure to grow each year. For most of the 1970s, this appeared to happen. Between 1971 and 1972, almost 200,000 more visitors came to the National Seashore, virtually doubling the amount from four years before. But in 1974 and 1975, the national energy crisis reduced the number of automobiles on the highways and dropped visitation back to pre-1970 numbers. This setback was short lived. A renewed sense of confidence and relaxed fuel supplies brought an all-time high number of visitors in 1976, over 968,000. This number, however, began to drop toward the end of the decade and began a trend of steady declines throughout most of the 1980s.

Increased numbers of visitors brought new problems for the National Seashore staff. Following the riots in Yosemite National Park in July 1970, the National Park Service stressed law enforcement in all of the national parks. Some Park Service employees argued that this new emphasis came at the expense of interpretation and resource conservation programs. At the same time, few employees denied that there was a need for strong enforcement. Padre Island National Seashore, like other parks, experienced its own set of problems.

Padre Island rangers reported that hunting violations, usually during duck and geese season, were the major offense in 1970. These were minor offenses usually caused by a hunter straying into the National Seashore unaware of the boundary. [46] By 1972 rangers reported

different violations, from illegal possession of drugs to excessive speeding and liquor law violations. In 1972 arrests increased four times from 27 to 107, mostly for drugs. [47] The following year law enforcement rangers implemented a new reporting system. Using the Form 10-343, Case Incident Record, rangers developed more reliable statistics than in previous years and reported in 1973 to have the most accurate to date. Once again, the number of arrests grew to 244, largely for illegal drug possession. Some rangers felt that the number may have been even larger except for an agreement between the Park Service, United States Attorney, and Magistrate. This agreement allowed park rangers to cite those in possession of small amounts of drugs rather than arresting them, beginning October 1973. [48] Over the next few years, the number of cases and incidents grew to an all-time high in 1976. Drug violations, however, slowly began to drop with only 50 reported in 1979. [49]

Implementation of Master Plan

After adoption of the *Master Plan* in 1974, Superintendent Jack Turney, superintendent at White Sands National Monument until December 1973, updated and submitted to Washington legislative data for a south boundary change. [50] The new plan called for an exchange of the small acreage acquired by the Park Service during its acquisition phase but now separated by larger acreage no longer under consideration. Although offered by South Padre Investment Company a year earlier, the Park Service was only now in a position to act and even then not without legislative approval. In 1975, Turney reported that the data submitted would be included in omnibus legislation during the Second Session of the 94th Congress. [51] The following year Turney reported that Congress enacted the legislation approving the land swap, but he took no administrative action. [52] By the end of the 1970s, the Southwest Region of the National Park Service and Padre Island staff continued to debate alternatives for handling the legislation and potential land swap. [53]

As the decade came to a close, the National Seashore listed progress on several other parts of the plan. When the Chevron Company decided to shut down its operation of the Permian tank on Bird Island Basin, the Park Service reinstated its right to use the road. After road repairs were completed in 1975, visitors accessed the Laguna Madre and boat docking facilities as outlined in the plan.

In January 1979 the National Seashore explored the idea of mass transit to the island as suggested in the Master Plan. Under a contract with the park, Alan M. Voorhees and Associates of Aurora, Colorado, examined a number of options for reducing vehicular use within the park. One of the options included developing a transit system to Yarborough Pass and the Mansfield Channel. The contractors believed that park visitors would use such a system but it required heavy subsidization by the Park Service. They also explored and abandoned the idea of a ferry service across the Mansfield Channel. Likewise, the planners looked at restricting four-wheel drive vehicles but stopped short of any recommendations. The consultants studied the concept of a new inland roadway to Yarborough Pass, but dropped the idea. The Voorhees report changed little at the National Seashore. [54]

New Issues in the Management of Padre Island

At the end of the 1970s, the National Seashore encountered a new issue that profoundly effected the park and its staff. During spring 1979 a blowout occurred at one of the many off-shore oil wells owned and operated by the Mexican government in the Gulf of Mexico. IXTOC I, as it became known, released its contents into the Gulf waters for three months before measures were taken to stop the flow. Because the Gulf currents flow along the Mexican border in a northwesterly direction, the park staff knew there was a strong possibility that oil would wash ashore in the park. On August 9th the effects of the oil spill became evident. Small tar balls washed onto the shore south of Big Shell Beach. Gradually,

larger sheets of crude oil and pancakes or blobs appeared. [55]

Six months before IXTOC I, Myrl Brooks arrived at Padre Island as its new superintendent, from being superintendent of Voyagers National Park in Minnesota. Brooks, who had risen in the Park Service ranks as a park ranger, was not prepared for this issue. After he no longer could delay addressing the problem, Superintendent Brooks, in consultation with Chief Park Naturalist Robert Whistler, flew down the island to inspect the washed-up tar on the beach. Shortly thereafter, Brooks requested Whistler to attend the United States Coast Guard meetings that were periodically updating the public on the spill. Whistler immediately began planning for the worst situation. He requested special funding from the Regional Office for a baseline study on the beach, and contacted the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to set up a bird cleaning station at Malaquite Beach. Even the Natural Resources Office in Washington sent a staff member, Dr. Schoenfield, to observe and work with the National Seashore staff on the spill. The Coast Guard assisted the park for one week and then discontinued its work. They did, however, successfully place booms at Mansfield Channel to prevent leakage into the Laguna Madre. [56]

As the wash-up continued, park maintenance staff tried every technique possible to eliminate the tar. A road grader raked the material into raised furrows roughly one foot in length and moved it to the upper beach. These furrows tended to gradually break down and disintegrate into the sand. When the oil patches grew too frequent and large, this practice became infeasible. The National Seashore purchased a Barber Beach Rake that helped to clean up debris as well as tar balls. Eventually, most of the staff simply gave up. By late summer, storms produced high tides on the beach and the currents shifted to a southerly direction. These natural changes helped to clean the beach and shorten the life of the spill. [57]

The IXTOC I spill seriously hindered park operations. A national flurry of bad press coverage seriously reduced visitation. As a consequence, the concessionaires at Malaquite Beach went out of business. The most serious problems manifested themselves in the staff of the National Seashore. A greatly demoralized and overwhelmed staff faced the spill with little assistance, experience, and support. Robert Whistler, one of those directly involved, took a short hiatus to recover from the mental drain. In less than six months, Superintendent Myrl Brooks retired from the Park Service, in part a victim of the worst oil spill in United States history to that point. [58]

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Padre Island

Administrative History



CHAPTER SEVEN:

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING ISSUES 1980 - 1993

Hurricane Allen

After almost 20 years of operation, the staff at Padre Island National Seashore anticipated the annual hurricane season. The chief ranger prepared and practiced a hurricane plan annually with the idea that each new season might be the one to bring a great storm to the island. From midsummer to early fall, the staff watched weather patterns in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico and monitored the path of any new tropical depressions or storms. Several hurricanes had threatened the park since its establishment, but no direct land fall had occurred within the park boundaries. In 1967 Hurricane Beulah landed at the mouth of the Rio Grande, causing wind and water damage to the new park. In 1970 Hurricane Celia hit land north of Padre Island between Corpus Christi Bay and Port Aransas. [1] These storms demonstrated the serious and destructive nature of hurricanes without causing the Park Service to alter its development plans for the National Seashore. The course of events in the 1980 hurricane season soon changed the park's development forever.

Bill Luckens came to Padre Island in late spring of 1980 from Saguaro National Monument in Tucson, Arizona, to assume the superintendency. After years of working in various parks in the West, Padre Island was his first non-desert assignment. In June, Chief Ranger Max Hancock presented the park's updated *Hurricane Plan* to Luckens and the staff. Employees received assigned tasks and an overview of steps for evacuation. As the summer months unfolded, the threat of a hurricane remained constant but nothing developed. During early August, things began to change. Weather reports identified a tropical storm forming in the Caribbean. Over the next few days the storm grew in strength and intensified as it crossed the Gulf of Mexico. The Hurricane Center in Miami watched its movement and soon predicted its probable landfall along Padre Island. [2]

The National Seashore staff moved to action. Putting its *Hurricane Plan* into effect, the staff boarded up all the facilities on the island and at Flour Bluff, and moved all four-wheel drive vehicles to the headquarters building. Park rangers traveled the length of the park to evacuate all campers and visitors. Staff members living on the island left for San Antonio. Within a matter of hours, the park employees closed the National Seashore, leaving behind them secured entrance gates. [3]

Hurricane Allen, as it was named, developed winds of close to 180 miles per hour, making it a very powerful storm. Forecasters now predicted it to land somewhere near the Mansfield Channel at the southern end of the park. In the days and hours that passed before landing, some coastal residents left for more inland locations while others braced themselves for the onslaught of the hurricane. On August 9th Hurricane Allen landed as predicted. Fortunately, just before reaching land its winds dropped to below 120 miles per hour making it less treacherous than estimated. Nevertheless, its destruction proved serious. [4]

Hurricane Allen left the barrier island in a shambles. The protective foredunes fell to small

hills of sand and scattered as much as 150 feet inland. Large alluvial fans spread across the grasslands down-island and many washovers left the barrier system defenseless. The storm caused serious damage to the already vulnerable Malaquite Beach facilities. The lower level campground broke into hundreds of small pieces with concrete picnic tables heaped on top and laying wherever the water left them. All the cabanas and beach resources under the Malaquite Pavilion washed away, leaving the support pillars exposed as much as five additional feet. [5] In large part, the barrier acted as it should have under such circumstances. The height of the foredunes reduced the strength of wind and flow of water before it hit the mainland. Although washovers and washouts occurred, these were typical of storm damage on barrier islands. Where human intervention left the dunes exposed and in an unnatural form, the damage was far more severe.

Most of the Malaquite Beach facilities returned to normal operations after a brief cleanup period. The foredunes gradually began to restore themselves under the natural processes of the barrier island. Damage to the Malaquite Pavilion, however, fully manifested itself several years later. In 1983 the staff reported patches of concrete falling off and determined that saltwater penetrating the building during the storm finally reached the steel supports and led to the flaking concrete. These problems, added to the existing maintenance dilemmas, required the Park Service to reconsider retaining the existing facilities and rethink recreational development on the barrier island. [6]

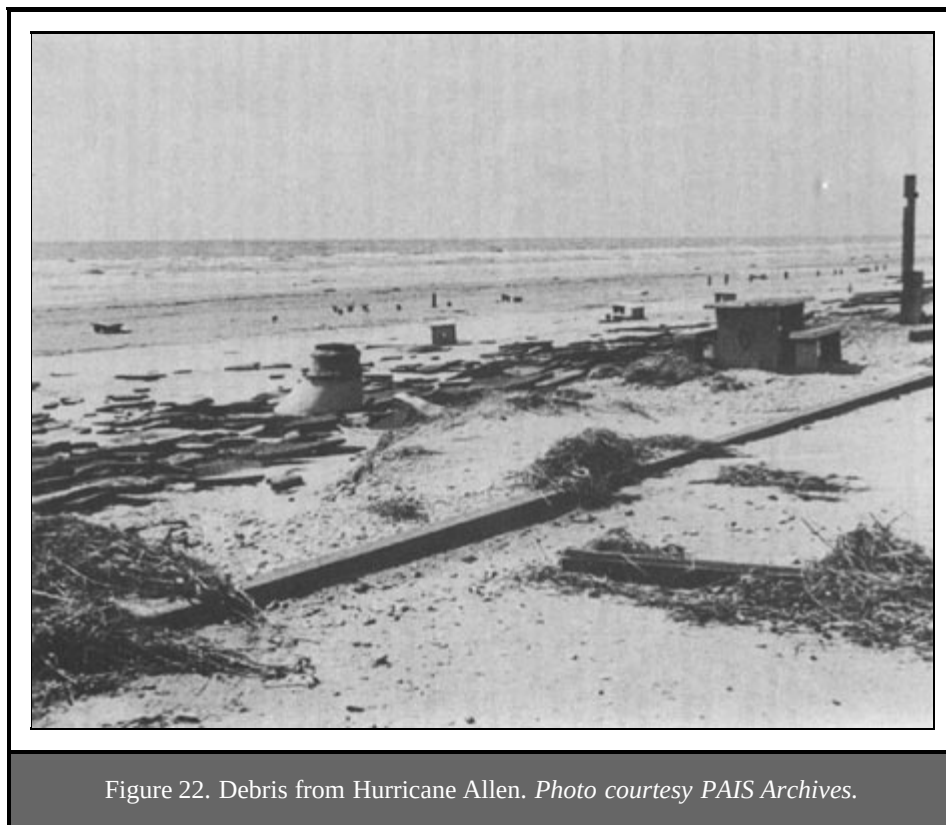


Figure 22. Debris from Hurricane Allen. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan

In the aftermath of Hurricane Allen the National Park Service reevaluated the 1974 *Master Plan*. Within a few months, Superintendent Luckens initiated a new planning endeavor recognizing some of the issues in operating a park on a barrier island. Hurricane Allen had caused millions of dollars of damage to the Gulf Coast, being particularly unkind to structures and buildings placed in "high-hazard" zones. The Malaquite facilities located on the high-hazard foredunes required an estimated \$562,000 in repairs. This estimate did not include the preexisting conditions of the pavilion caused by the corrosive salt-air and wind

since its construction. Luckens and staff examined the documented and observed visitor use and travel trends between 1974 and 1981 to determine visitor demand. They discovered that visitation, as projected in the 1974 plan, was approximately twice greater than the current one million arriving annually. These factors pointed to a new philosophy for development on the barrier national seashore. [7]

As part of the new planning process, the National Seashore staff involved visitors in identifying current issues and concerns. Some of the public comments included the following: (1) need for a 24-hour ranger patrol to reduce law enforcement and resource management problems; (2) improved boat launching facilities at Bird Island Basin to reduce congestion and waiting time; (3) addition of down-island visitor use facilities; (4) management action to reduce resource damage and conflicts among visitors associated with Off Road Vehicles (ORVs). These comments and the already identified issues led to less development-oriented management for the National Seashore. An integrated set of proposals followed in the new *Draft General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan* released in November 1981.[8]

Superintendent Luckens and the planning team, mostly from the Denver Service Center, proposed several ways to integrate resource management, visitor use, operations, and development at least through the early 1990s. The first proposal directed the island to be managed to sustain natural processes. In other words, new facilities and visitor activities would be designed to conform to the island's natural processes rather than trying to adjust them to fit human needs. Second, the team suggested that all new development anticipate an annual visitation of approximately one million, but that the Park Service not commit itself to maintaining large permanent facilities that would accommodate more visitors. Finally, in memory of Hurricane Allen, the team stated that since hurricanes will continue to hit the Gulf Coast and potentially Padre Island, the perpetuation of the foredunes was a necessity in order to maintain the island's defenses. [9]

Natural resource management now became the priority for the National Park Service on Padre Island. The staff no longer interfered in natural processes except to correct situations of human degradation. Dunes depleted by humans or vehicles, such as those at Malaquite Beach, would be restored by planting native grasses. Other dune denudation remained until it corrected itself. If another hurricane came ashore on Padre, natural processes would restore the island to its former condition in their own time. The Park Service, however, continued its research programs in order to better understand the functions of the barrier island and island wildlife. This included the popular Kemp's ridley turtle project and protection of the nesting habitats on the spoil islands. [10]

In other areas of park management, the planning team proposed few changes. Malaquite Beach continued to be closed to vehicles while North and South Beaches could be accessed by two-wheel drive vehicles and beyond that four-wheel drive vehicles. The team suggested that interpretation programs be expanded and redesigned to inform two types of visitors. Local short-term visitors, approximately 85% of the total visitation, received basic information about the barrier island. The park offered other visitors opportunities for in-depth education on the island and special activities. The team envisioned more interpretation at Malaquite Beach, headquarters in Flour Bluff, and an expanded wayside exhibit program. Finally, park operations would be confined to a permanent headquarters in Flour Bluff with only minimal support facilities based on the island for daily use by staff. [11]

In the accompanying *Development Concept Plan*, park planners departed from the earlier development strategies by relocating or modifying some existing visitor facilities and limiting other visitor support facilities to that essential for safety or resource protection. The most extensive changes were proposed for Malaquite Beach. After many years of deterioration and

high maintenance costs, the pavilion would be replaced within a five-year period. Planners now envisioned "less permanent," "expendable," or even "transportable" structures that housed visitor services such as information/orientation, showers, restrooms, and concessions. Park planners called for all new buildings and structures, save the beach lifeguard and first-aid station, to be located behind the foredunes on the existing paved parking area and connect to utility lines already in place. They redesigned the extensive 1,200-vehicle parking area, too large for current visitations, to provide for 100 tent and recreational vehicle camping sites. These new sites would replace those destroyed by Hurricane Allen and the surviving 40 still on the fore-island dune ridge. Planners called for the removal of all remaining camping sites on Malaquite Beach, access roads, and comfort stations. Tent camping, however, remained in the existing camping area. To restore already damaged natural resources, the Park Service reestablished the fore-island dune ridge at the pavilion and camping area. While the natural forces worked, visitors accessed the beach by way of raised boardwalks [12]

The planners identified other areas within the park for changes in addition to those at Malaquite Beach. They wanted Bird Island Basin to offer visitors a hard-surfaced boat launch ramp with disabled accessibility and ensure all existing visitor activities would be retained. In a similar vein, Yarborough Pass provided acceptable primitive campsites but the access road needed improvement. The planners arranged for wayside exhibits carrying orientation and interpretation material to be expanded at the entrance and Flour Bluff headquarters, Bird Island Basin, North Beach, Malaquite Beach, South Beach, and at the start of the four-wheel-drive area. Staff also developed a new interpretive self-guided walk with barrier-free parking constructed near Malaquite Beach for interpreting the nearby ponds and wetlands. The long-established Grasslands Nature Trail and its parking area also became disabled. [13]

The planners addressed the ranger and maintenance areas as the last part of the plan. They recommended the removal of Caffey Barracks, now almost 20 years in Park Service possession, and all additional storage buildings except for one vehicular storage building. The team suggested that all ranger functions required on the island be moved to the view tower after some modifications to the observation level for office space, storage, communications center, and restrooms. The other functions now carried out at the ranger station remained in additional rental facilities near the headquarters in Flour Bluff. Planners suggested moving off the island the employee's residences on the island, two wood-frame and two mobile homes. [14] Durable sectional mobile homes, however, soon replaced the old buildings at the same location. [15]

While the park planners sought to reduce the use of permanent buildings on Padre Island, they supported adding new buildings that fit new criteria. Mobile and flood-proof buildings that were energy efficient and accessible to all disabled persons became the model for new construction. The planners further recommended that all new buildings be located out of the 100-year floodplain or be elevated to accommodate estimated water levels. Park planners also stressed that new buildings, structures, and trails must be oriented with respect to the environment of the island including solar energy, winds, vegetation, and natural site conditions. [16]

The Park Service devoted the last part of the *Development Concept Plan* to evaluating visitor carrying capacity and incorporating this into four broad management zones including natural environment, historic, development, and special use subzones. As the new planning team concluded, visitor capacity at other parks is set by the size of facilities. In Padre Island National Seashore, the capacity must be determined by management policies, climate, and vehicular characteristics, except for Malaquite Beach which is set by the availability of parking. [17] The team devised management policies for the first time that put the environment and natural resources ahead of visitor accommodation. These zones were a

noteworthy attempt at administering Padre Island National Seashore by emphasizing resource conservation.

In order to comply with Federal environmental regulations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the park planning team completed an *Environmental Assessment* for the *General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan*. Citing the outdated approaches given in the 1974 *Master Plan*, the planners outlined three alternatives for development of the National Seashore. Alternative One called for removal of all major facilities as prescribed in the new *Draft Concept Plan*. This alternative offered the smallest-scale visitor facilities, least amount of resource changes, and smallest number of facilities on the island. Alternative Two supported the current situation in the park which followed a blending of concern for visitor facilities and resource conservation. Alternative Three proposed an upgrading and retention of visitor-use facilities that placed the visitor's experience and accommodation above the needs for resource conservation. Each of the three alternatives described by the planning team were to be evaluated against compliance with the legislative intent based on an analysis of the positive and negative aspects of each one. The final evaluation of the *Environmental Assessment*, however, would be formed after soliciting public comment and Federal agency approval. [18]

In late 1981, Superintendent Luckens released the three documents to the public and set three public meetings for January to discuss content. Written comments were encouraged and required by mid-February. After a series of well-attended meetings in early 1982, the Park Service forwarded the *General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan* to the Southwest Regional Office and onto Washington for approval. In April 1983, approximately one year later, the Park Service adopted both plans with three key proposals to be carried out over a 10- to 15-year period. First, the National Park Service continued protection of the island's natural and cultural resources. Second, park staff supported established levels and patterns of visitor use. Finally, the staff facilitated efficient park operations. [19]

Land Protection Plan

Two years later, in September 1985, the National Park Service adopted a *Land Protection Plan* as guidance for future park land acquisition. Superintendent Luckens and the new planning team referred back to research conducted for the *General Management Plan* to determine if any lands within the authorized boundary were unnecessary or inappropriate for park purposes.

Park planners once again turned to the question of the land south of Mansfield Channel and the tracts there held in abeyance since 1980 when Congress approved acquisition under Public Law 96-199. Tract Seven, still in private ownership, consisted of 262.56 acres immediately south of the Channel. This tract remained, in addition to approximately 2,000 acres south of Mansfield Channel originally designated for National Seashore acquisition. Most of the acreage was now owned by the Federal government, including 1,829.4 acres in Tract 8-103, deeded by the State of Texas in 1963, six acres in Tract 8-104, and 12 acres in Tract 8-105. The latter two were purchased during the land acquisition program of the 1960s but were separated from the main park by the controversial Tract Seven. Public Law 96-199 allowed the National Park Service to delete all of Tract Eight, returning the State of Texas land and either exchanging or disposing of the other 18 acres.

As of 1985, the National Park Service had taken no action on Public Law 96-199. Hurricane Allen, a new park superintendent, and the overriding problems of providing visitor services in the park precluded following through with the law. The new *Land Protection Plan* and adopted *General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan* provided the management structure to complete the task. After determining that the disposal of land was consistent with

the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982, the Park Service proceeded. This Act restricted the use of indirect or direct Federal expenditures for economic growth or development on the barrier system along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. These restrictions were imposed to reduce loss of life, wasteful expenditures, and damage to natural resources along the coastal barriers resulting from development. [20]

The National Park Service now seemed determined to move ahead in the disposal of land by eliminating the last 262 acres in Tract Seven from the authorized land acquisition program. The *General Management Plan/Develop Concept Plan* listed four reasons for its removal: (1) development of recreational facilities south of Mansfield Channel was not feasible, (2) the National Park Service now had guidelines that discouraged development in areas subject to flooding, wave erosion, or overwash, (3) expense of development and operational costs, and (4) failure to gain significant resource management benefits. In the fall of 1985, the Park Service posted its intention to remove this acreage from the proposed park in the *Federal Register*, as approved in earlier plans. [21]

This deletion of acreage south of Mansfield Channel ended the long controversy over providing National Seashore facilities to residents of South Texas. The court battles of the late 1960s that sided in favor of the property owners left the southern end of the proposed park vulnerable to extensive development. By the late 1970s when South Padre Island Investment Corporation offered the acreage to the Park Service, it became obvious that the corporation's original intent to develop the land seemed unlikely. After the passage of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act in 1982, development was virtually impossible. For the same reasons that precluded private development, park use seemed unlikely, making the decision by the National Park Service to eliminate Tract Seven in 1983 long overdue.

One tract of land within the park boundaries remained in question in 1985. Tract 13 consisted of slightly more than 78 acres with surface rights owned by the Willacy County Navigation district, northwest of the Mansfield Channel. The State of Texas still owned all minerals on the tract. These mudflats, often inundated by high tides, remained largely undesirable for park use. Nevertheless, the land possessed strong natural resource values where it provided a feeding ground for the endangered Bald eagles and Peregrine falcons. In reconsideration of the tract in 1985, park planners looked at the acreage from a different vantage point. Since the National Seashore's staff now gave natural resources prominent consideration, Tract 13 fit neatly into the objectives of the park. Park planners discussed several alternatives for including the land in the National Seashore. Federal regulations did not require park managers to be contacted prior to mineral extraction on the acreage. If a cooperative agreement were in place, the National Park Service must provide input but may not prohibit incompatible uses. If the Park Service acquired a scenic easement, the easement might preclude some development, but not mineral extraction. As a final alternative, the National Park Service acquired the land with full-fee interest directly from the Navigation District as allowed by Texas Civil Statutes, Article 6077t, Section 7. Park Service ownership gave the park the authority to enforce mineral management uniformly throughout the park and immediately adjacent areas. The *Land Protection Plan* concluded with the recommendation of the planners: Tract 13 should be acquired with fee interest and, if unsuccessful, a cooperative agreement should be negotiated with the Navigation District for short-term protection. [22] When the National Park Service fulfilled this recommendation, it completed the land acquisition program begun almost 20 years earlier.

Malaquite Beach Pavilion

By January 1986 the Malaquite Beach Pavilion could no longer withstand daily use without being a safety hazard. For more than three years, sections of concrete fell from the pavilion much as it had prior to the mid-1970s overhaul and patching. In the spring of 1983

Superintendent Luckens requested an architectural and engineering study to determine the financial feasibility of repairing the building or building a new one. [23] The 1984 *General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan*, approved a few months later, more directly stated that the Malaquite Pavilion should be replaced within five years.

Park staff began a special "scaling" program the following year to monitor the deterioration of the concrete and its removal. On a bimonthly basis, staff maintained the frequency of scaling and removal of concrete from the pavilion on the National Seashore's computer. As sections became worse, the staff fenced off areas like that underneath the boardwalk where visitor safety became a major concern. [24]

In the meantime, the Park Service planned and designed a new visitor facility to replace the existing Malaquite Pavilion. They secured funds from the Visitor Facility Fund of the National Park Foundation to begin construction in the summer of 1986. [25] The Park Service appropriated \$800,000. Harris Sharp and Associates, an architectural and engineering firm from Corpus Christi, prepared a new design under contract to Bechtel, Inc. [26] Bechtel, Inc., initially provided management representation for the National Park Foundation, but by mid-1985 the Denver Service Center took over the program and solicited bids for the new facility. By June, preparations included removing two fire hydrants and capping water lines. [27]

All of the bids received for the Malaquite Beach replacement exceeded the amount appropriated. The Denver Service Center, now leading the new development, revised the drawings and specifications to follow United States government procurement regulations during late summer and early fall 1986 and, instead of beginning construction, solicited bids once again. A new funding package followed that allowed the appropriation to be split between Fiscal Years 1985 and 1986. The new construction bids arrived over budget. A third revision to the design followed with a final solicitation of bids. On December 22, 1986, Park staff opened the most recent set of bids and announced a low bidder. During the next month, National Seashore staff issued a contract but delayed the "notice to proceed" until approval of bonding for the construction company arrived in late spring. Shortly afterwards, the Denver Service Center proceeded with plans to remove the old Malaquite Pavilion by developing specifications and securing funds. [28]

Park staff worked around the closed Malaquite Pavilion during the summer 1986 and 1987 visitor seasons by importing temporary buildings, one for a Visitor Center and interpretive information and another for concessions. The concessioner, now left with no facilities because of the pavilion closure, proved especially problematic. After only a few days of operating out of the temporary building, the concessioner closed down. The park staff then introduced a small vending operation, but after two burglaries, these closed as well. [29]

As the 1987 summer season unfolded, the Park Service encountered a problem with the construction contractor for the new Malaquite facility. Salazar Construction of Corpus Christi failed to provide the data of all items and methods specified in the contract. Although the delay received some negative media coverage, the Park Service and Salazar management temporarily reconciled their differences and construction on the new building began on October 26, 1987. [30]

In July 1989 the contractor turned over Phase I of the new Malaquite Visitor Facility to the National Seashore staff and Superintendent John Hunter. Hunter, who replaced Bill Luckens after his retirement in 1988, came to Padre with years of experience as Superintendent of Bandelier National Monument. He quickly picked up the development activities as a priority and reported the following year about the difficulty of working with the contractor, lack of an adequate contract to cover some important parts of the new building, and inadequacy of

funding for the facility. Hunter devoted a great deal of time to the completion of the new building and raising funds in order to complete the work. [31] In order to stay on schedule, the National Seashore's own maintenance crew took over some of the final tasks for Buildings 632, 633, and 634. Crews sanded and varnished floors, reset screws, sealed the deck, and insulated and sealed the subfloor of the facility. [32]

When the Visitor Facility opened in mid-July, Phase II, including a shade structure over the deck and deck skirting, remained to be done and funded. Superintendent Hunter seemed troubled by the inadequacies of the Seashore's facilities. Although a new visitor facility greeted the public, programmed park management facilities and complete visitor facilities lacked funding. [33] In November 1990, Hunter announced additional funding of \$335,000 for completion of the Visitor Center. The park staff, however, dropped the proposed shade structure over the deck when the park secured no funding. [34]

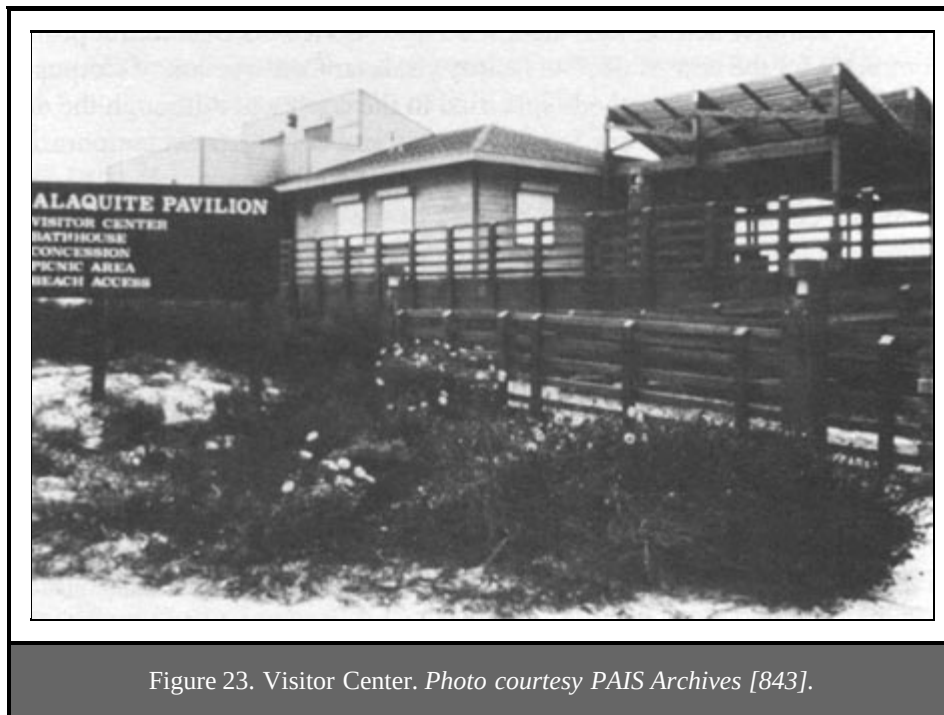


Figure 23. Visitor Center. Photo courtesy PAIS Archives [843].

Concessions at Malaquite Beach essentially ended after the disastrous years of IXTOC I and Hurricane Allen. In 1985, National Seashore staff arranged a new contract with American Funtier, Inc. [35] This company, owned by Dr. Paul Kennedy of Corpus Christi, sold out to Forever Resorts of Phoenix in 1989 before the facility reopened. It again reorganized as Padre Island Park Company with new staff and accommodations. [36]

In 1992 the National Seashore staff began to revise the *Development Concept Plan*, now almost ten years old. New planners again mentioned the problem of the Malaquite Beach facilities. The new visitor center lacked audiovisual and storage space. Seashore visitors who used the old parking area needed a clear direction to the main entrance of the facility and often walked over the dunes rather than using the access provided. The planners identified the late-1960s view tower as unsound and closed to visitors. They also mentioned that the construction of the new visitor facility created a design problem leaving the old view tower "obtrusive and anomalous." [37]

After 30 years of planning for the National Seashore, the National Park Service faced many more issues in planning for the park. The Malaquite grouping remained the only visitor facilities on the island for the foreseeable future. Despite efforts to the contrary, park staff faced insufficient building specifications and troublesome contractors. The overriding issue

still seemed to be the lack of funding to complete facilities as intended. Unfortunately, park managers continue to face these same problems.

Law Enforcement Issues

The National Seashore faced a number of new law enforcement issues at the onset of the 1980s. In addition to the possession of drugs, park rangers met increasing numbers of illegal aliens using the island as a point of entry into the United States. By 1985, park officials agreed to participate in a cooperative program with the Border Patrol and Customs called "Operation Alliance." This cooperation resulted in seizure of almost 900 pounds of marijuana, assistance in seizing another 400 pounds, and the apprehension of 113 illegal aliens in one year. [38]

By the early 1990s park rangers announced a new drug interdiction program. This aggressive effort included trained canine inspection and special four-wheel vehicles. Park officials reported a decrease from five to one drug trafficking case in the first year of operation in 1992. Park rangers also expanded the number of cooperative agreements by adding Kleberg and Kenedy Counties in 1992 to an existing agreement with Nueces County. These agreements allowed park rangers to issue state violation notices when Federal law does not cover a specific violation. Park officials believe that this cooperation improved relations with the three counties crossing the National Seashore by bringing in local revenue. [39]

The most troublesome law enforcement issue occurred in 1983 at the height of the tourist season. On the afternoon of July 23, 1983, Park Rangers Larry Couser and James Copeland stopped an automobile driven by John Landry on North Beach. The rangers intended to stop two teenage females from hanging onto the side of the vehicle. After a few minutes of conversation with Landry, the rangers noted the smell of alcohol and suspected that all the occupants were using drugs. A brief investigation uncovered marijuana, liquor, and drug paraphernalia. Following procedure, the rangers told Landry to park his vehicle and remain there until they returned from delivering the two girls to the Ranger Station. When they returned, Landry had left the beach and park. Several hours later, the Corpus Christi police arrested Landry after he hit a motorcyclist. Although Landry was arrested at the scene, the injured driver on the motorcycle, Randy William Crider, lost an arm and leg from the accident. Mr. Crider sued the Federal government because the rangers had not arrested Landry earlier in the day and thus prevented the accident. A local court faulted the park rangers, but on October 10, 1989, a subsequent court hearing at the district level reversed the lower decision. [40] The Crider case haunted Padre Island staff for many years and is still used as a landmark case in law enforcement training for national parks.

Hazardous Substances and Waste

As early as the 1970s, National Seashore staff recognized the increasing presence of 30- and 55-gallon drums washing ashore. The strong Gulf of Mexico currents that converged near Big Shell Beach deposited these drums from North and South Beach down to the southern end of the park. Some of these carried labels noting hazardous substances, others were distorted indicating some internal combustion occurred. Most of the drums derived from offshore oil drilling platforms, crew boats, and cargo ships, known to be working with toxic materials. The Park Service staff became concerned when materials from within the drums leaked. Bullet holes in the drums suggested that park visitors used these for target practices and sometimes as windbreaks around campfires. [41]

The park staff soon developed its own "Beach Cleaning Plan" for handling the hazardous drums. Barrels washing ashore on North and South Beach received top priority and a two-hour response for removal. When the beaches closed, rangers checked the beaches at least

once a week and removed any barrels within one week. The majority of the beach, that area below South Beach and accessible only by four-wheel-drive vehicles, was not covered in the plan. At the same time, the plan did not specify protective equipment or clothing, except steel-toed boots and gloves. [42] The plan, while a significant step forward, failed to recognize and highlight the seriousness of managing a hazardous waste product.

A new plan went into effect in 1981 receiving partial funding of \$10,000 from the Park Restoration and Improvement Program. National Seashore employees recovered 170 55-gallon drums from the four-wheel-drive sign on South Beach to Mansfield Channel. With two days of free use of a Rolligon vehicle, provided by a pipeline firm then laying natural gas pipeline across the park, park staff recovered the drums and placed them in a designated area near the sewer lagoon storage just west of Malaquite Beach. They crushed and disposed of all barrels without hazardous substances. National Seashore officials could not dispose of the last 30 drums until their contents were tested and reported. A local environmental firm tested the contents free of charge while a local vacuum service removed the contents. [43] The National Seashore later purchased its own all-terrain amphibious tractor or Rolligon for \$57,870 from the Rolligon Corporation as a means for collecting the drums from the beach and continuing the collection program. [44]

In the following three years, park employees recovered and counted an increasing number of drums washed ashore. In August 1982, employees recorded 40 drums on the four-wheel drive beach. During the same month in 1983, they counted 60 drums and recovered 80 in August 1984. An additional 26 drums washed ashore in the northern parts of the park during these last two years. When the Park Service calculated its total finds over the early 1980s, they estimated that approximately 150 drums, or one every two days, washed onto the beaches of the National Seashore. Park officials reported that of those recovered 30-50% contained substances and most were in some stage of deterioration. Although testing of enclosed substances produced no pesticides or PCBs, park officials found a variety of inflammable liquids and harmful materials. In 1985 and 1986 the drums continued to wash ashore with 237 appearing during the first year and 110 in the latter. [45]

National Park Service officials soon were forced to address the issue of hazardous waste directly. In a cooperative effort with the United States Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency, the Park Service developed a program to sample, analyze, and dispose of the drums as they were sighted. Largely using Superfund cleanup money from the Environmental Protection Agency, National Seashore staff reported drums to the Coast Guard who in turn contacted its contractor to collect the drum. All collected drums were held temporarily in the park near the sewer lagoon until disposed. [46] In 1985 the National Seashore continued to hold 60 hazardous waste drums as it awaited approval for their removal to South Carolina. [47]

Cooperative activities between the various Federal entities remained active through Fiscal Year 1987 when the Environmental Protection Agency stated that it no longer regarded the drums an "emergency" worthy of funding under the Superfund. Likewise, the Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency believed all drums washed ashore were the problem of the responsible land agency, i.e., National Park Service. To cover the new expenses, the Padre Island staff requested \$250,000 in Fiscal Year 1988 to assume responsibility for the program. In the next two fiscal years, the Environmental Protection Agency threatened to discontinue funding the drum removal, but after interference from Department of the Interior officials, the program continued through 1990. Park Service personnel discontinued the program in recent years.

Palo Alto National Battlefield Development

For many years after designation, Padre Island National Seashore represented the easternmost park unit in Southwest Region of the National Park Service. It was also the most developed park with any connection to South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. After Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Roger Toll's visit to South Texas in 1933, he suggested that Padre Island be joined with Rabb's Palm Grove, now called the Sabal Palm Grove, and the battlefields of Resaca de la Palma and Palo Alto from the Mexican-American War of 1846. [48] This idea never attracted the attention of the National Park Service. Instead, the Audubon Society purchased the Palm Grove and the battlefields received nominal historical attention as the only representation of the Mexican-American War.

More than 40 years after Toll's visit, the United States Congress officially recognized the Palo Alto battlefield as Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site in 1978.. Local enthusiasts finally won the recognition they had long struggled to receive. Southwest Region officials soon set up an office and placed staff in the vicinity of the battlefield. Bob Amberger was appointed as superintendent. Within a few years, however, it became clear that Congress had no intention of furthering the interpretation or purchase of the battlefields. The Park Service dispersed the staff and chose to send all equipment and collections to Padre Island National Seashore. Shortly afterwards, the Regional Office assigned Padre's chief ranger, Max Hancock, to be "Acting Superintendent" of Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site. This status required trips, record keeping, and reports to the regional office. Harry O'Bryant, the chief of maintenance at Padre Island, later served as acting superintendent. [49]

The South Texas supporters of Palo Alto continued through the 1980s to seek a clear and committed presence for the National Park Service. In 1991, the United States House of Representatives passed HR 1642 and the Senate concurred on June 4, 1992. President George Bush signed Public Law 102-304 establishing Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site on June 23, 1992. [50] In response, the Park Service assigned Tom Carroll of the Southwest Region to be the superintendent. [51] Although most of the collection for Palo Alto remained with Padre Island National Seashore in 1993, plans are underway for its transfer to the new park when it completes acquisition and development.

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Padre Island

Administrative History



CHAPTER EIGHT: NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES

Victor Cahalane visited Padre Island in February 1947 to investigate the island's potential as a unit in the national park system. As chief biologist for the National Park Service, Cahalane's endorsement carried significant weight in management's decision-making. [1] Over the course of the February visit, he roamed freely through the dunes and tidal flats, capturing the diversity of natural resources on Padre Island with his camera and in his notes. Cahalane's report, issued almost a month after the visit, for all practical purposes serves as the first scientific evaluation of Padre Island conducted by the National Park Service. Although brief, the biologist focused on the presence of "ecological associations" and animal life and how Padre Island compared to two other seashores managed by the Park Service:

In its beach fauna, Padre Island surpasses Santa Rosa Island and Cape Hatteras both in variety of species and number of individuals. It is exceptionally rich also in fish life, and is one of the finest sport fishing areas in the United States. Due to the lack of variety of habitats, its mammal life is not as varied as that of the Hatteras banks. The variety of birds in winter is considerably greater than that of the Hatteras region. Our observations indicate, however, that the number of waterbirds at this season is not nearly as large. To anyone who has seen the magnificent flights of ducks, geese and swans of Pimlico and Currituck Sounds, the bird spectacle at Padre Island is disappointing. [2]

Unfortunately, Victor Cahalane's tour of Padre Island was too brief and limited largely to the beach area north of Big Shell beach. [3] At the same time, Park Service personnel had very little experience with the dynamics of coastal barrier islands and tended to see one barrier island as identical to the next. This misunderstanding gradually became clear as scientists began to study and report on the complex natural systems and resources of Padre Island.

Natural Resources of Padre Island National Seashore

As a barrier island Padre Island National Seashore is a dynamic system that was formed and is continually being reshaped by the action of wind, currents, and waves. The seashore's landscape changes from broad sandy beaches to ridges of fore-island dunes and then to grassy flats separated by smaller dunes, ephemeral ponds, and wetlands. The western portion of the seashore is defined by back-island dunes and wind tidal flats that merge with the waters of the Laguna Madre.

Padre Island National Seashore encompasses thousands of acres of pristine wetlands that are critically important habitat for numerous flora and fauna species. A rich variety of wetlands, including estuarine emergent wetlands, freshwater ponds, wind tidal algae flats, the Laguna Madre intertidal zone, lagoonal sea grass beds, and marshes comprise approximately 80-90 percent of the area behind the gulf dune line to the Laguna Madre. Wildlife experts estimate that 60-65 percent of all Piping plovers winter in South Texas and report that both Wilson's plover and Snowy plovers breed and nest in the park. The park is also home to 325 pairs of

Reddish egrets. Migratory wildlife observed in the park include the sandhill crane, snow geese, Canada geese, and various species of duck.

A number of animals found at the National Seashore are listed by the Federal government as threatened or endangered species: American peregrine falcons (E); Arctic peregrine falcon (T); Eastern brown pelican (E); Piping plover (E); White-tailed hawk (T); Least tern (E); green sea turtle (T), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (E), Loggerhead sea turtle (T), Leatherback sea turtle (E), and the Hawksbill sea turtle (T). The Reddish egret (C2), Long-billed curlew (C2), White-faced ibis (C2), Snowy plover (C2), and the Osprey are protected species recognized by the State of Texas that either nest or reside at the seashore. In addition, the Ferruginous hawk (C2) and Cerulean warbler (C2) are yearly migrants through the park.

The southern portion of the park is unique in that it is the migration route "staging area" for peregrine falcons. This particular area (noted by mile markers 30-68) in the National Seashore is the most important peregrine falcon habitat on the Gulf Coast and is considered as critical habitat by the Peregrine Fund. In 1993, park officials counted more than 2,000 peregrine falcons utilizing this area during their fall migration. Padre Island is the only known locality in the Western Hemisphere where peregrine falcons also can be found in concentrations during their spring migration.

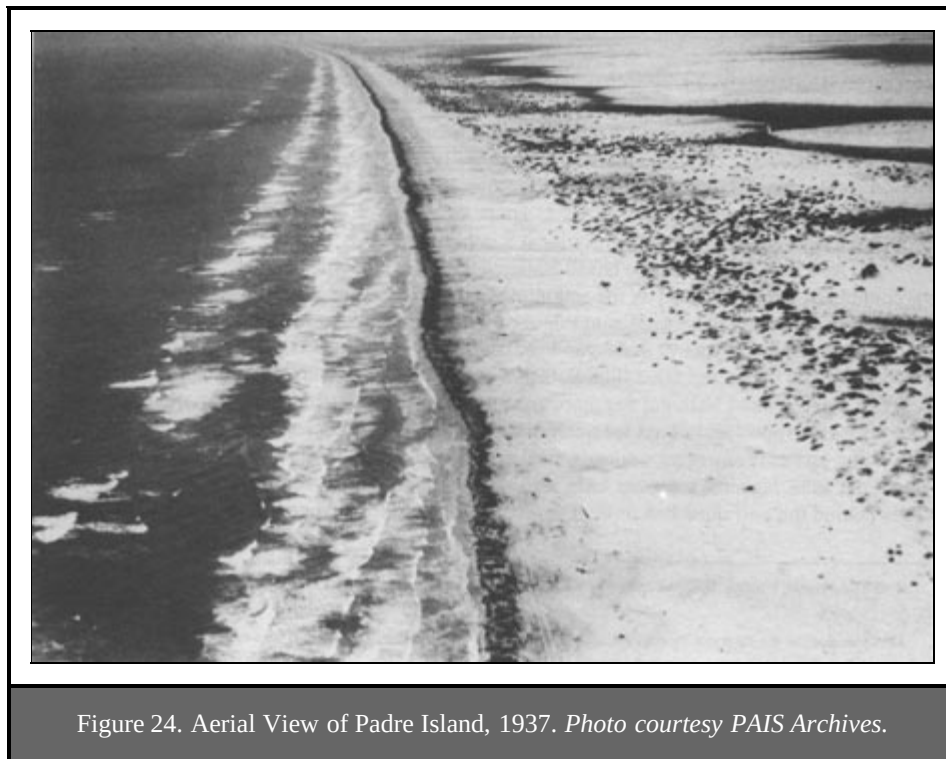


Figure 24. Aerial View of Padre Island, 1937. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

The park serves as an important rookery area for thousands of colonial waterbirds and is an important staging area for 140 neotropical bird species as well. As growth and development continue in the coastal bend area of South Texas, the park becomes increasingly more significant as important habitat area for colonial nesting waterbirds, neotropical migrants, and threatened or endangered bird species. In addition, the southernmost portion of the park provides a nesting area for Kemp's ridley, green, and Loggerhead sea turtles.

The fine sandy sediment of the island supports coastal grassland or prairie environment which was severely degraded prior to acquisition of the park. Natural environmental perturbations such as hurricanes, droughts, fire, flooding, and high salinity were accentuated by human impacts of cattle grazing, burning, and military activities. The combined effect reduced large areas of the island to little more than blowing sand. Since the central portion of

the island was taken over by the National Park Service, the park area vegetation has significantly recovered. Natural plant succession has resulted in 95 percent vegetation recovery in 1996 from approximately 10-20 percent vegetation cover in 1972. [4]

The Laguna Madre is noted as one of the few hyper saline bodies of water in the country with salinity levels typically higher than the Gulf of Mexico waters. This salinity content is attributed to high evaporation and low freshwater infusion into the Laguna due to limited runoff and scarcity of freshwater systems emptying into it. The Laguna Madre is one of the most productive estuarine systems in the United States and as such is critical to the park's resource management.

Aquatic and Waterfowl Resources Management Plan, 1969 - 1979

In the late 1960s Park Service officials initiated the first natural resource's management plan. By 1969 Superintendent Ernest Borgman released the approved 10-year plan to provide guidelines for management and identify potential problems with the resources in the National Seashore and the adjacent Laguna Madre. The plan proposed management practices for fisheries, waterfowl, and hunting. [5]

Park Service scientists first suggested limiting channel dredging, spoil deposition, and "similar habitat modification." Similarly, when mineral extraction occurred on the island, the scientists encouraged the removal of all by-products. Although public access to the western boundary of the park deserved consideration, any type of access might benefit fishing but jeopardize the waterfowl populations. Finally, Park Service officials stated that studies determine who used trotlines within the National Seashore and whether netting fish on the beach was compatible with other forms of recreation. [6]

The scientists then recommended that Padre Island proper be closed to all hunting and that the Laguna Madre be open only for waterfowl hunting with the exception that no permanent blinds be permitted. They continued recommending closing North and South Bird Island, and conducting future studies. For added protection of North and South Bird Islands, the researchers recommended that the Park Service stay in close contact with the Audubon Society. They then concluded with the statement that all other hunting permits and regulations remain intact unless there became a reason to discontinue them. [7]

The most direct comments in the report came under the subtitle, "Extenuating Environmental Factors." In spite of all the "man-oriented influences" taking place within the island, these were insignificant compared to the effect that the blowing sands of the island now filling the Laguna Madre would have on aquatic life. The researchers acknowledged that there may be no way to stop the movement of the island into the lagoon, but that a dune stabilization and planting program could greatly reduce the movement. [8] Shortly after the publication of this report, National Seashore employees took appropriate steps to implement the *Aquatic and Waterfowl Resources Management Plan*, especially in management of the dunes.

Although revised a number of times between the late 1970s and the mid 1990s, the *Resource Management Plan* (RMP) describes, documents, and prioritizes resource management issues, problems, and actions required to preserve and protect natural resources in the National Seashore. The planning document is dynamic, being revised as information and expertise is advanced, and is used in the development and implementation of short- and long-term management strategies. Most resource management and administrative activities conducted in the park are accounted for in the RMP. Park officials use the RMP as a programmatic document to track achievements and when needed to conduct in depth management studies or alternatives by developing a specific action plan. Completed action plans become addenda to the RMP. The typical action plan includes legislative mandates, management objectives,

summaries of the condition or "status" of each resource "type," a list of needs or actions, and funding needs and potential sources. The RMP is today a comprehensive document far more sophisticated than those prepared during the early years of the National Seashore.



Dune Migration and Stabilization Studies

Shortly after establishing the National Seashore, the staff turned its attention to the study of Padre's dunes. Decades of cattle grazing and human degradation had left some of the dunes devoid of vegetation. Derrick Hambly, the second park naturalist, performed elementary studies of sand movement during the late 1960s. Hambly selected six study sites for monitoring the speed of active dune migration and the rate of the enlarging island into the Laguna Madre. He cited problems during road construction in Fiscal Year 1968 when sand dunes sometime inundated routes before construction. Hambly projected that future Park Service development involve the construction of small boat channels from the Intracoastal Waterway to the island and the sand movement in general be a budgetary factor for Park managers. [9]

Shortly after Hambly's work, the Park Service employed B.E. Dahl, a geologist from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. Dahl arranged experimental foredunes in two locations within the park. From 1969 to 1974, he monitored the tenacity of several plant species, including exotic and indigenous plants, and planting techniques. Dahl concluded that two grasses, sea oats and bitter panicum, both natives, possessed the ideal traits for reestablishing foredunes. He added that this type of intervention could speed up the restoration process to only a few years rather than 10 to 20 years under natural circumstances. [10]

Several other studies on the foredunes followed Dahl's work. These focused on the foredune ecosystem highlighting vegetational compositions, faunal populations, geomorphological profiles, and human-related impacts and mitigation. The team of Baccus and Horton in 1979 produced the most comprehensive of these studies. Their work discussed in detail the environmental condition of foredunes depicted by the presence of various species of vegetation. [11]

Island Ecosystems

In addition to the foredune ecosystem, scientists studied several other systems within the park. Teerling (1970), Hill and Hunter (1973), Gundlack, et al. (1980), and Tunnell (1980), all investigated the beach ecosystem. Their works provide a reasonable baseline on the infaunal populations within the tidal zones. Each scientist closely evaluated the response of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and oil spills. [12]

The vegetated deflation plain received less attention. One study, Baccus and Horton in 1979, presented an overview of vegetation and geomorphology but did not cover impacts of fauna. Horizon Environmental Services, Inc., addressed native vegetation in 1989 in part to document the historical presence of the oak mottes on Padre Island. [13] In 1978 Hanna studied the island's freshwater ponds. He focused on five ponds near the Gulf Ranger Station, cataloguing selected invertebrates and completing a chemical analysis of the water. In 1990 Dr. Stanley Sissom of Southwest Texas State University completed a baseline study of three fresh water ponds and recommended one to be used with a nature trail. [14] Two other scientists, Abbott and Pulich, completed a study of the back-island sand and mud flats in 1986. Abbott specifically addressed vehicular impacts on the soils and vegetation while Pulich examined productivity in the ecosystem. [15]

Marine Debris Survey

Marine debris is one of the most serious natural resource issues for Padre Island National Seashore. At certain times of the year, the shoreline of the National Seashore is inundated by as much as one ton of debris per linear mile. Approximately 90 percent of the marine debris items found are made of plastics. Although similar in many ways to other National Seashores, Padre Island is atypical because convergent currents off the seashore's coastline deposit large quantities of garbage onto its shoreline from accumulations of almost any debris item discarded into the Gulf of Mexico. The presence of marine debris leads to such management problems as beach aesthetics and impacts to marine mammals, birds, and reptiles from entanglement or ingestion of debris. Toxic chemicals and medical waste also wash ashore and pose a safety hazard to the visiting public.

In 1987, the United States joined 39 other nations in ratifying Annex V of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, known as MARPOL. This treaty bans the dumping of plastics by vessels at sea and also limits the dumping of other vessel generated garbage to specific distances from shore. In special designated areas, however, including the Gulf of Mexico, the treaty expressly prohibits the discharge of any vessel generated garbage. In spite of the treaty, large amounts of plastics and other debris continue to wash onto the shoreline of Padre Island.





Figure 26. Collecting Marine Debris. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

John Miller, Chief, Resources Management Division, initiated and completed seven years (1989-1996) of intensive marine debris research to determine the extent of marine debris found in the park. From 1989 to 1993, Padre Island participated as one of ten National Seashore parks in the National Park Marine Debris Monitoring Program. The objective of the effort was to . . . "provide a quantitative assessment of the abundance, composition, and accumulation of marine debris on national park beaches." [16]

By 1996, marine debris research consisted of 48 months of quarterly data from six 50 by 100 meter quarterly transects, 18 months of daily (five days per week) data from four 50 by 100 meter transects, three months of daily (five days per week) data from a transect covering eight miles of shoreline and 16 months of daily (seven days per week) data from a transect covering 16 miles of shoreline. Based on findings from each of the previous studies, park scientists developed methods to identify and assess the magnitude of marine debris point source polluters in the Gulf of Mexico and involved a daily (seven days per week) survey of 16 miles of shoreline. Based on information collected from March 1994 through February 1995, John Miller and associated researchers compiled the multi agency funded research effort into the *Marine Debris Point Source Investigation 1994-1995*. [17] They performed descriptive statistical tests on all survey data and correlated monthly shrimping effort data with monthly totals of each shrimping item using data provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The researchers performed a Spearman Rank Order Correlation to detect an association between the total number of shrimping debris items and the effort expended by commercial shrimping vessels in a specific area of the Gulf of Mexico.

The marine debris study conducted from March 1, 1994 to February 28, 1995, yielded a total of 40,580 debris items along the 16-mile transect at Padre Island National Seashore. Total items associated with the commercial shrimping industry numbered 26,549 (65 percent of the total). Thirteen items associated with the offshore oil and gas industry numbered 5,298 (13 percent of the total) and 14 items from an unknown source totaled 8,733 (22 percent of the total). [18]

Results from the marine debris research indicate that point-source violators can be identified and prove that the shrimping industry is directly responsible (from statistical analysis) for 30 percent of garbage that washes onto Padre Island beaches. The shrimping industry may also contribute an additional 35 percent. Other results show that the offshore oil and gas industry

is suspected of contributing 13 percent of the garbage. Taken together this means that more than 70 percent of most items that wash ashore are contributed by identifiable point sources. [19]

Miller and his staff received national recognition from many media sources for the 1994-1995 *Marine Debris Point Source Investigation*, which is currently being considered as a model for other planned marine debris research efforts. From March 1995 to March 1996, the research team initiated a second year of marine debris research as a continuation of the 1994-1995 *Marine Debris Point Source Investigation*. The resource management staff is currently in the process of analyzing and comparing the two sets of data for a final report in September 1996.

Laguna Madre Environment

The largest number of researchers focused on the Laguna Madre. [20] The Laguna Madre deserved special attention over the years from research projects. As a distinct body of water, the lagoon is rich in natural resources. Its shallow, hyper saline water contains significant grasses useful to the reproduction of fish, crab, and shrimp. These areas are now recognized as important wetlands protected under Federal law.

The Laguna Madre also hosts North and South Bird Island and a handful of spoil islands. These offer special sanctuaries for hundreds of birds but especially the nesting sites for the White Pelican. More than 300 other species of birds occupy the Laguna Madre and its surrounding area. Many of these take refuge here only during migration. Thus, in the mid-1970s, Chief Naturalist Robert Whistler initiated an annual bird count in conjunction with the Audubon Society. This is known as the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. The count generally occurs in January and typically identified more than 130 species, some of them endangered. [21] The Park Service staff discontinued the count on Padre Island in 1990.

Colonial Waterbird Survey

Twenty-one species of Colonial waterbirds inhabit North and South Bird Islands and the 17 other islands within the Laguna Madre. The spoil banks are in different stages of vegetative development, but are prime habitats for nesting colonial birds. When the Brown Pelican almost disappeared from the Texas coast in the mid-1960s, Gene Blacklock, then of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, and Dr. Henry Hildebrand became interested in the species. These two men implemented the first "Texas Fish-Eating Bird Survey" along the central Texas coast in 1967. The following year the men expanded the survey to the entire coast and in 1969 they added East Texas. [22]

The Colonial Waterbird Survey provides essential data on species composition, population trends, preferred nesting sites, and changes in nesting sites. During the month of May each year, Donna Shaver, Padre Island Research Biologist, in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, conducts the survey on all park islands. During the mid 1990s, the researchers counted approximately 10,000 nesting birds annually. [23]

In 1991, Park Service personnel initiated several meetings with representatives of universities and agencies to develop recommendations on management strategies for the rookery islands within park boundaries. The recommendations included modifying nesting habitats to increase nesting numbers. Prior to the 1992 season, park staff members began several projects to improve the nesting habitat as directed such as increasing the number of signs on the islands restricting landing of visitors and monitoring and removing predators. [24]

White Pelicans

The best known of the colonial water birds is the White Pelican (*Pelicanus erythrorhynchos*). In 1981 Park Service officials became concerned as the population tried to nest two times before being successful on the third attempt. The unsuccessful nesting efforts altered the behavior of the adult pelicans and caused the death of large numbers of nestlings and juveniles. After investigation and research, Park scientists attributed the problems to the infestation of the chewing louse on the juveniles. [25]

As Park scientists began to study the problem in 1981, they noted a gradual decline in the White Pelican population from 1967 to 1980, from 450 to 50 nesting pairs. The census data gathered in 1978 also showed only two surviving young. After examining similar census data from 1976 to 1980, the scientists noted that fewer and fewer pelicans nested successfully on South Bird Island and many moved to island No. 111 of the spoil bank islands. [26]

The 1981 nesting season proved the most troubled. Park officials observed in early March that adults constructed nest sites on the west end of South Bird Island and on the southwest side of island No. 111. Within four weeks, the adults abandoned these sites and relocated to begin another attempt at nesting. This second attempt proved unsuccessful. When the park staff examined the second nesting site, they found the hatched chicks carried excessively high ectoparasite loads. The presence of parasites caused extreme weakness in the chicks. Shortly afterwards, the adult pelicans abandoned the second site and chose a third on another spoil island. The pelicans succeeded in the final attempt at nesting. Park scientists concluded that the heavy infestation of ectoparasites led to the poor success at nesting. [27]

Two years after detection of the ectoparasites, the National Seashore contracted with Dr. Brian Chapman of Corpus Christi State University for a study of the ectoparasite species and its effects on young chicks. Chapman reported, in a preliminary analysis in 1986, that a hard freeze in December 1983 killed the ectoparasites living in the soils of the islands. [28] In subsequent years, National Seashore biologists reported increased populations of the White Pelican and successful nesting on the Bird Islands and spoil islands.

Vegetation Research/Restoration Projects

Early travelers and visitors to Padre Island reported on the vegetation and wildlife of the island in journals. Though few resemble modern scientific descriptive or quantitative studies, the reports provide a 300-year perspective and detail the vegetation prior to extensive disturbances by European settlement and ranching activities. Aerial photographs of Padre Island taken in 1937, mark the beginning of a new dimension in large-scale, quantitative analysis of vegetation change. A series of studies published in the mid to late 1970s by the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin document a 50-year sequence of changes in vegetation lines and vegetative cover based on aerial photograph interpretations. [29] In 1975, Dr. Lynn Drawe of the Welder Wildlife Foundation initiated a long-term vegetation inventory project on 30 transects surveyed every five years. In 1993, Drawe resurveyed the transects and provided the park with comprehensive data on plant communities and species diversity, inclusive of all habitat types found within the park. Dr. Drawe's data suggests that natural succession has resulted in an increase in the number of vegetation species from 60 to 140 and an increase in vegetation cover to approximately 96 percent for the northern portion of the National Seashore. [30]

In 1992, the staff of the Division of Resources Management began a long-term project to assist in the restoration of native species. All known oak mottes located within the park are visited at least once a year to determine their condition and reproductive status. Acorns are collected, transported to the park's greenhouse, grown for one year, then transplanted. Additionally, Spanish daggers have been planted in areas of the park that were historically known to have had this particular plant species. [31]

Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Project

In 1978 Padre Island National Seashore initiated one of its most ambitious natural resource programs, the Kemp's ridley turtle project. In 1968 the International Union for Conservation (ICUN) declared the Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Leplidochelys kempii*) the most endangered sea turtle species. Two years later the Federal government formally protected the turtle as an endangered species. In response, Robert Whistler, chief naturalist, and Dr. Henry Hildebrand, professor of marine biology at then Corpus Christi State University, combined efforts to propose the turtle project in 1974. Seeking support and possible funding from the National Park Service or other Federal entities, Whistler and Hildebrand outlined a 10-year project to establish a secondary breeding colony of the Kemp's ridley sea turtle on Padre Island. Whistler and Superintendent Jack Turney contacted the regional office on the project and forwarded a copy of a proposal on the Kemp's ridley turtles prepared by Dr. John R. Hendrickson of the University of Arizona. In a response dated April 1974, Roland Wauer, chief scientist from the Southwest Region, expressed reservations. He cited a project already underway in Florida to reintroduce the green sea turtle that showed little promise. After six years, Dr. Peter Pritchard, in charge of the project, reported that no turtle hatchlings returned to their point of release. Although Wauer was pessimistic, he recommended that the park superintendent and chief naturalist include the project in its *Resource Management Plan* but not expect any funding from the National Park Service. [32] At roughly the same time, Dr. Hendrickson submitted his proposal to the United States Department of the Interior Office of Endangered Species to conduct a three-year project with a projected cost of \$96,000. [33] The Hendrickson proposal apparently failed to be funded by the Office of Rare and Endangered Species or National Park Service. In spite of the earlier hesitation, Dr. Hildebrand and Whistler convinced the park superintendent to approve a 10-year project in cooperation with the Instituto Nacional de Pesca in Mexico, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service Laboratory in Galveston.

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, Kemp's ridley turtles also received increasing attention from Mexican officials concerned about their dwindling numbers. This attention led the Mexican government to establish a scientific headquarters at Rancho Nuevo in the northern Mexican state of Tamaulipas under the direction of Dr. Rene Marquez Milan. Playa de Rancho Nuevo offered the principal nesting area for the Kemp's ridley turtles along a 16-mile stretch of beach on the Gulf of Mexico. [34] Mexican scientists recorded some 40,000 Kemp's ridley sea turtles nesting, called *arribadas*, in a single day during the 1940s. Senor Herrera, a wealthy Mexican citizen, took a special interest in the sea turtles and documented on film one of these spectacular nesting periods in spring 1947. [35] Despite these efforts by both the United States and Mexico, the future of the Kemp's ridley turtles seemed dim in the late 1970s.





Figure 27. Imprinting Young Turtles. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives.*

In 1978 the National Seashore began participation in the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Restoration and Enhancement Program. Each summer from 1978 to 1988, Mexican scientists, working with biologists employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, shipped approximately 2,000 eggs to Padre Island National Seashore from Rancho Nuevo in Styrofoam boxes containing Padre Island sand. Chief Naturalist Robert Whistler and volunteers constructed a special hatchery at the rear of the Gulf Ranger Station to house the turtle eggs. In 1979 Whistler became responsible for the educational programs of the program while the Environmental Services Division, later renamed Resources Management Division, oversaw the incubation and research efforts. Several years later Chief of Environmental Services Robert King expanded the incubation facility and laboratory. King, Whistler, and other members of the National Seashore staff observed the eggs until they hatched. [36] Staff and volunteers carried and released them onto the sandy beach, usually allowing a short swim into the shallow surf. This "imprinting" proved to be a critical experience for the youngsters. Participants then collected the turtles in nets and shipped them to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Laboratory in Galveston for nine to ten months of "head starting." The Fisheries Service staff tagged adolescent turtles for identification and returned them to South Texas for release into the Gulf of Mexico. Beginning in 1982 each turtle also received a "living tag," where a small plug from the lighter bottom shell was implanted into the darker

upper shell. In 1986 Biological Technician Donna Shaver assumed responsibility for sea turtle projects conducted at Padre Island. Shaver had worked with the project since 1980 and had completed several studies regarding the biology of sea turtles at Padre Island National Seashore and in Texas. During the 11 incubation seasons from 1978 to 1988, approximately 22,507 eggs reached Padre Island, 17,358 or 77.1 percent hatched, 15,875 were transferred to Galveston for head-starting, and approximately 12,000 were released into the Gulf. [37]

Investigators confirmed fewer than one Kemp's ridley nest per year between 1980 and 1994, but beginning in 1995, they detected an increasing number of Kemp's ridley nests along the Texas coast. In 1995, reports indicated four confirmed nests and, in 1996, six nests. Because most of the turtles from the earliest years probably no longer possessed identification markings, park scientists could not determine whether the nest sites were from wild or head-started turtles. In May 1996, however, Shaver and others documented the first return of a head-started sea turtle within Padre Island National Seashore. The turtle was from the 1987 class and laid 83 eggs. [38]

The Kemp's ridley program served a conservation purpose as well as allowed for the collection of biological data previously not available. Park biologist Donna Shaver studied the incubation effort to determine the pivotal temperature at which a 50:50 sex ratio is produced and expand knowledge of the embryological states of development for the Kemp's ridley. Shaver used this data to improve the incubation program at the National Seashore to its current 90 percent hatch success rate and to assist scientists at Rancho Nuevo in improving their incubation program. [39]

Although the program officially ended in 1988, Padre Island biologists and rangers continue to monitor the beaches during the late spring and summer months. In 1986, under the guidance of Donna Shaver, the National Seashore staff and volunteers began patrols of the beach area for nesting turtles. Patrol coverage varied between 1986 and 1995, but encompasses the entire 68-mile National Seashore. From 1994 to 1996, the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and two donations from Canon USA, through the National Parks Foundation, funded the patrols. [40] In addition, an aggressive educational campaign alerts visitors in the park to the possibility of sea turtles and their endangered status. Posted signs, published handouts, ranger interpretation and educational programs, and a videotape and display at the visitor center offer information of the Kemp ridley's. Park biologists rely on visitor reports to assist in documenting possible nests. [41]

In July 1992, the National Park Service approved the *Padre Island National Seashore Sea Turtle Management Plan*. This plan details threats to nesting sea turtles, nests, and hatchlings, identifies measures to protect them, and outlines recommendations for dealing with eggs and hatchlings found in nests on local beaches. In 1993, John Miller, Chief of Resources Management Division, expanded the Kemp's ridley program to include rehabilitation of injured Kemp's ridley hatchlings. To support Miller's effort, the Exxon Corporation donated \$35,000 to match National Park Service funds for the construction of a Hatchling Rehabilitation Facility. The facility is capable of holding 45 injured hatchlings for three to four weeks or until they are fully recovered from their injuries. Rehabilitated hatchlings are released back into the Gulf of Mexico. [42]

The Kemp's ridley sea turtle project received more media attention than any other initiated by Padre Island. It remains popular with visitors and continues to attract a considerable number of volunteers. This project may be considered one of the park administration's most successful natural resource programs. The Kemp's ridley project may be a model example of incorporating and educating the public as part of the National Park Service's mission.

Inshore Sea Turtle Research

Sea turtles, once abundant among the inshore waters of the Laguna Madre and Mansfield Channel, appeared in few numbers by the latter part of the century. Park biologists knew little about the habitat and characteristics of these turtles. In 1989, Donna Shaver, Research Biologist, started a long-term monitoring program study of sea turtles at the Mansfield Channel to ensure their adequate protection. She gathered information on species composition, seasonality, residency, growth rates, sex ratios, food habits, and tag retention times, addressing several recovery task priority items listed in the Kemp's ridley and green sea turtle recovery plans. Each turtle that is caught is identified to species, tagged, weighed, measured, and photographed. When possible, blood is drawn to determine a gender and breeding colony of origin. Lavage and fecal samples are taken to determine food habits. [43]

From June 1989 through March 1996, park officials captured 139 green and two Hawksbill turtles during monitoring and netting at the Mansfield Channel. Nearly half of the green turtles were recaptured with four months being the average interval from first to last capture. Capture data indicate that the population at the Mansfield Channel has declined since the inception of the study. Park scientists identified several possible factors causing the apparent decline including freezing, dredging, increased visitation, spread of sea urchins and exotic mussels, and natural fluctuations. None of these, however, is proven. Scientists observed and photographed a pair of mating Kemp's ridley sea turtles in the Mansfield Channel in June 1991. Although no sea turtle nests were found along the Texas coast subsequent to the mating, the observation confirmed the presence of Kemp's ridley sea turtles mating in Texas waters and supports the possibility that this species could be encountered in the area. The survey of sea turtles in park inshore waters addresses several recovery task priority items listed in the *Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Recovery Plan* and *Green Sea Turtle Recovery Plan*. [44]



Figure 28. Nesting Sea Turtle. Photo courtesy PAIS Archives [P1124].

Peregrine Falcon Research

Beginning in the late 1940s, the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*, subspecies *f.p. anatum* and *f.p. tundrius*) population in the United States began to decline. The most frequently mentioned cause was the introduction of pesticides (DDT) into agricultural practices both in the United States and Mexico. Pesticide residues found in falcon eggs and tissue caused the birds to lay fragile, thin-shelled eggs that often broke during incubation. [45] By the early

1970s, the peregrine falcon population dropped so drastically that Federal protection as an endangered species followed, along with an amended US-Mexico Migratory Bird Treaty in March 1972. [46] This designation spawned a national effort to study, report, and protect the peregrine falcon. The National Park Service took an early leadership role by fostering environments for the falcons in the parks.

Padre Island National Seashore became one of the first parks to address the peregrine falcon issue, because the island is a "staging area" for migrant peregrines in the central flyway during the spring and fall months. The spring months of April and May are the most notable periods of migration, making Padre Island the only known area of concentrated spring migrating peregrines in the Western Hemisphere. [47] The falcons select wide tidal flats and beach dunes to feed on birds unprotected by vegetation, usually water birds and mourning doves. Most of the migrating falcons stop in the 40-mile stretch around Mansfield Channel, roughly 30 miles into the southern end of the National Seashore. [48]

The population of peregrine falcons increased during annual counts since 1978 with more than 2,000 falcons being counted during the spring migration of 1994. Peregrine falcon researchers utilized the park from 1978 to 1994, but in 1994, park officials banned the researchers. After analyzing satellite imagery, it became apparent that the researchers had inadvertently destroyed large sections of wind-tidal flat and algal mats by using all-terrain vehicles. Because of the extent of damage, several scientists believe that it may take decades to repair the tidal flats that are sensitive foraging habitat for other species of avifauna. [49]

Oil and Gas Exploration and Development

Oil and gas exploration and development began on Padre Island well before its designation as a National Seashore. In the enabling legislation for the park, property owners retained all mineral rights with the right to occupy and use as much surface as reasonable for the removal of the minerals. In 1978, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior developed and distributed regulations in *Non-Federal Oil and Gas Rights* (36 CFR 9B). Under these regulations, the owner of mineral rights submits a "Plan of Operations" for approval, which serves as the operator's access permit, and proceeds with mitigation measures to minimize the environmental effects. [50]

During the 1970s, fewer than ten individual companies operated within the National Seashore. Park officials considered this number to have a negligible environmental impact. In the early 1980s, however, the number of operations increased by ten in one year. This increase continued until the end of the decade. [51]

The National Seashore staff developed a number of restrictions for mineral extraction within the park and the park's viewshed. Outlined in an agreement with the General Land Office, the park prohibits any exploration apparatus within two miles of the Gulf of Mexico shoreline in the area of Padre Island National Seashore to protect the aesthetic and recreational values of the public beaches. Drilling is allowed within the area from two miles to three miles from shore during the tourist off-season (September 16th to March 14th), but drilling activity in this strip must commence before January 15th to insure adequate completion time before the March 14th deadline. Access to minerals in the two-mile zone along the Gulf beach may be achieved by directional drilling from upland sites on Padre Island, if authorized by the National Park Service, or from tracts held by the State of Texas beyond the two-mile limit. Max Hancock, Chief Ranger from 1974 to 1988, also negotiated restrictions to protect the Peregrine falcon during migration and limit exploration activities within three-quarters of a mile of the Malaquite Beach area. Officials placed other restrictions on reinstating native vegetation after extraction and taking measures to prevent fires. [52] In 1988, Kean Boucher, Petroleum Engineer with the Mining and Minerals Branch of the National Park Service in

Washington, developed additional stipulations related to seismic exploration. [53]

By 1988 park staff reported that the low price of oil kept exploration at a standstill. [54] Two years later the staff listed nine active oil and gas wells, one salt water disposal well, two producing water wells, and 65 plugged and abandoned wells. Of the active wells, six corporations had owned and operated them since January 8, 1979. In addition, five pipeline companies operated more than 70 miles of pipeline within the park boundaries. [55] In 1989, because of the complex regulations related to managing oil and gas development, John Miller, Chief of the Resources Management Division, requested a full-time position to manage the park's oil and gas program. Paul Eubank of the Ranger Division transferred to the serve as the first oil and gas manager.

In March 1994, Dunn-McCampbell, et al, the mineral owners in the park, filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court against the National Park Service and Butch Farabee, Superintendent, Padre Island National Seashore. Dunn-McCampbell charged that the regulations of the Park Service applied to prospective operators and thus prevented development of the privately owned minerals beneath the park. In addition, Dunn-McCampbell alleged that the State of Texas retained the right to regulate the minerals under Padre Island and that the Park Service regulations did not apply to their operators. If the district court ruled in favor of the Federal government, the plaintiffs indicated they would file a "takings" claim against the National Park Service for \$750 million. In June 1995, U.S. District Judge Janis Jack ruled in favor of the Park Service and severed the "takings" claim from the judgement because of the lack of jurisdiction. Dunn-McCampbell appealed the decision to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in September 1995. [56]

In 1995, the Park Service approved "Plans of Operation" for exploratory drilling by ENSERCH, Inc., in Dallas, Texas, and Bright and Company, in San Antonio, Texas. These efforts resulted in dry holes. As of March 1996, American Exploration Company (Dunn-McCampbell A-4) and Amoco Production Company (South Sprint) operate producing gas wells in the park; Fina Oil and Chemical Company (State Tract 181-#1) operates one oil well. American Exploration Company is discussing plans to plug and abandon three wells in late 1996. [57]

In 1993, Padre Island staff began collecting baseline research data for the purpose of writing a *Minerals Management Plan*. With funding, from the Southwest Regional Office of the National Park Service, the plan would address all aspects of mineral development and compliance regulations. Donna O'Leary, Project Coordinator, is supervising the plan preparation in coordination with two other park units in Texas, Big Thicket National Preserve and Lake Meredith Recreation Area. When completed in 1997, the plan will provide one document to potential operators and thus facilitate future oil and gas development in Padre Island National Seashore. [58]

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CHAPTER NINE: CULTURAL RESOURCE ISSUES

Local avocational historians researched Padre Island many years before its consideration for a national park. Professional historians also researched the island's history, as in the case of two master theses by Pauline Reese in 1938 and Robert Meixner in 1948. The island's cultural resources, however, were largely unknown until the establishment of the National Seashore in 1962. The originating legislation for Padre Island National Seashore recognized its natural resources and recreational value. Cultural resources seemed of little consequence at the time. After the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, the Park Service shifted some attention to cultural resources within park boundaries and made at least nominal steps to recognize these as part of the park's interpretation.

In 1964-65 the Park Service initiated the first historical research on Padre Island. Dr. Joe B. Franz of the University of Texas at Austin contracted to prepare a history of the island and a survey of its historic structures. The whereabouts of this work is unknown. [1] Several years later, Park Service historian James W. Sheire of the Eastern Service Center produced an *Historic Resource Study* that provided a comprehensive overview of the island's history. Sheire developed a thorough bibliography of previous research and outlined various aspects of history that might be adapted in an interpretive program. [2]

Surface Archeological Investigations

In 1963, one year prior to the historical research, the National Seashore staff commissioned its first archeological investigation in anticipation of road and facility construction. Dr. T.N. Campbell of the Department of Archeology at the University of Texas at Austin completed his work by February 1964. Between 1947 and 1956, Dr. Campbell had investigated sites around Corpus Christi Bay and South Texas, eventually publishing several articles on his research. By the early 1960s he was clearly the best informed Texas archeologist on the Padre Island prehistoric cultures. Campbell examined fifteen sites during his investigation, and two years later Dr. Dee Ann Story of the University of Texas at Austin investigated another. [3] Although the study indicated the presence of a number of sites, Campbell recommended that no systematic salvage be done prior to construction. Campbell recommended future multi-disciplinary work that considered the island sites as part of the larger prehistory of South Texas. [4]

Almost ten years later, in June 1973, the National Seashore again contracted for an archeological assessment on sites found within the park boundaries. The Park Service contracted with Dan Scurlock of the Texas Historical Commission for four phases, (1) compilation of data from all previous work, (2) completion of a field reconnaissance to gather additional data, (3) analysis of all data collected, and (4) preparation of a final report. [5] One year later the contractors issued their report. In addition to the 15 sites located by Campbell and one by Story, the new team located 13 new sites. Louis Rawalt, local amateur archeologist and Padre Island homesteader, led the team to ten of the sites. The Scurlock team added the three remaining historic line camps of Black Hill, Green Hill, and Novillo. Of

these 29 sites, 20 were identified within the boundaries of the National Seashore. [6]

The 1970s archeological team also surveyed three tracts of park property that were proposed for development. In February 1974 the team examined the area immediately west of the Malaquite Beach pavilion where a sewer lagoon was proposed. During the following month, the team traveled to the southern boundary to survey a six-acre and 12-acre tract in Willacy County. They uncovered no cultural material. [7]

Scurlock's report concluded with a handful of recommendations centered on developing a comprehensive archeological program. First, he encouraged the National Park Service to acquire and study the Louis Rawalt collection gathered from over 30 sites on the island. Scurlock also encouraged study of the collections of W.S. Fitzpatrick of Corpus Christi and A.E. Anderson of Austin. For underwater sites, the team recommended a full-scale magnetometer survey of the surf zone along the Gulf of Mexico. Scurlock elaborated on the comprehensive archeological program that included a permanent headquarters in Corpus Christi and field office on the island. In conclusion, the team sought a synthesis of the widespread cultural and environmental information that could be used for an in-depth interpretation program on the prehistory and history of the island. The total comprehensive archeological program for four years exceeded \$700,000. [8]

Underwater Archeological Investigations

The National Park Service believed that significant artifacts existed underwater. Beachcombers and treasure hunters had collected Spanish coins and ship fragments from the beaches of Padre Island throughout the twentieth century. Although most of the finds amounted to very little, visitors learned of the three shipwrecks from the ill-fated 1554 Spanish voyage and searched for its bounty. In 1964, within a few years of the establishment of the National Seashore, Vida Lee Connor discovered the location of one of the shipwrecks during a summer scuba diving adventure off the island. For two years she conducted research on the Spanish shipwrecks and privately documented her discovery. In 1966 Connor announced her find and marked the exact location with buoys. She returned later to observe a diving party excavating the shipwreck. [9] Ms. Connor's discovery unlocked the long-held mystery of the location of the three shipwrecks and created one of the longest controversies over antiquities ever experienced in the State of Texas.

The first of the three shipwrecks, the *Santa Maria de Yciar*, lay approximately 42 miles north of the mouth of the Rio Grande. During dredging of the Mansfield Channel in the late 1950s, workers destroyed the site leaving virtually no remains of the wreck. Two artifacts appeared, a two-real coin found on the beach and an anchor left on the jetty. The National Park Service later recovered the anchor and made it part of its collection. A second wreck, the *Espiritu Santo* (41WY3), lay roughly three miles north of the Mansfield Channel; and a third, the *San Esteban* (41 KN 10), another two-and-one-half miles north of the *Espiritu Santo*. [10] All three shipwrecks rested in the tidelands on the edge of the National Seashore.

In the fall of 1967, Platoro, Ltd., of Gary, Indiana, began excavation of the middle shipwreck, *Espiritu Santo*. The company salvaged some 500 items including gold bars, gold jewelry, and early navigational equipment. When General Land Commissioner Jerry Sadler heard of the excavation he protested that the recovered items belonged to the State of Texas. Over the next few years, Platoro and the State of Texas argued in court over rightful ownership. At the same time, the Texas Legislature, largely at the direction of State Representative Cissy Farenthold of Corpus Christi, debated and passed the Antiquities Code of Texas in 1969 to protect future archeological work. The recovered artifacts were moved to the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory of the University of Texas at Austin for analysis and eventually placed with the Corpus Christi Museum for interpretation and display. [11]

After passing the Antiquities Code, the State Legislature set up an Antiquities Committee to oversee and review proposed excavations on public lands. In 1970 staff of the Underwater Archeological Research Section of the Committee arranged for Underwater Research of Dallas to conduct a one-month magnetometer survey of some twenty miles of the coastline. The survey team uncovered the northernmost shipwreck and confirmed its presence. In 1972 the Antiquities Committee staff arranged for summer excavations of the *San Esteban*. Brief excavations also followed in 1973 and 1975. The Antiquities Committee staff forwarded all artifacts to the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin. [12] All three archeological sites were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 21, 1974, as the "Mansfield Cut Underwater Archeological District." [13]

Novillo Line Camp

The Novillo Line Camp is the last historic resource within the National Seashore that reflects human use and occupation of Padre Island. Located a few miles within the northern boundary and entrance, the camp was the northernmost line camp used by the Dunn cattle ranch in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is also largely intact with a collection of small buildings, a pump well, wind mill with concrete water holder, and barbed wire and board corrals. [14]

In the early days of the National Seashore, the park staff gave no special attention to the line camp or its value to the park. Because it sat behind a Chevron Cracking Plant, the camp remained largely hidden from the public who traveled the main road to the Malaquite complex. In 1972 Chief Naturalist Robert Whistler inspected the site and envisioned an interpretive program involving "living history." At almost the same time, Chief Ranger Jim Arnott submitted a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; it was listed on October 1, 1974. [15] Shortly afterwards, the park staff completed a thorough inspection of the site and developed work programs for its preservation. [16]

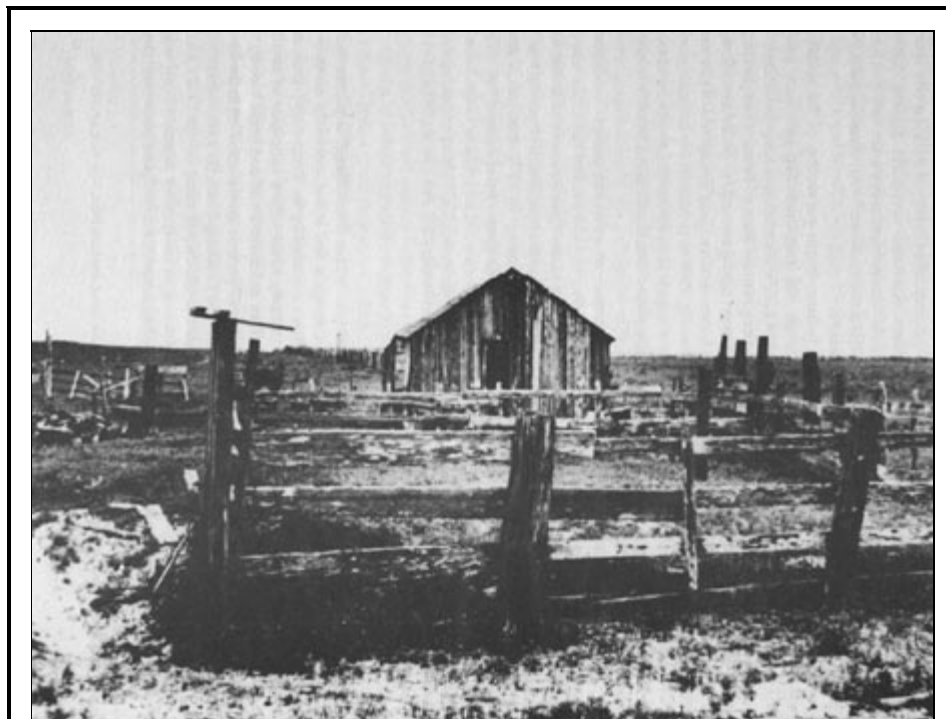


Figure 29. Patrick Dunn's Novillo Line Camp. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives [P1124].*

Whistler took a step toward implementing the living history concept during the Bicentennial celebration of 1976. He invited and contracted with the last foreman for the Dunn Ranch, Jim Lynch, and original vaqueros for a site demonstration. [17] The events included horse shodding and grooming, hand working leather articles, and a general demonstration of how cattle were handled by the Dunn Ranch. Designated camp cooks even prepared food for visitors while the staff and Volunteers in the Park assistants conducted tours. Jim Lynch later offered the National Seashore the last cattle wagon from Dunn's ranch, now in the park's collection. [18]

Chief Naturalist Whistler continued to be concerned about the line camp, especially its preservation and interpretation. In summer 1978, he persuaded the maintenance crew to repair and replace some of the deteriorated boards and apply a wood preservative. Other than these isolated repairs, the park largely ignored the camp, giving priority to other resources. The camp became another concern the following year. Although one of the park rangers was aware of the situation, he allowed a vagrant to occupy the old foreman's cabin in the camp complex. Unfortunately, the vagrant's carelessness with a fire caused considerable damage to the cabin and adjoining buildings. [19]

In 1979 the Southwest Region sent its historical architect to inspect the line camp and report on its physical condition and value as a cultural resource. The architect's report, issued in October 1979, explored four interpretive and preservation alternatives. First, the line camp could be interpreted in a "ruinous condition" and under no major preservation program. Second, Park staff could provide an explanatory panel at one location allowing a view of all structural components. Under this proposal parking for roughly six automobiles could be accommodated off the shell-based road to the Chevron Cracking Plant. The architect outlined a third alternative that included some minimal preservation efforts such as grounds maintenance and removing unnecessary items. As a final alternative, he suggested placing the property under Category D of the List of Classified Structures (LCS) and following a path of benign neglect. [20] The architect concluded that the complex was always temporary requiring some annual maintenance. He added that the buildings and corrals were not "well-crafted" in design or construction. At last, he concluded that the fourth alternative, that of benign neglect, should be the route pursued. [21]

The National Park Service and the Texas Historical Commission entered into a *Memorandum of Agreement* that adopted the fourth alternative of the architect. Through the 1980s and early 1990s, the Novillo Line Camp remained vulnerable to the island's harsh climate and periodic storms. In 1984, the Chevron Company removed the Cracking Plant that has obscured the camp from public view. It is now visible but not accessible to visitors. [22]

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CHAPTER TEN:

INTERPRETATION AND COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

History of Management

Almost two years passed after Congressional authorization of Padre Island National Seashore in 1962 before the National Park Service made any significant headway toward building an interpretive program in the new park. Although various Park Service biologists and planners visited and reported on the resources of Padre Island from the 1920s through the 1950s, no one completed an in-depth study that might provide enough background material for an interpretive program. Likewise, while a number of local scientists, conservationists, and historians collected information on Padre Island, their work remained in a number of different locations including Corpus Christi State University, Texas College of Arts and Industries in Kingsville, the Welder Wildlife Foundation, and area historical commissions. The work of local Padre Island enthusiasts also came in formats ill-suited for devising an interpretive program ranging from highly technical or academic papers to personal scrapbooks and junior historian projects.

In 1964 Superintendent Bowen took the first step toward developing the interpretive program. Following the trends of the 1960s, Bowen hired a biologist as park naturalist to coordinate resource management and initiate interpretive and collection programs. James K. (Ken) Baker transferred to Padre Island from Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Because he was originally from Corpus Christi, his arrival attracted local newspaper interest mostly as "hometown boy returns," but also as the first public notification of the intention to promote resource conservation and visitor education. Baker immediately focused on two park issues: resource conservation and collection of information for interpretation. In addressing the first, he drafted "Special Regulations" on visitor use and enjoyment, protection of wildlife and natural features, and regulation and removal of oil/gas and other minerals from the park. For the second issue, Baker gathered information about the island and began to collect natural resource material. [1]

Almost one year later, Superintendent Bowen reported on Baker's progress. He stated that an extensive literature search for information was underway and that several publications were already acquired for the growing park library. Bowen also mentioned that Baker had written a charter and bylaws for a Padre Island Natural History Association. The support Association, typical of many national parks, would be incorporated as a nonprofit under Texas law sometime in spring 1966 and sell literature in the park visitor center. In a final note, Bowen stated that the staff had completed the draft of "Special Regulations" and comment was being sought from various State and Federal agencies with an interest in Padre Island. [2]

The staff had begun its most intensive effort for interpretation a few months earlier in 1965. Through a handful of direct contracts, the staff set up special research projects with professionals that focused on subjects needed in an interpretive program. Dr. Theodore N. Campbell of the Department of Archeology at the University of Texas at Austin completed

the first of these in early 1965. His archeological appraisal of the island was primarily important for the placement of development and subsequently for interpretation. At the same time, the staff contacted individuals with an interest in the island to conduct a biological survey for both Padre and Mustang Islands. Five individuals from different biological fields agreed to participate: Dr. Henry H. Hildebrand from University of Corpus Christi on marine biology; Dr. Burrus McDaniel from Texas A&I College on birds; Fred Jones on plants, Anne Speers on mollusks, both of the Welder Wildlife Foundation; and the Park Naturalist James K. Baker on terrestrial vertebrates. Park officials expected the survey team to complete all work within two years, including a manuscript suitable for publication. The staff arranged with Dr. W. Armstrong Price for a geological study of Padre Island and the Laguna Madre. The Southwest Parks and Monuments Association first funded the Armstrong work but funds from the Department of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin allowed it to be completed. The only non-scientific work was contracted to the well-known Texas historian Dr. Joe B. Franz at the University of Texas at Austin. Franz agreed to compile a history of Padre Island and conduct a survey of sites and structures of the park. [3]

The newly contracted research covered the typical elements of an interpretive program, but the staff had no overall direction for implementing one. As a beginning, the National Seashore staff prepared a rough draft of an interpretive prospectus and developed some simple panel exhibits for use in the headquarters building. These exhibits complemented the work of the Padre Island Natural History Association, finally incorporated in 1966, which was prepared to publish materials on Padre island and sell these and other items at the headquarters building. As a means of acquiring specimens and artifacts for interpretation, the park staff collected approximately 300 species of plants and animals during 1965. Seashells comprised most of the collection, largely begun with donations from Anne Speers of the Welder Wildlife Foundation. [4]

Over the next two years, National Seashore staff developed the park's interpretive program without an approved *Interpretive Prospectus*. They conducted research, assembled basic material, and revised the *Prospectus* in anticipation of assistance from Washington. To process photos and plates for the biological survey manuscript, the staff added a dark room in the headquarters building in 1966. The staff progressed slowly toward a full-fledged interpretive program for the new park. Their work slowed as complications arose with land acquisition and development plans. These problems in turn influenced the number of visitors coming to the National Seashore. After half a year of being open in 1965, park officials reported 46,424 visitors and only 152,432 in 1966. These numbers were behind earlier estimates and gave little impetus for implementing a stronger interpretive program. [5]

In July 1966 James Baker transferred to Joshua Tree National Monument in California. By September, Derek O. Hambly transferred to the National Seashore as the second park naturalist. Hambly, also a biologist, brought eight years of experience with the National Park Service, having served at Colorado National Monument, Great Smoky Mountains, and Lake Mead. He announced soon after arrival that he would focus on interpretive planning in light of the expected visitation increases. [6]

In early 1967, Superintendent Borgman formally requested the Natural Science Division in Washington, D.C., for assistance on an interpretive plan that would at least be an intermediate step. This preliminary interpretation, as Borgman envisioned it, would be set up along the walkways of the new Malaquite facilities which were large enough to carry visitors and interpretive panels at the same time. [7] Borgman's concept unfortunately did not take into account the intense climatic and seashore forces along the beach, especially during the summer months.

By late 1969 when the completed Malaquite Beach facilities opened to visitors, park staff

offered a basic interpretive program. Park Naturalist Derek Hambly designed the Grassland Nature Trail near the entrance to the National Seashore. With a mimeographed guide briefly describing the composition and characteristics of the grasslands and its accompanying natural resources, visitors could pick up the trail near a large rectangular sign mounted on posts and follow along a primitive trail that circled through the back dunes of the island. The Grassland Trail became a significant attraction in the National Seashore during the early years of the park and for many provided the only introduction to the sensitive ecology of the barrier island. [8]

Hambly also adapted the upper story of the Malaquite View Tower for an evening program that lasted through the 1970 season. Two seasonal employees, generally local high school students, performed all other interpretation from the Malaquite Beach Pavilion during the summer months, focusing on walks and evening activities. The park naturalist and a park technician conducted other interpretive activities during the course of the year, but during peak visitor periods they maintained the Information Desk at the headquarters building and spent any additional time training seasonal employees. [9] Hambly's newly created Padre Island Natural History Association began to flounder around 1970 as the park entered a transitional period. Despite a merger with the larger Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, park managers decided to drop the Association because of the amount of bookkeeping and record keeping necessary. By 1971 all cooperative associations ceased. [10]

In 1972 Superintendent James McLaughlin, relatively new to the park, redesigned the interpretive program. Following the departure of Park Naturalist Derek Hambly to be the superintendent of Fort Davis National Historical Site, McLaughlin created a new Division of Interpretation by separating the existing Division of Interpretation and Resources Management into two departments. For a short period, Park Technician Barbara Shelton became the new chief of interpretation, but soon resigned to pursue other professional interests. Afterwards, Superintendent McLaughlin upgraded the position to an environmental specialist and promoted Park Ranger Richard McCamant. McCamant largely focused on monitoring oil and gas operations rather than interpretation or scientific research. [11]

Shortly afterwards, Robert Whistler transferred from the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., to serve as the first chief naturalist. Under Whistler's direction, the Division of Interpretation increased visibility and expanded visitor education. New programs such as nature craft classes and "surprise walks" added a special dimension to visitors' experiences at the National Seashore. Whistler also developed informational brochures and handouts and scheduled the first off-season programs for clubs, scouts, and professional organizations. An evening campfire program, common in many national parks, was initiated, but discontinued by Superintendent McLaughlin because of its potential to attract vagrants to the park. Between 1971 and 1972 National Seashore employees recorded a significant increase in attendance at evening programs, craft classes, off-site talks, and environmental school walks. Participation in nature walks, however, dropped. [12]

The National Seashore staff began an aggressive interpretive program in 1973 centered around participatory demonstrations. Sand candle casting, star watching on the beach, coquina clam stew cooking, and art classes were offered on the beach. The Malaquite View Tower was modified for classes that included construction of nature plaques, fish printing, and handicraft projects. When a new visitor information desk also opened in the summer at Malaquite Beach, the staff offered small natural history exhibits, information on interpretive programs, and general National Park Service information. [13] In the following year, despite visitation declines because of the energy crisis, interpretive activities still increased. Evening slide programs, morning beach walks, and afternoon nature films constituted most of the interpretive activities, but arts and crafts projects and beach demonstrations continued. Chief Naturalist Whistler revived the earlier contract with the Southwest Parks and Monuments

Association with a new contract signed in 1974. The cooperative agreement with the Association brought a wider array of materials to the information desk and broadened the scope of interpretation at the National Seashore. [14] In 1975 park managers opened a new visitor center desk and interpretive office at the ranger station, allowing a Park Naturalist to be based there full time, and a seasonal interpreter to be stationed at the desk. [15]

The Grasslands Nature Trail continued to be an attraction for the park. With financial assistance from the Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, the staff printed trail guides that were distributed free of charge from 1970 to 1975. During these years, the guide became one of the few publications specifically devoted to interpretation of the island. It was upgraded in 1976 to 16 pages and photographs and sold for a modest 20 cents. Trail hikers left payment in a guide box at the beginning of the trail until petty theft forced an end to the distribution. [16]

In 1972 Chief Naturalist Whistler initiated the Volunteers in the Parks (VIP) program approved by Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel and Congress in 1969. [17] Beginning with a small program, Whistler arranged for two young volunteers to maintain aquariums at the headquarters and Gulf District Ranger Station during the winter and spring. The volunteers collected specimens in the Laguna Madre through seining and supplied both aquariums. Over the next few years the program expanded. Volunteers served as dispatchers, receptionists, environmental education leaders, interpretive guides, photographers, and researchers on various resource management projects. As the program grew in importance, college students, retirees, citizens working off misdemeanor charges, and physically challenged persons participated in the program. [18] In 1987 Whistler developed a program for winter Texans who stayed in the campgrounds at the National Seashore. These winter Texans catalogued collections and assisted with interpretive activities. By the late 1980s the National Seashore staff expanded the program further by enrolling volunteers associated with the Texas Coastal and Adopt-a-Beach clean up program. This increased the number of enrollees to 816 in 1989 and to date serves as the peak year for participation. [19]

1975 Interpretive Prospectus

The first successful effort to develop a park-wide interpretive program began in 1975. Chief Naturalist Robert Whistler prepared a draft *Interpretive Prospectus* that was assisted by a National Park Service planning team from Harper's Ferry and the Denver Service Center. The planning team described the existing interpretive program and facilities as "minimal" and "unsatisfactory." They outlined a set of factors limiting interpretation that included heat during the summer, wind off the ocean, sounds or noise from the surf, large mosquito populations behind the foredunes, corrosion from the Padre environment, and high humidity. Two objectives were also identified:

- To stress the historical interaction of man and the natural environment of Padre Island. Visitors should begin to consider their own environment and how they relate to it.
- To help visitors enjoy the recreational resource of Padre Island National Seashore for the natural area it is, emphasizing activity-oriented exploration that does not seriously impact the resource. [20]

At the north entrance, the *Prospectus* called for a radio message repeater located near the Gulf Ranger Station that would provide current safety messages about weather, beach conditions, and park regulations. The team suggested retaining the existing Grasslands Nature Trail but with an additional wayside exhibit on dune grasslands. They also proposed a new Fresh Water Pond Trail in the vicinity of the Malaquite Beach development and including a wayside exhibit on plant and animal life at the beginning of the trail to be accessed along a

raised, wooden, covered walkway. [21]

The planners further recommended developing historical interpretation at the Novillo line camp, just south of the entrance to the National Seashore. The line camp could be the focus of three different interpretive themes: cattle ranching on Padre Island, different land uses by man and their impacts on the environment, and the role of recreation as the basis for National Park Service administration of the National Seashore. Interpretive development was to be simple, consisting of a small parking area, short trail, and several wayside exhibits covering the three themes. The *Prospectus* mentioned the problem presented by the visual and noise distractions from the adjacent Chevron Oil Company separation plant. [22]

On the Laguna Madre side of the National Seashore, the planners envisioned a shaded exhibit near a proposed pier and launch ramp. This planned exhibit would describe recreational opportunities of the spoil banks and how to safely enjoy them. The story of the spoil banks as bird sanctuaries, protective programs, and needs for the sanctuaries could be another interpretive idea. Another exhibit on the dunes could also be placed on the Laguna Madre to provide information on the fragile nature of dunes and encourage visitors to avoid walking or driving on them. [23]

At the Malaquite Beach complex, the *Prospectus* mentioned building a "modest" interpretive facility connected to the other development by a concrete walkway. The proposed facility included a visitor center, exhibit space, naturalist and environmental education center, and a ranger's district office. Appropriate exhibits at the facility included historical subjects such as the Karankawa Indians, Spanish exploration, and the American years of cattle ranching, oil and gas exploration, and military use. The planner added an outdoor exhibit complex near the beach, reached via the visitor center, to highlight dune ecology and the dynamics of the Gulf of Mexico and Padre Island. [24] Additional dune ecology would be addressed at Yarborough Pass where a proposal in the 1974 *Master Plan* called for a shell road to end. Extensive facilities were planned for the site that included interpretation of the environment. [25]

The interpretive planners developed other activities that they detailed in the *Prospectus*. They envisioned a view tower, placed high enough to avoid mosquitoes, that allowed a view of the Laguna Madre and intracoastal shipping activities, and considered wayside exhibits to educate the public on the varieties of birds at the National Seashore. The planners suggested additional informal and participatory programs including guided beach walks, sketching walks, beach combing, surfing, and surf fishing. They even suggested a bicycle trail to parallel the main road and from the campground at Malaquite Beach connect to another one at Yarborough Pass. For automobile travelers, special "pull-offs" for photographs or observing the ponds were recommended along the existing roadways. [26]

In the final statements of the *Interpretive Prospectus*, the planners suggested new and better publications, including a park handbook, to describe the environment of Padre Island. Also, they conceived of a series of monographs on technical subjects such as topographic maps and navigational charts. The planners recommended that the National Seashore maintain a minimal collection keeping only those items that primarily supported the interpretive program. As an exception to the minimal collection idea, the planners recommended that the National Seashore acquire the artifacts recovered during an archeological salvage program on Padre Island. [27] The final placement of these artifacts -- owned by the State -- was a topic of intense debate during the late 1960s and would eventually be placed in the Corpus Christi Museum following a court order in the 1970s.

The planners for the 1975 *Prospectus* emphasized wayside exhibits throughout the National Seashore as the primary means of interpretation. They also used development proposals

highlighted in the 1974 *Master Plan* as the focus for interpretation. By the early 1980s park officials were beginning to question the location and scale of much of the proposed visitor facilities and instead favor resource conservation over visitor accommodation. In time, the 1975 *Prospectus* became obsolete as a guide. These projections seldom mentioned cost estimates, budget constraints, or visitation expectations and thus remained largely conceptual. Almost 15 years later in 1989, a new *Interpretive Prospectus* scaled back the earlier concepts and shifted the emphasis of interpretation.

1989 Interpretive Prospectus

In the mid-1980s Chief Naturalist Whistler coordinated a new planning team to update the 1975 *Interpretive Prospectus*. The new planning team, consisting of National Seashore staff and Harper's Ferry professionals, was guided by the 1983 *General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan* and a new program devised by John Cook, regional director of Southwest Regional Office, that designated Padre Island National Seashore as bilingual (Spanish/English) for interpretive media. In the opening lines of the 1989 *Interpretive Prospectus*, the planners still described the interpretive facilities and programs as "minimal." As they went on to describe other existing conditions in the park, the overall setting for interpretation seemed difficult. The absence of a visitor center in the new Malaquite Beach complex, inadequate staffing for the visitor center, inadequate outreach programs, and limited use of wayside exhibits headed the planners' list of constraints. The planners further noted that existing interpretive programs reached only 10 percent of visitors. This problem, they noted, resulted from changes in visitor use patterns over the years of park operation and the attraction of different sets or types of visitors depending on the time of year and section of the park. As a last issue, the planners stated that except for a Spanish version of the park's welcome brochure, all interpretive media were in English. [28]

The interpretive planners took several new approaches in the draft *Prospectus* in deference to the shift to resource conservation. They recommended a revision of earlier statements on interpretation that included five new themes:

- Barrier Island Processes/Function -- Discussion of wind and wave energy as a part of the dynamic equilibrium on a barrier island.
- Barrier Island Ecology -- Coverage of the biological and mineral resources of the island that represent integrated systems.
- Edge of the Sea -- Marine processes of the near-shore sea and the protected lagoon. Representative plant and animal species and their natural history.
- Seashore Recreation/Visitor Awareness -- Examples of how visitors can enjoy the seashore without degrading the environment.
- History - The effects of human occupation on Padre Island. [29]

The planners identified two park facilities for exhibits: park headquarters in Flour Bluff and the Malaquite Beach Visitor Center. The 1989 *Prospectus* suggested that new static exhibits, a short audiovisual program, and more outdoor signage for tourists should be added at the headquarters. At the Malaquite Beach Visitor Center, planners suggested exhibits on the functions of barrier islands and human use and association with the barrier island. Additional subject areas included in the report were safety topics such as riptides, sun, wind, sting rays, sharks, jelly fish, trash (toxic wastes), and emergency phone numbers. Most of the exhibits were static, but the planners also envisioned an audiovisual program on the natural and human history of Padre Island for the Visitor's Center. All exhibits were to be bilingual. [30]

Several other areas mentioned in the *Prospectus* departed from the 1975 version. The new plan called for a long-term solution to the environmental education facility to be a barge moored on Bird Island Basin. It focused on the Laguna Madre ecosystem and offered bilingual interpretation, incorporating both pontoon boats and a glass bottom boat. A new shift on interpreting the Novillo line camp also appeared. Although occasional recreations of cattle drives were already being staged successfully, the park's overall management strategy pointed to benign neglect. The planners suggested, however, one wayside exhibit on cattle grazing. Finally, existing wayside exhibits, mostly ineffective because of exposure to the extreme heat and elements, were eliminated. [31]

The planners also introduced new programs including self-guided trails, especially a cross-island nature trail. Other ideas were to add bicycling and jogging trails, a freshwater pond trail, a boardwalk trail along South Beach, and relocating the Grasslands Nature Trail. Park interpreters called for expanded auto audio taped tours, outreach programs, and environmental education programs to complete the park's interpretation. In conclusion, the *Prospectus* encouraged additional oral history work, funding needs, and new interpretive programming focusing on accessibility. [32]

Unlike the 1975 plan, the 1989 *Prospectus* focused on quality interpretation of identified themes in a few sites rather than large-scale development around the park. In setting this new direction, Padre Island reflects a maturity in its management toward environmental sensitivity.

Environmental Education Program

During the late 1960s the national environmental movement emerged, that affected the management and interpretation of the national parks. National Park Service personnel created an environmental education program to be implemented in all parks. In 1969 Derek Hambly introduced the first environmental education program at Padre Island by outlining three Environmental Study Areas (ESAs): outer beach, grasslands, and dune-mudflats(s). The outer beach concentrated on three elements: tidal zone, wide beach, and outer dunes. The Grasslands Nature Trail covered the latter two ESAs. [33]

In 1972 Chief Naturalist Whistler revived the ESA program by coordinating with the Corpus Christi Independent School District. The National Seashore staff agreed to lead students on walks of the Environmental Study Areas during the early spring months when visitation was typically low. Staff conducted 22 walks with more than 1,000 children in the first year. The staff discontinued the three ESAs developed by Park Naturalist Derek Hambly in the late 1960s, replacing them with two new National Environmental Study Areas (NESA). A second program also begun in 1972 worked with educators. Seventy local elementary and secondary school teachers attended two Environmental Education Teacher Workshops and 24 participated in a workshop at the National Seashore. The park staff continued its outreach during Environmental Education Week, September 18-23, 1972. Whistler and staff again contacted area schools encouraging them to send students for morning interpretive walks and afternoon slide programs. In total 13 programs with more than 1,000 students highlighted the week. [34]

In 1973 Padre Island staff established a cooperative effort with the Welder Wildlife Refuge at Sinton, the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, and the Corpus Christi Museum. This cooperative provided a uniform format for the Corpus Christi Independent School District to arrange field trips to each location after an orientation on all of them at the Corpus Christi Museum. [35] Although the proposed program was ambitious, a decline in participation occurred in 1974 because of the energy crisis. In 1975, however, the Padre Island staff reorganized, giving an emphasis to environmental education outside the immediate region.

After attending a workshop at the National Seashore in spring 1975, a group of high school students from San Antonio developed a series of workshops on environmental issues in their own parks. The San Antonio program developed rapidly and included both indoor and outdoor workshops, the latter conducted in city parks. Padre Island officials reported in the 1975 Annual Report the success of the workshops and that the participants continued to conduct workshops on their own initiative. [36]

The staff's efforts to broaden environmental education proved fruitful. The volunteers organizing the program expanded the workshops to include elementary schools, Cub Scouts and Brownies, and additional high school classes. On the park's side, the chief naturalist scheduled films, sent materials requested, and provided supplies for the workshops. In 1976 the volunteers and staff added special certificates for those completing the workshops. [37]

The National Seashore's environmental program received increasing attention. In 1976 the Washington office of the National Park Service recognized the Grasslands Nature Trail as a National Environmental Study Area. During the 1980s the environmental program stabilized. In 1985 Richard Harris developed a second ESA for Bird Island Basin. He wrote and illustrated a teacher's guide, published by Texas Agricultural & Mechanical University Sea Grant Program. Marie Gillett, a local volunteer, followed in 1987 with a draft ESA on beach trash that was never finished or printed. [38]

Collections Management

In the 1960s, the National Seashore staff made only minimal progress in developing and cataloguing the park's collections. Few of the superintendents mentioned the status of park collections in annual reports or overviews of the park. In spite of the lack of attention, residents from the area often approached Padre Island staff to offer artifacts or specimens gathered on the island. Anne Speers of the Welder Wildlife Institute offered the park her collection of shells; Lou Rawalt, a longtime Padre Island beachcomber, promised to give his lifetime collection of miscellaneous beach items to the park. Park employees also contributed to an unwieldy collection. Park naturalists collected numerous biological specimens and various park rangers picked up items washed up on the beach. All of these became part of the permanent collection. [39]

In 1972 the new Chief Naturalist Robert Whistler mentioned that upon arrival at the park the collections were unsupervised with some of the finest shell specimens missing. [40] Improvement of the collections management became a high priority for Whistler. By 1975 when the National Seashore released its first "Area Collection Statement," the staff reported a significant improvement. Volunteers and staff had accessioned and catalogued all items through the park's accession book and catalogue records. Staff stored museum pieces in standard museum storage cabinets in a locked room that was temperature controlled. Very valuable items, such as Spanish coins or unusual shells, were locked in a vault. As of May 1975, the collection consisted of 28 history items, 17 mammals, 17 arthropods, 51 reptiles, 288 plants, and 368 archeological items. In the same year, National Seashore officials initiated discussions for the National Seashore to acquire Spanish artifacts from recovered shipwrecks off Padre Island from the State of Texas and Texas Antiquities Committee in Austin. Although a permanent placement was not agreed on until later, the Park Service staff used some of the recovered artifacts for interpretive displays and others pieces were lent to area museums. [41]

Ten years after the first collections report, park staff updated the report. Once again, interpretation of the National Seashore became the primary objective for maintaining a collection, and teaching and reference were the primary functions. The 1985 report listed a number of management actions for the collection to support the interpretation program. The

staff's primary objective became retrieving three collections owned by the National Seashore but stored outside the park. One of these collections included an insect exhibit held at Texas A&I in Kingsville, but considered so poorly documented that it was not worth including within the park. Corpus Christi State University and Corpus Christi Museum held two other unspecified collections. [42]

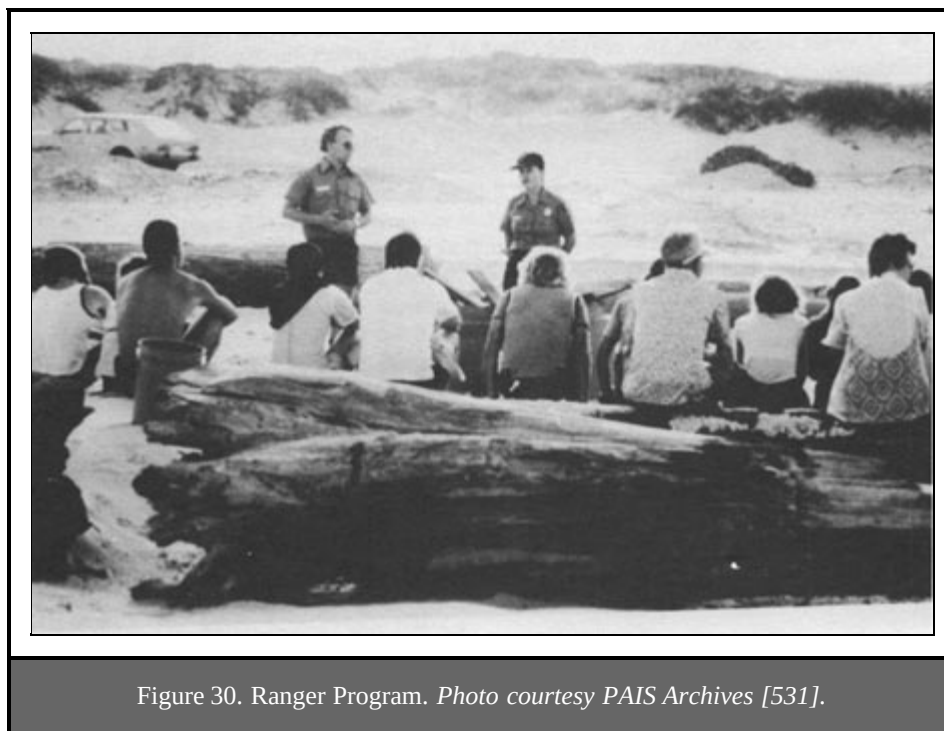


Figure 30. Ranger Program. Photo courtesy PAIS Archives [531].

By the mid 1980s park staff mentioned several other achievements with the collections. The majority of the collection, more than 2,349 objects, was placed in the computer program, with an additional 700 remaining. The park ranger in the Division of Interpretation responsible for the collections devoted 10 to 15 percent of his time to curatorial work. He also trained in the National Park Service cataloging course and planned to be involved in a curatorial methods course of the Park Service. The new Malaquite Beach complex scheduled for development promised to offer three times the exhibit space available in the old pavilion. This was seen as an opportunity to display more of the collection. [43]

The report also listed some problems in managing the collection. A theft of two silver Spanish coins occurred in the early 1980s from a display at the National Seashore headquarters. Another misplaced item was de-accessioned, then recovered. A donated ranch wagon used by Patrick Dunn in his cattle operation on Padre Island and a reproduction Spanish ship anchor were stored in an uncontrolled environment behind the headquarters. Both objects needed proper storage space. Finally, the report stated that the collection of Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site was being stored as part of the National Seashore collection. Six accessions and 135 cataloged items comprised the battlefield collection. Park personnel expected the storage arrangement to continue until the battlefield developed its own facilities. [44]

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CHAPTER ELEVEN:

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations and Special Events, 1962-1970

Long before Padre Island National Seashore opened to the public in 1965, Superintendent Bill Bowen recognized the importance of public relations for the park. The prolonged struggle for legislative endorsement of the park had polarized North and South Padre Island. As park development got underway in the mid-1960s, the perceived favored treatment for North Padre further contributed to the polarization. Many South Padre residents and property owners, some formerly opposed to the park, now resented the lack of attention.

Superintendent Bowen took the first step toward improving public relations in the south by assigning Art Partin as district ranger, South District, at Port Isabel on October 25, 1964. [1] In a later report in 1965, the superintendent stated that the Park Service may have to rethink scheduling all construction on the north end through 1968 simply because "cold, hard political facts-of-life may indicate some adjustment." [2] By December 1965, Bowen seemed resigned to developing the park on South Padre at the same rate as that on North Padre. [3] Shortly afterwards, the park staff reversed this position because of the legal problems and challenges on the property south of Mansfield Channel.

Padre Island administrators continued the development of park facilities on North Padre as the legal battles raged over South Padre Island. In April 1965, the park staff opened the doors of their new headquarters building in Flour Bluff. [4] In 1969, several years later, the staff opened the Malaquite Beach Pavilion and facilities. Early National Seashore employees, however, remember April 1968 as the most significant event in the park's initial years.

Dedication of Padre Island National Seashore, April 8, 1968

In February 1968, Bill Newbold from the National Park Service Division of Interpretation in Washington contacted Superintendent Ernest Borgman requesting that the First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson, visit Padre Island for the park dedication. Borgman and staff had delayed making dedication plans until the first buildings were completed. Development activities, however, were behind schedule and it seemed unlikely that construction on the Malaquite Beach facilities would be completed within the year. Moreover, Borgman knew that it would be difficult to fit into the First Lady's travel agenda at another time. After several telephone calls, Borgman and Newbold agreed to arrange a formal dedication of the National Seashore with the First Lady presiding during the first week in April. Their selection of the April date left only a month for all preparations. [5]

The park staff hurriedly planned the dedication. They prepared and mailed more than 3,500 invitations. Park rangers constructed a speaker's stand and covered it on all sides with driftwood collected on the Padre Island beaches. [6] Superintendent Borgman and the rangers placed the stand at the northern end of the National Seashore near the site of the proposed Malaquite Beach complex. For added local flavor, rangers erected a flag pole near the stand

and added a podium or lectern covered with driftwood. Park employees later recalled this month as one of their busiest and most stressful. [7]

On Monday, April 8, 1968, Lady Bird Johnson arrived at the Naval Air Station for the second stop on her "Crossing the Trails of Texas" tour. Just two days before, the First Lady had opened the Hemisfair grounds in San Antonio for the first world's fair to be hosted in Texas. She now would open Texas' second national park.

The day began with overcast skies thick with fog and threatening rain. By midmorning, however, the fog lifted, leaving the balance of the day a balmy 70 degrees. The First Lady's motorcade drove directly from the Naval Air Station to the dedication site. Hundreds of cars lined the narrow road as invited guests made their way down to the still incomplete park grounds. Superintendent Borgman, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, National Park Service Director George Hartzog, and Senator Ralph Yarborough led the dedication party. Mrs. John Young, "standing in" for her husband Representative John Young who was "called back" to Washington by President Johnson, Representative Eligio de la Garza, Representative Abe Kazan, and Admiral and Mrs. McPherson of Naval Air Advanced Training, accompanied the First Lady. Mayor Jack Blackmon and his wife and Ed and Mrs. Harte completed the list of local dignitaries. Governor John Connally, present only a few days before at the Hemisfair dedication, failed to attend or send a substitute. Although unable to attend because of poor health, Cameron County Judge Oscar Dancy would be mentioned later by several members of the dedication party. [8]

Lady Bird Johnson, the principal speaker, arrived at the dedication site shortly before the 11 o'clock scheduled ceremony. Mrs. Johnson greeted the audience and brought an air of gentility and warmth to the seashore setting. Despite these good feelings and the congratulatory comments of the participants, two significant events cast dark shadows on the dedication. After Borgman and Newbold arranged the April dedication, President Johnson announced that he would not seek reelection. This announcement shocked many citizens and brought even more attention to the lingering Vietnam War. Shortly afterwards, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the symbol of civil rights for blacks, was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. Out of respect for Dr. King's death, the park rangers flew the flag at half mast except during the national anthem. [9]

Secretary Udall served as the master of ceremonies, giving tributes and accolades to the work of many that led to Padre Island National Seashore. Senator Yarborough, who followed Udall's introductions, spoke eloquently of the four-and-one-half year struggle for Padre Island's recognition. He too credited the work of many citizens but gave special credit to Ed Harte, editor of the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, for writing numerous editorials in support of the bill, and Judge Oscar Dancy. In an unusual deference to Lyndon Johnson, Yarborough stated that the great impetus for passing the Padre Island legislation came from a Congressional trip led by then Vice-President Johnson and Secretary Udall in 1961. The Senator then turned to more recent events, describing the King assassination as the "tragic event that struck this nation." In conclusion, Yarborough focused on the natural resources of Padre Island giving special attention to the "king of oak trees" that grew "in little groves of Quercus." "These trees," Yarborough stated, "grow nowhere else except on Padre Island." [10]

The First Lady followed Senator Yarborough. Her speech, later printed in the local newspapers and quoted in the syndicated presses, began with an introduction of some 40 journalists from 13 European countries. These special guests were accompanying Mrs. Johnson on the Texas tour at her invitation. In her opening statement, the First Lady asked a simple question "What does it take to make a national park?" and then began to answer it:

To create a national seashore?... It takes a dream... as it did with Judge Oscar Dancy some thirty years ago. We've known him for all of those thirty years and more. It takes endless hours of hard work by the 'believers,' people up and down the island span; not only people, but newspapers like the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* who helped educate the readers to the advantages and won an award for it. [11]

Mrs. Johnson then recognized the work of Senator Yarborough and United States Representatives Young and de la Garza. As a follow up, she brought in the special interest of President Johnson emphasizing his fondness for calling the national seashores "the nation's necklace of national seashores." In her concluding comments, Mrs. Johnson noted the "delightful" driftwood and weathered rope that graced the speakers stand. She ended by referring to potential interpretation in the National Seashore:

Legends of early Indians, of shipwrecked Spanish galleons are part of Padre Island, and I hope, Mr. Hartzog, that there will be occasions when some gifted storyteller could bring them to life as part of the regular program here. I've been to so many national parks, and that is one of the great things they do. They weave in the history of the island, the history of man and nature -- the whole ecology -- sitting around the campfire or in the visitor's center. [12]

With her final gesture given to the future visitor activities at the park, Mrs. Johnson stepped down from the speakers' stand to unveil a plaque commemorating the day on a large piece of driftwood.

Following the ceremony, Mrs. Johnson and her traveling party changed clothes in tents especially erected for them. They then participated in a beachfront fish fry sponsored by the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Johnson, Secretary Udall, and the traveling party set out for an afternoon walk on the beach. The newspaper accounts later remarked on the relaxing afternoon and vividly portrayed the barefooted First Lady decked in her large-brimmed hat and casual clothes. As a special treat, Park Naturalist Derek Hambly traveled with the party stopping occasionally to tell the visitors about the island. Afterwards, the First Lady returned to Corpus Christi for an evening cocktail party and dinner. She continued to Goliad the next day to complete her tour of Texas.

For Superintendent Borgman and his staff in 1968, the dedication day was a significant milestone. The staff banded together and in a very short time put together the first major event in the park's short history. The staffs scrapbook of photographs and memorabilia reflect the pride of accomplishment that had largely eluded the park staff in its initial years. National Park Service managers and local officials forwarded numerous congratulatory notes to Borgman and his staff in the months following the dedication. In many ways, the success of the dedication proved that Padre Island National Seashore was a viable park entity that was here to stay.

Public Relations and Special Events, 1970 - 1990

The completion of permanent park facilities communicated a positive message to the public in the late 1960s, but the park staff became the best means for developing good public relations in the 1970s. National Seashore staff members often spoke to community groups on the Park Service and the resources of the barrier island. Park rangers met the public daily and, to the surprise of some visitors, were excellent ambassadors for the new park. [13]

In 1972 National Seashore Superintendent James McLaughlin reported that in addition to the large number of talks presented by staff, that several events that year strengthened public relations. A campfire program at Malaquite Beach in March brought more than 60 park

visitors. After McLaughlin told the crowd of the history and development of the National Park Service, the park staff led them in group singing and showed the film "Our Living Heritage." Later that year, the park sponsored a "Tenth Anniversary" celebration. Park staff presented special programs and conducted tours of Little Shell Beach. In the evening Superintendent McLaughlin again talked about the National Park Service and the Flour Bluff High School band played musical selections under the Malaquite Pavilion. [[14](#)]

The National Seashore staff grew into an extended family in these early years of the park. To facilitate communication, the staff published what was first called the "Padre Island National Seashore Employee News," that was changed in March 1972 to the "Gulf Breeze." This publication often reported on a special park organization for the National Seashore women. The group met occasionally and participated in area community activities such as the Festival of Flowers in Corpus Christi. Their exhibits often covered topics like dune preservation, beach combing, and anti-litter campaigns. [[15](#)] The group continued to meet through the end of the 1970s.

On a more regular basis, the National Seashore sought ways to serve area residents. Local television stations sometimes produced special stories on Padre Island, such as on grass fires and beach tar. The staff also began to offer beach and surf condition reports on a regular basis to local broadcasting stations. This was later expanded by installing a 24-hour answering service that gave callers information on tides, surf conditions, fishing, weather, and driving conditions. [[16](#)]

In the 1980s the National Seashore developed few new programs or methods of outreach to the public. On special occasions, the park staff arranged exhibits on the park or topics related to activities at the National Seashore. Chief Naturalist Robert Whistler often organized these events. In 1980 Whistler and other staff members sponsored a booth at Padre Staples Mall in celebration of the Year of the Coast. He again led the park staff for Public Lands Day in 1988 that recognized the 1986 Public Lands Clean Up Act. [[17](#)] In 1989 under the new Chief of Interpretation John Lujan, the staff set up special exhibits for Bayfest and the Ultimate Yacht Race Festivals in Corpus Christi. [[18](#)] A few special events also occurred in the 1980s. The most notable even took place in June 1987 when the National Seashore dedicated a new Visitor Information Center in Flour Bluff.

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CHAPTER TWELVE:

A NATIONAL SEASHORE FOR THE FUTURE: MANAGING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS

Padre Island National Seashore remains the longest stretch of undeveloped and pristine seashore in the United States. It continues, however, to be challenged by internal and external threats. In recent years, the National Park Service examined threats and developed strategies for responding to their effects. National park units are now often described as "islands" or reserves surrounded by complex land uses or forces that put pressure on the park. These pressures may emanate from politics or economics but be nonetheless destructive to the protected resources. Padre Island managers, similar to most other park managers, often are forced to choose between alternatives that seem to compromise the dynamics of the barrier island or its "island" status. The following threats affect Padre Island National Seashore:

Internal Threat: Inadequate Budget

The most tenacious internal threat is the lack of an adequate budget for managing the National Seashore. From its earliest years of operation, Padre Island fell short in annual operating budgets that often were overshadowed by high acquisition and development expenditures. The strain is felt on personnel, but it also creates problems in the areas of development and maintenance. The severity of the South Texas's coastal climate and conditions creates undue stress for buildings and structures within the National Seashore. The stress is especially evident on the Gulf Ranger Station and Maintenance Complex left from the former Navy operations in the 1940s and the old Malaquite view tower. The former was originally intended as temporary buildings, while the latter remains closed to the public because of its structural problems, first noted in the 1970s. Without additional funding, park managers will not be able to improve on these facilities.

Internal Threat: Bird Island Basin Use Conflicts

Bird Island Basin lies roughly five miles from the northern boundary. It is the primary point of access for the public to the Laguna Madre. A second point of access is at Yarborough Pass, which requires a boat or through access from South Beach. Bird Island receives a large proportion of visitors to the National Seashore. In the fall and spring, visitor use may be quite heavy and result in different types of users. The two most prominent users in recent years are the power boaters and sailboarders. In the later 1980s and early 1990s, many users were often in conflict over use. Park officials became concerned about the conflicts and safety problems. This internal issue remained in the early 1990s although some decrease was noted by park managers. Questions concerning ways to accommodate large numbers of different users while still protecting the resources will continue in the near future and must be resolved largely through internal management strategies. [1]

Internal Threat: Visitor Degradation

Visitor use also remains a threat to the National Seashore. Vehicular and foot traffic in

combination with beach camping cause dune and shore area erosion. Likewise, occupants of recreational vehicles sometimes illegally dump trash. These and related visitor activities require constant monitoring by park officials. In spite of concerted public education efforts, these violations continue. Visitors will continue to modify the natural resources of the park. [2]

External Threat: Adjacent Land Use

External threats continue to come from potential development on the edges of the National Seashore. One of the critical areas is north of the park boundary. This acreage remains in private ownership and is under the Kleberg County authority more than 130 miles away. [3] The western park boundary along the Intracoastal Waterway is difficult to discern and not inclusive of some natural features protected by the park. The ambiguous boundary causes management difficulties, especially for law enforcement. [4] Park Service officials still have not resolved the southern boundaries of the National Seashore. Two tracts of land continue under park ownership but are not contiguous to other park land. These tracts and the long-debated adjacent tracts occasionally are offered for potential development or exchange. In the early 1990s, American General Corporation proposed a 4,000 acre, \$3,000,000 development on this property. [5] An organized effort by conservationists killed the proposal for the time being, but many expect similar projects to be suggested in the future. Although the park itself is well contained, external land use pressures in all three of these areas continue.

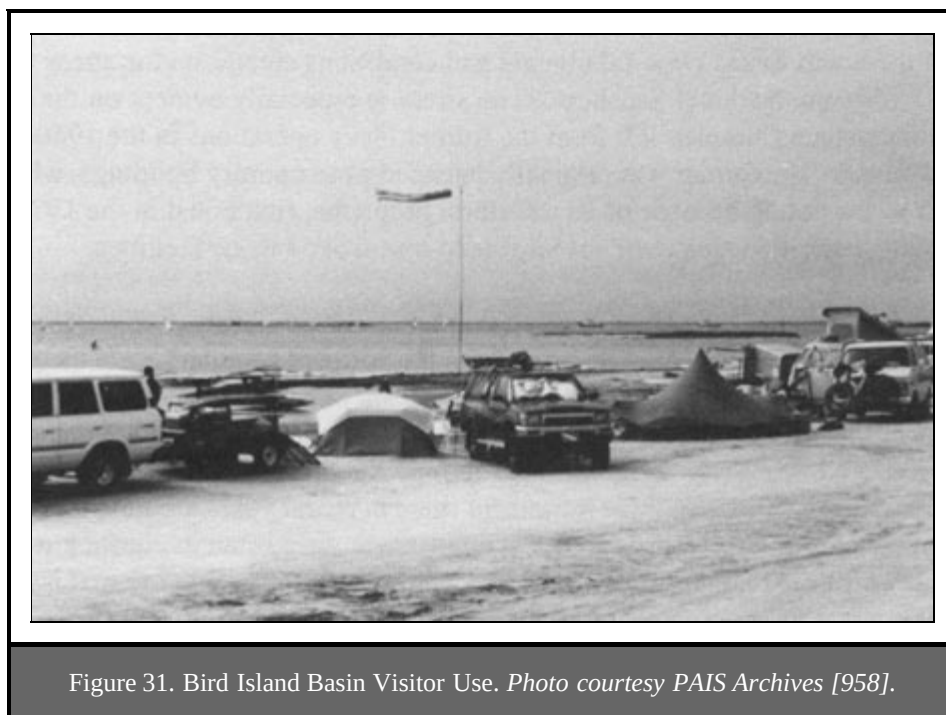


Figure 31. Bird Island Basin Visitor Use. *Photo courtesy PAIS Archives [958].*

External Threat: Causeway Construction

A related external threat is the proposed construction of a causeway across the Laguna Madre parallel to the Nueces and Kleberg county line. The causeway would reach Padre Island just north of the National Seashore entrance and doubtless lead to increased visitation. On the positive side, this proposal would lead to quicker evacuation during hurricanes and simplify access to the park through Kingsville. The negative aspects are the potential effects on the Laguna Madre resources and possible complications to mineral development. Although this proposal continues to receive serious consideration, widespread support does not appear evident. [6]

External Threat: Hazardous Containers

The influx of hazardous containers continues to be an external threat. Since the early 1980s when containers began to wash ashore, park managers addressed the container problem in a number of ways. The most successful arrangements were made with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and United States Coast Guard for funding and handling of the barrels. This program ended in the early 1990s leaving the Park Service to fund and disperse its own collected material. While the number of barrels collected can rise or fall each year, the threat to visitors remains the same and thus the park must continue to oversee collection and storage. This program is at times expensive and causes serious risk problems for park workers and visitors. [7]

External Threat: Law Enforcement Issues

Law enforcement issues resulting from larger external problems also threaten the National Seashore. Illegal aliens, illegal hunting, drug trafficking, and armed visitors potentially damage natural resources and jeopardize visitor safety. [8] Recent programs such as Drug Interdiction and agreements with area law enforcement departments have decreased the number of violators and reduced threats, but issues are still present. Because the National Seashore is located in South Texas near the Mexican border, many of these violations and threats will continue in the near future.

External Threat: Resource Degradation

Various operations conducted by other public or private interests continue to pose threats to the National Seashore. United States Corps of Engineers dredging and cleaning of the Intracoastal Waterway creates new resource problems in the Laguna Madre. In April 1994, contractors for the Army Corps of Engineers mishandled sludge or "spoil" from a dredging operation in the Laguna Madre and contaminated valuable fishery habitat. Unfortunately, Corps mishaps occur too often and result in an accumulation of harmful environmental effects. [9]

Non-Federal mineral extraction within the National Seashore also threatens resources. Although oil and gas operations now can proceed only with an approved plan, heavy equipment must be transported through visitor areas and in spite of precautions the potential still exists for spills. Other agencies, such as the Texas Parks and Wildlife and United States Customs, operate occasional helicopter beach patrols that distract from visitor experiences and daily park operations. [10]

External Threat: Mansfield Channel

One of the most insidious external threats to the park comes from the long-term effects of the Mansfield Channel dredging. The jetties constructed to prevent silt collection in the Channel are altering the dynamic processes of the island. These alterations over a period of time may result in different barrier formations and functions. Although the Channel is on the southern boundary, its effects may be quite dramatic for the National Seashore.

Park Strategies for Management of Threats

Park managers address internal and external threats through a variety of approaches. In recent years, a special planning team drafted the *Development Concept Plan* on an issue-by-issue basis rather than the large-scale development proposals in earlier park plans. The team made a concerted effort to enlist other federal, state, and local government staff and programs for each issue. The idea of managing the park as an isolated entity operating within its own boundaries was over. A host of partnerships, agreements, and joint programs facilitate park

management. This approach continues at present.

The completion of the *Development Concept Plan* ushered in a new phase of management and direction for Padre Island National Seashore. Despite the inevitable changes in personnel and leadership, the National Seashore may now be the responsibility of all park employees, visitors, and stewards of our public resources. Whatever new forces befall Padre Island National Seashore in the future a more comprehensive program is there to meet them. This approach promises a great future for the land, its natural and cultural resources, and the ever-present enchanted visitor, as the island continues its dynamic presence along the Texas Gulf coast.

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The majority of primary sources are located in the collections and archives of Padre Island National Seashore now based at the headquarters building in Flour Bluff, Texas. Many of the early park documents are catalogued and easily accessible. Other material on the park, especially the 1980s and 1990s, is found in the library of the Gulf Ranger Station. These materials are filed by topic and mostly indexed on the front of the file box. References to box numbers in the study refer to those in this library. There are also general studies that relate to

the National Seashore or academic studies involving Padre Island.

Most of the National Park Service documents were found at the National Archives and Records Center in Lakewood, Colorado. The Archives stores some of the documents relating to Padre Island, as well as other national parks from the Southwest Regional Office or Region III. The Fort Worth Archives Division has no records of Padre Island and the Records Division have only a few documents. The National Park Service is now retaining copies of the annual reports at the Harpers Ferry Center with microfilmed copies available at the Denver Service Center.

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Several of the former superintendents are no longer in contact with the National Park Service and thus unable to be interviewed. Some of the earliest superintendents are now believed to be deceased. Fortunately, many of the National Seashore's longtime employees provided interviews or brief responses to questions allowing elaboration on the written documentation regarding the park.

Miscellaneous Sources

Copies of legislative hearings, pre-park studies, and some correspondence are found here. One of the most useful pieces for the pre-park years was a loosely bound set of copies of correspondence regarding Padre Island. This material provided excellent coverage for the years leading up to the 1962 legislation. The collection also contains some photographs and negatives.

Scrapbooks and personal material from supporters of Padre Island are catalogued in the collection. Several scrapbooks from the earliest years of the park were maintained by the staff and give personal insights to the beginnings of the park. The one compiled on the park's dedication day is especially worthy of attention.

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APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION

**Public Law 87-712
87th Congress. S. 4
September 28, 1962**

AN ACT

To provide for the establishment of the Padre Island National Seashore.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in order to save and preserve, for purposes of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped, the Secretary of the Interior shall take appropriate action in the public interest toward the establishment of the following described lands and waters as the Padre Island National Seashore: Beginning at a point one statute mile northerly of North Bird Island on the easterly line of the Intracoastal Waterway; thence due east to a point on Padre Island one statute mile west of the mean high water line of the Gulf of Mexico; thence southwesterly paralleling the said mean high water line of the Gulf of Mexico a distance of about three and five-tenths statute miles; thence due east to the two-fathom line on the east side of Padre Island as depicted on United States Coast and Geodetic Survey chart numbered 1286; thence along the said two-fathom line on the east side of Padre Island as depicted on United States Coast and Geodetic Survey charts numbered 1286, 1287, and 1288 to the Willacy-Cameron County line extended; thence westerly along said county line to a point 1,500 feet west of the mean high water line of the Gulf of Mexico as that line was determined by the survey of J. S. Boyles and is depicted on sections 9 and 10 of the map entitled "Survey of Padre Island made for the office of the Attorney General of the State of Texas", dated August 7 to 11, 1941, and August 11, 13, and 14, 1941, respectively; thence northerly along a line parallel to said survey line of J. S. Boyles and distant therefrom 1,500 feet west to a point on the centerline of the Port Mansfield Channel; thence westerly along said centerline to a point three statute miles west of the said two-fathom line; thence northerly parallel with said two-fathom line to 27 degrees 20 minutes north latitude; thence westerly along said latitude to the easterly line of the Intracoastal Waterway; thence northerly following the easterly line of the

Padre Island
National Seashore,
Tex.
Establishment.

Intracoastal Waterway as indicated by channel markers in the Laguna Madre to the point of beginning.

SEC. 2. (a) The Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to acquire by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, condemnation, transfer from any Federal agency, exchange, or otherwise, the land, waters, and other property, and improvements thereon and any interest therein, within the areas described in the first section of this Act or which lie within the boundaries of the seashore as established under section 3 of this Act (hereinafter referred to as "such area"). Any property, or interest therein, owned by the State of Texas or political subdivision thereof may be acquired only with the concurrence of such owner. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any Federal property located within such area may, with the concurrence of the agency having custody thereof, be transferred without consideration to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary for use by him in carrying out the provisions of this Act.

Acquisition of
land, etc.

76 STAT. 650.
76 STAT. 651.

(b) The Secretary is authorized to pay for any acquisitions which he makes by purchase under this Act their fair market value, as determined by the Secretary, who may in his discretion base his determination on an independent appraisal obtained by him.

(c) In exercising his authority to acquire property by exchange, the Secretary may accept title to any non-Federal property located within such area and convey to the grantor of such property any federally owned property under the jurisdiction of the Secretary within such area. The properties so exchanged shall be approximately equal in fair market value: *Provided*, That the Secretary may accept cash from or pay cash to the grantor in such an exchange in order to equalize the values of the properties exchanged.

SEC. 3. (a) As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act and following the acquisition by the Secretary of an acreage in the area described in section 1 of this Act, that is in the opinion of the Secretary efficiently administrable to carry out the purposes of this Act, the Secretary shall establish the area as a national seashore by the publication of notice thereof in the Federal Register.

Publication in F.
R.

(b) Such notice referred to in subsection (a) of this section shall contain a detailed description of the boundaries of the seashore which shall encompass an area as nearly as practicable identical to the area described in section 1 of this Act. The Secretary shall forthwith after the date of publication of such notice in the Federal Register (1) send Notice, a copy of such notice, together with a map such boundaries, by registered or certified mail to the Governor of the State and to the governing body of each of the political subdivisions involved; (2) cause a copy of such notice and map to be published in one or more newspapers which circulate in each of the localities; and (3)

Notice.

cause a certified copy of such notice, a copy of such map, and a copy of this Act to be recorded at the registry of deeds for the county involved.

SEC. 4. (a) When acquiring land, waters, or interests therein, the Secretary shall permit a reservation by the grantor of all or any part of the oil and gas minerals in such land or waters and of other minerals therein which can be removed by similar means, with the right of occupation and use of so much of the surface of the land or waters as may be required for all purposes reasonably incident to the mining or removal of such from beneath the surface of these lands and waters and the lands and waters adjacent thereto, under such regulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary with respect to such mining or removal.

Mineral
reservation.

(b) Any acquisition hereunder shall exclude and shall not diminish any right of occupation or use of the surface under grants, leases, or easements existing on April 11, 1961, which are reasonably necessary for the exploration, development, production, storing, processing, or transporting of oil and gas minerals that are removed from outside the boundaries of the national seashore and the Secretary may grant additional rights of occupation or use of the surface for the purposes aforesaid upon the terms and under such regulations as may be prescribed by him.

76 STAT. 651.
76 STAT. 652.

SEC. 5. Except as otherwise provided in this Act, the property acquired by the Secretary under this Act shall be administered by the Secretary, subject to the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service and for other purposes", approved August, 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented, and in accordance with other laws of general application relating to the areas administered and supervised by the Secretary through the National Park Service; except that authority otherwise available to the Secretary for the conservation and management of natural resources may be utilized to the extent he finds such authority will further the purposes of this Act.

Administration.
16 USC 1.

SEC. 6. The Secretary may provide for roadways from the north and south boundaries of such public recreation area to the access highways from the mainland to Padre Island.

Roadways.

SEC. 7. The Secretary of the Interior shall enter into such administrative agreements with the Secretary of the Navy as the Secretary of the Navy may deem necessary to assure that the Secretary of the Interior will not exercise any authority granted by this Act so as to interfere with the use by the Department of the Navy of any aerial gunnery or bombing range located in the vicinity of Padre Island.

Gunnery or
bombing ranges.

SEC. 8. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act; except that no more \$5,000,000 shall be appropriated for the acquisition of land and waters and improvements thereon, and

Appropriation.

interests therein, and incidental costs relating thereto, in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

Approved September 28, 1962, 12:40 p.m.

Public Law 90-594
90th Congress, H. R. 17787
October 17, 1968

AN ACT

82 STAT. 1155

To authorize the appropriation of funds for Padre Island National Seashore in the State of Texas, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, there are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to satisfy the final judgment of \$6,810,380 (that is, \$9,212,730 minus \$2,402,350 deposited in all figures exclusive of amounts for tract No. 7) rendered against the United States in civil action numbered 65—C—54 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, for the acquisition of land and interests in land for the Padre Island National Seashore. The sums herein authorized to be appropriated shall be sufficient to pay the amount of said judgment, together with interest and costs as provided by law.

Padre Island
National Seashore,
Texas.
Appropriation.

Approved October 17, 1968.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 1856 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).
SENATE REPORT No. 1598 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 114 (1968):
Sept. 16: Considered and passed House.
Oct. 4: Considered and passed Senate.

Public Law 91-42
91st Congress, H. R. 11069
July 11, 1969

AN ACT

83 STAT. 45

To authorize the appropriation of funds for Padre Island National Seashore in the State of Texas, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, there are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to

Padre Island
National Seashore,
Texas.

satisfy the final net judgments rendered against the United States in civil action numbered 66—B—1 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, for the acquisition of lands and interests in land for the Padre Island National Seashore, totaling \$4,129,820.00, plus interest as provided by law. Appropriation.

Approved July 11, 1969.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 91-305 (Comm. on Interior & Insular Affairs).

SENATE REPORT No. 91-261 (Comm. on Interior & Insular Affairs).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 115 (1969):

June 16: Considered and passed House.

June 30: Considered and passed Senate.

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APPENDIX B: PERSONNEL

Biographies of Padre Island National Seashore Superintendents

William L. Bowen (July 1, 1963 - February 1966)

William L. (Bill) Bowen served as the first superintendent of Padre Island National Seashore beginning July 1, 1963. Prior to this, he was chief of the Division of National Park and Recreation Area Planning at National Park Service headquarters in Washington, DC, and regional chief of Recreation Resource Planning of Region III, later called Southwest Region, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Most of the preliminary planning for Padre Island National Seashore occurred during Bowen's years in Santa Fe. While in Washington, however, he participated in securing Congressional authorization of Padre Island as well as Cape Cod National Seashore and Point Reyes National Seashore. During his superintendency, Bowen initiated land acquisition for the park, established a viable public image in the region, and arranged for the first permanent headquarters at Flour Bluff. Superintendent Bowen left Padre Island to serve as chief of Design and Construction at the National Park Service Western Regional Office in San Francisco, California, in February 1966. He retired from the Park Service in 1971 as Director of the Western Service Center in San Francisco. In 1993, he was living in Kentucky.

Ernest J. Borgman (February 1966 - October 1969)

Ernest Borgman came to Padre Island as its first park ranger in 1964. His previous assignments included Grand Teton, Shenandoah, Everglades, and immediately preceding Padre Island he was chief ranger at Virgin Islands National Park. Borgman, a native of Wyoming, graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. He developed the first master plan for Padre Island. When he became superintendent after Bill Bowen transferred in 1966, Borgman continued land acquisition for the park, initiated and oversaw construction of the Malaquite Beach facilities, and presided over the official dedication and opening of Padre Island National Seashore in 1968. He transferred in October 1969 to serve as superintendent of Mt. McKinley National Park and Katmai National Monument in Alaska, headquartered in Anchorage. Borgman retired from his last assignment at Klamath Falls Group, Oregon, in 1980, and no longer maintains contact with the Park Service.

James L. McLaughlin (May 3, 1970 - December 8, 1973)

Jim McLaughlin began his National Park Service career in 1954 as a ranger with Yosemite National Park. In 1961 he transferred to the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha working as a park planner. Two years later McLaughlin became superintendent of Muir Woods National Monument, California, and within two years moved to an administrative position with Great

Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina. McLaughlin arrived at Padre Island National Seashore in May 1970 to serve as the first superintendent charged with an operating park. During his tenure, McLaughlin phased out the private use of the spoil islands in spite of significant local objection. He also initiated a ban of four-wheel drive vehicles from the dunes and Little Shell Beach (later reversed) and ended cattle grazing on the island. He transferred to Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in 1973 and retired from the Park Service as assistant superintendent of Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park in 1981. He resides in California.

John (Jack) F. Turney (December 9, 1973 - September 9, 1978)

Jack Turney held a bachelor's degree in physical science and a master's in anthropology when he entered the National Park Service as a ranger at Bandelier National Monument in 1950. From there, he moved to be superintendent of Aztec Ruins in New Mexico and Walnut Canyon in Arizona. In 1967 Turney became superintendent of White Sands National Monument in New Mexico. Six years later he transferred to Padre Island National Seashore to serve as the fourth superintendent. Turney followed the tumultuous years of establishing the National Seashore and thus began his superintendency by building community relations. During his stay at Padre Island, he addressed the declining facilities of Malaquite Beach facilities and strengthened natural resource conservation programs. Turney left to be superintendent at Buffalo National River in 1978 and retired from the Park Service in 1980. He is no longer maintains contact with the National Park Service.

Myrl G. Brooks (December 3, 1978 - February 1, 1980)

Myrl Brooks began his Park Service career as a ranger at Blue Ridge National Parkway in 1954, then moved to be a district ranger at Acadia National Park in 1962. He became assistant chief ranger at Big Bend in 1963, serving for three years. From 1966 to 1968, Brooks served as chief of interpretation at Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park in North Dakota, then moved to Washington to work on master planning projects. In 1971 he assumed the first superintendency at Voyagers National Park in Minnesota. Brooks transferred to Padre Island National Seashore in December 1978. While superintendent he encouraged better interpretation programs and clean-up efforts on the beach. After his tenure at Padre Island, Meryl Brooks maintained contact with the National Park Service until he passed away.

William M. (Bill) Lukens (May 4, 1980 - September 12, 1987)

Bill Lukens served over 21 years in various parks in California, Colorado, Utah, Montana, and New Mexico. He transferred from superintendent of Saguaro National Monument in May 1980 to superintendent of Padre Island. During Lukens' tenure, he stressed preservation and conservation of the island's natural and cultural resources. He oversaw the development and adoption of the first General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan (1983), instituted a hazardous waste drum monitoring and removal program, and revised natural resource plans. Bill Lukens retired in September 1987 and lives in Arizona.

John D. Hunter (February 28, 1988 - March 9, 1991)

John Hunter began as a seasonal Park Service employee at Badlands National Monument in South Dakota. In 1963, he took his first assignment as a ranger at Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. Hunter became district ranger at Assateague National Seashore in

1966 and then became chief ranger in 1971. His first superintendent position was with Stones River National Battlefield in Tennessee in 1971, then Bandelier National Monument in 1974. Hunter transferred to Padre Island in February 1988. During his tenure at Padre Island National Seashore, he enhanced community relations, raised funds for the new Malaquite Beach facility, and oversaw its completion. He transferred to the Southwest Regional Office in March 1991 and retired soon afterwards to the Corpus Christi area.

Charles R. (Butch) Farabee (March 10, 1991 - April 13, 1996)

Butch Farabee began his permanent career with the National Park Service as a ranger in Glen Canyon NRA in 1965. After a three-year term with the Tucson Police Department, Farabee worked at Lake Mead NRA from 1968 to 1970 and then moved to Yosemite National Park in 1971. He transferred to Grand Canyon National Park in 1981 as Assistant Chief Ranger. He advanced to Management Assistant before leaving in 1986. Farabee served as the first Emergency Services Coordinator in Washington, DC, from 1986 to 1991 then came to Padre Island. After leaving Padre Island, he spent the rest of his career as the Assistant Superintendent of Glacier National Park, although most of his time was actually spent as acting Superintendent. He retired on December 31, 1999 credited with 34 years of service. After retirement he wrote the book "Death, Daring, and Disaster: A History of Search and Rescue in the National Parks". It was published in 1998 by Roberts Rinehart Publishers.

Patrick C. McCary (April 14, 1996 - 1998)

Patrick McCary began his National Park Service career in 1977 as a maintenance worker at Rocky Mountain National Park. In late 1977, he transferred to Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity NRA, as a maintenance mechanic leader. McCary moved to the Denver Service Center in 1980 to serve as a project supervisor for Michigan, Maine, and Massachusetts, and assumed the position of contract administrator for the West Coast and Alaska in 1983. After two years, he became regional contracting officer for the former Pacific Northwest Region before being transferred to the former Southwest Region as division chief for contracting and property management. In 1989 McCary received his first appointment as superintendent at Lake Meredith NRA. He became the ninth superintendent of Padre Island National Seashore in 1996. Following his service at Padre Island Mr. McCary went on to serve as Superintendent at the new Oklahoma City National Memorial in 1998 then again as Superintendent at Lowell National Historical Park in 1999.

Jock F. Whitworth (1998 - Present)

Jock Whitworth began his career as a seasonal ranger at Montezuma Castle National Monument in 1978. He received his first permanent position as a park ranger/dispatcher at Grand Canyon National Park, also in 1978. A year later he transferred to Wupatki and Sunset Crater Volcano National Monuments as a lead park ranger. He worked as a district ranger at Carlsbad Caverns National Park from 1983 to 1985 and as a district naturalist at Theodore Roosevelt National Park from 1985 to 1988. This was followed by his first superintendency at Big Hole National Battlefield from 1988 to 1993, from there he transferred to Rocky Mountain National Park as the West Unit Manager. While at Rocky Mountain NP he served as the acting superintendent at Chamizal National Memorial for six months.

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APPENDIX C: VISITATION STATISTICS

Year	Number of Visitors
1965	46,424 (July - December only)
1966	152,432
1967	195,443
1968	360,802
1969	710,959
1970	721,243
1971	904,365
1972	883,817
1973	937,362
1974	796,325
1975	872,194
1976	968,109
1977	842,247
1978	866,974
1979	783,470
1980	776,209
1981	635,241
1982	621,824
1983	741,204
1984	636,483
1985	676,368
1986	714,242
1987	606,942
1988	589,578

1989	591,553
1990	594,088
1991	973,825
1992	849,873
1993	768,181
1994	917,396
1995	757,617
1996	842,036
1997	679,292
1998	709,799
1999	632,362

Source: Statistics are largely drawn from the U.S. Department of the Interior, PAIS, Monthly Public Use Reports, December and Year; 1965-1975. The park staff provided more recent visitation figures.

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ADDENDUM:

EVENTS SINCE 1994

Since the initial writing of this history several events have occurred which have significantly effected the National Seashore.

Relocation of Padre Island National Seashore Headquarters 1991-1999

Over the last nine years the park has gradually shifted the operations of the headquarters from the Flour Bluff office to the ranger station. When Butch Farabee was superintendent, he maintained his official office in Flour Bluff, but spent a great deal of time in the park. When Pat McCrary became superintendent, he transferred his office to the ranger station's old dispatch office, which had been renovated for his use, but the administrative staff remained in the Flour Bluff office until February of 1999. A complete renovation of the old ranger station on the island was completed at that time and converted to the park Headquarters and the administrative staff moved into it.

That move resulted in much improved access to, and communications with, the administrative staff. The park's curatorial collection was moved from the Flour Bluff office to the Connor Museum at Texas A&M University in Kingsville, TX in April of 2000, at which time the GSA lease on the Flour Bluff office was terminated.

Sea Turtle Studies

From 1994-2000 there were many developments with the various sea turtle projects conducted at Padre Island National Seashore (PAIS). During this time, Donna Shaver, U.S. Geological Survey Station Leader, continued to lead the projects, which were cooperatively conducted by the National Park Service and U.S. Geological Survey. During various years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Canon U.S.A., Inc., Shell Oil Company, the National Park Foundation, and Unilever provided funding to assist with this work.

The primary sea turtle project conducted during this time was the effort to detect and protect sea turtle nests and determine the results of the experimental project to increase Kemp's ridley nesting at PAIS. This effort involved daily patrols on North Padre Island and public education efforts. From 1994-1999, 69 sea turtle nests were found on the Texas coast, including 50 at Padre Island National Seashore. Among the 69 found during these six years were 49 Kemp's ridley, 14 loggerhead, five green turtle, and one hawksbill nests. An increased number of Kemp's ridley nests was found during each of five consecutive years beginning in 1995 and culminating in 1999 with a record 16 nests. The hawksbill nest, found at Padre Island National Seashore, was the first confirmed for the Texas coast. In comparison, only 12 sea turtle nests were found on the Texas coast between 1979-1993, including six

Kemp's ridley, five loggerhead, and one green turtle nests. Eggs from virtually all of the 69 nests found between 1994-1999 were transported to the PAIS incubation facility for protected care and all hatchlings from these eggs were released on the beach at PAIS and allowed to enter the surf there. Numerous NPS and USGS officials, media representatives, and visitors attended these releases.

From 1994-2000, patrols to detect nesting on North Padre Island were greatly expanded over 1986-1993 levels. The recent increase in the number of detected nests may reflect increased nesting, improved detection efforts and patrols, increased awareness and reporting by the public, or a combination of all.

Attempts were made to examine as many of the nesting Kemp's ridleys as possible, to determine whether they were from the experimental project. However, many re-entered the water before staff arrived on site and hence it was only possible to examine about half of the nesters. The first two confirmed returnees from the experimental project were found nesting in 1996. Through 1999, Shaver identified a total of nine Kemp's ridley turtles from the experimental project that returned to nest in South Texas. These nine individuals laid a total of 13 clutches of eggs, most at PAIS. These were the first confirmed records of sea turtles experimentally imprinted to an area returning to that area to nest and first confirmed records of head-started sea turtles nesting outside of captivity.

The Kemp's ridleys currently nesting in south Texas are probably a mixture of both returnees from the experimental project and turtles from the wild stock. Unfortunately, most dead adult Kemp's ridleys found washed ashore in the U.S. from 1995-1998 were located in south Texas. Deaths of adult Kemp's ridleys in south Texas could threaten the success of the project to increase Kemp's ridley nesting there. There continued to be a strong relationship between shrimp trawling and strandings on Texas Gulf beaches during the Gulf shrimping season. To address this problem, several environmental groups proposed a closure of waters off Padre Island to commercial fishing in 1999; waters off the primary Kemp's ridley nesting beach (Rancho Nuevo) are closed to commercial fishing. In 1997, Shaver initiated an investigation using satellite telemetry to study the movements of Kemp's ridleys that nested in south Texas. Results from this study are being used to delineate usage of south Texas waters and aid with detection of subsequent nesting.

Berge Banker Oil Spill February 25-March 20, 1995

On February 5, 1995, the Norwegian tankers *BERGE BANKER* and *SKAUBAY* collided while transferring heavy crude oil between them. As a result, 50,000 gallons (approximately 858 barrels) of oil spilled into the Gulf about 40 miles south of Galveston. After drifting down the coast for almost three weeks, the first quantities of oil and tar began washing up on Padre Island National Seashore on February 25th. A response team and equipment were mobilized with Sean Baker named as Incident Commander.

The oil accumulated quickly and on Feb. 26th Malaquite and North Beaches were ordered closed to visitors. On the 27th the area from mile marker 5 to the Mansfield Channel was closed as well and the party deemed responsible for the spill had a contracted cleaning crew of 180 personnel on site. Heavy equipment was used to pile sand into windrows to prevent oil from reaching the dune line at high tide. The remaining few miles were closed on March 1st, when oil covered the entire Gulf side of the National Seashore.

All divisions of park staff were charged with supporting the clean-up operations. Resource management dedicated all its personnel to the cleanup for such tasks as performing incident

command duties; monitoring and documenting the cleanup; surveying park resources; collecting Global Positioning System data; and providing support to federal, state, park, and contractor officials. Maintenance provided employees to perform cleanup of park facilities, buildings, and equipment; provide logistical support in the form of vehicles, radios, and equipment; man road barricades; and monitor the cleanup. Interpretation provided public information services such as interacting with the media, providing interviews, producing site bulletins, fielding visitor complaints, and issuing press releases. Law Enforcement provided helicopter security, provided radio and telephone dispatch services, monitoring of road closures, and beach and road patrols. Administration Division handled budget matters, provided incident daily resource reports, purchased materials and supplies, and provided computer and repair services. Almost all divisions performed the additional duties of patrolling for oiled wildlife, manning road barricades, monitoring the cleanup, and providing various administrative support services.

Two personnel were brought in from other National Park units to assist. Mr. Ernest Ralston, Oil and HAZMAT Emergency Response Coordinator from the National Park Service's Environmental Response, Planning, and Assessment Unit was dispatched to the National Seashore to act as the on-scene advisor to the park's Incident Commander. He acted in the capacity of technical liaison to ensure compliance with environmental and other applicable regulations. Mr. David Vekasy, Supervisory Park Ranger, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, was selected for a two week detail to compile the chronology of the event, write the final incident report, and perform other duties as assigned by the Incident Commander.

Oil-soaked sand was piled up and carted off by dump trucks to an area set aside by the Kleberg Co. government. As more oil washed ashore more contracted personnel and heavy equipment were needed. By March 7th, the clean-up crew numbered 400. Initially heavy equipment consisted of 14 maintainers, 8 front-end loaders, and 10 dump trucks. As operations progressed more dump trucks were brought in to carry off contaminated sand. On one day shortly before the end of the cleanup 80 dump trucks were used to haul away sacks of tarballs.

North Beach and Malquite reopened on March 17th, South Beach on March 19th The park resumed normal operations on March 20th after 24 days.

77 oiled birds were found. Three were sent to the Port Aransas Marine Science Institute for rehabilitation. The remainder were dead.

On November 12-13, 1998 representatives from Resource Trustees and the Responsible Party (RP) met at the Tremont House in Galveston, Texas to discuss compensation for damages. The Resource Trustees were represented by staff from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, the Texas General Land Office, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, the Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor, and the National Park Service. The Responsible Party was represented by attorney and staff from Eastham, Watson, Dale & Forney, Cecil Consulting, Triangle Economic Research, and Vanguard Environmental. With regards to the National Seashore, the tentative agreement reached agreed to the following:

- The RP agreed to replace 20,279 cubic yards of oiled sand.
- The RP agreed to replace 2,136 square meters of sand in the impacted road bed. RP also agreed to \$36,404 for monitoring, inspection, and oversight. RP agreed to 10% of the entire cost for the NPS.
- The RP agreed to pay \$25,000 for repairs to the parking lot that was used for

staging during the response.

- The RP accepted the NPS claim of \$14,292 for mounding sand to prohibit driving behind the coppice dunes.

- The RP agreed to compensate the NPS in the amount of \$200,158 for lost visitor days and \$5,609 for lost entrance fees.

A final settlement was reached in 1999. 2,136 square meters of dunes will be created with \$40,000 will be allotted for dune monitoring and another 15,480 cubic yards of sand will be used to replace that lost during the clean-up. A monetary settlement in the amount of nearly \$212,000 will be used in some aspect of visitor use.

T/S Buffalo 292 Oil Spill March 18-April 26, 1996

On March 18, 1996 a second major oil spill occurred far to the north which had significant impact on the National Seashore. The T/B BUFFALO 292 buckled its midsection in the Houston Ship Channel spilling approximately 5,000 barrels of crude oil into the Gulf. By comparison, the BERGE BANKER incident spilled 858 barrels.

On March 28, park officials were notified the spill might impact Padre Island within the following few days. The next day, March 29, a staff meeting was held to plan the response and prepare to implement the incident command system. A unified command post was established at the Corpus Christi Sheraton by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). In addition to the National Park Service and USCG, other organizations participating in the unified command were the Texas General Land Office and Buffalo Marine Services, Inc., the owners of Tankbarge (T/B) Buffalo 292, who accepted full financial responsibility for the spill. Other organizations participating in the response were the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission (TNRCC), Nueces County, and Kleberg County.

From March 30-April 2 park beaches were monitored for incoming tar. Small quantities were found, but not enough to warrant an organized response. On April 1, Resource Management Specialist Paul Eubank was named as the Incident Commander. Park officials contacted NPS regional officials; Dan Hamson, the National Park Service oil spill expert; and Glenn Sekavec, the Department of the Interior Regional Environmental Officer.

On April 5, the first tar began washing ashore at the 5 mile marker. On April 9, enough oil came ashore between the 5-49 mile markers to warrant an organized response. The response lasted 18 days, from April 9 until April 26. Although the amount spilled was much greater than that in the BERGE BANKER incident, neither the impact nor the response was as great. At most around 200 personnel contracted by the Responsible Party worked on the National Seashore at any one time. No beaches were closed during cleanup operations, however, the public was advised to remain away from cleanup personnel. Approximately \$1,230 of revenue was lost by the park in entrance fees.

For the Buffalo 292 spill, no settlement has yet been reached. The responsible party, the NPS and the other natural resource trustees (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Texas General Land Office) will start negotiations during fiscal year 2000.

Recreational Fee Demonstration Program 1997-Present

Since 1997 Padre Island National Seashore has participated in the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program, known as the "Fee Demo Program". The program started in 1996 when Congress passed the Omnibus Consolidated Recisions and Appropriations Act and later the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1997 establishing the three year Recreational Fee Demonstration program to run through 1999. The first phase was announced in November, 1996. The second phase was announced in March, 1997 and included Padre Island National Seashore. The law allows parks in the program to retain 80% of the revenues collected until the end of fiscal year 2002.

Fiscal year 1999 collections for the National Seashore were a little in excess of \$700,000. The park will receive approximately \$563,000 back for fee demo projects and operation of the fee collection process, which must be approved by the regional office. Projects that were submitted include beach access for the disabled, dune restoration, improvements to Bird Island Basin (including boat ramp maintenance, parking lot expansion, and road construction/repair), building and installation of picnic tables and shade structures, road repairs, tree plantings, improvements to the Malquite Beach visitors center, park boundary survey, marking of the park boundary in the Laguna Madre, and boardwalk construction.

Globally Important Bird Area October 26, 1998

On October 26, 1998 Padre Island National Seashore qualified as a Globally Important Bird Area in *American Bird Conservancy's United States Important Bird Areas* program. The letter announcing the designation noted that "Specifically, this site provides important habitat for globally significant numbers of Brown Pelicans, Redheads (5% of the world's population), Least Terns (8% of the North American population), Piping Plovers (10% of the world's population), Reddish Egrets (7% of the biogeographic population) and Peregrine Falcons (7% of the North American population)."

Western Geophysical Survey July-September 1999

During late summer the Western Geophysical Company conducted a seismic survey for the owner of the rights to the minerals beneath the National Seashore (Dunn-McCampbell Royalty Interest, Inc.) and their lessee (Seiskin Interests, Ltd.) The survey covered the portion of the of the National Seashore from the three mile point on South Beach to the northern boundary and included offshore areas. Operations were planned to minimize environmental impact. All-terrain vehicles were used to transport personnel and equipment into the interior of the island. An aluminum-tracked marsh buggy was used where conditions did not permit access by other means. No vehicles were used in sensitive areas; personnel carried equipment by foot. Airboats and various other boats were used in the Laguna Madre and Gulf of Mexico.

Operations consisted of first surveying a grid with axes running east to west and north-northeast to south-southwest. Shot points, where holes were drilled to contain small explosive charges, were placed 220 feet apart along the east-west axes. These were drilled to one of three depths, depending on location and drilling equipment. Receiver points, where recording systems were located, were placed 220 feet apart on the NNE-SSW axes, but 110 feet apart in the Gulf of Mexico. For all work on Padre Island and in the Laguna Madre

dynamite was the only energy source to create seismic vibrations. Airguns were used in the Gulf.

Prior to the detonation of a source point, recording equipment was set up on the nearest axes. After detonation, the recording equipment was removed along with all trash stemming from the operation. At the same time the recording equipment was being set up for the next detonation(s). This enabled the company to "leapfrog" operations through the grid.

Although the park has not nor will receive any direct benefit from the study, the potential exists that the park could be effected indirectly. If more oil or natural gas pockets are discovered, the owners of the mineral rights could build more oil/natural gas wells in the park. This will have to be done, however, under the strict supervision of the park in order to minimize damage to park resources.

Hurricane Bret August 22-23, 1999

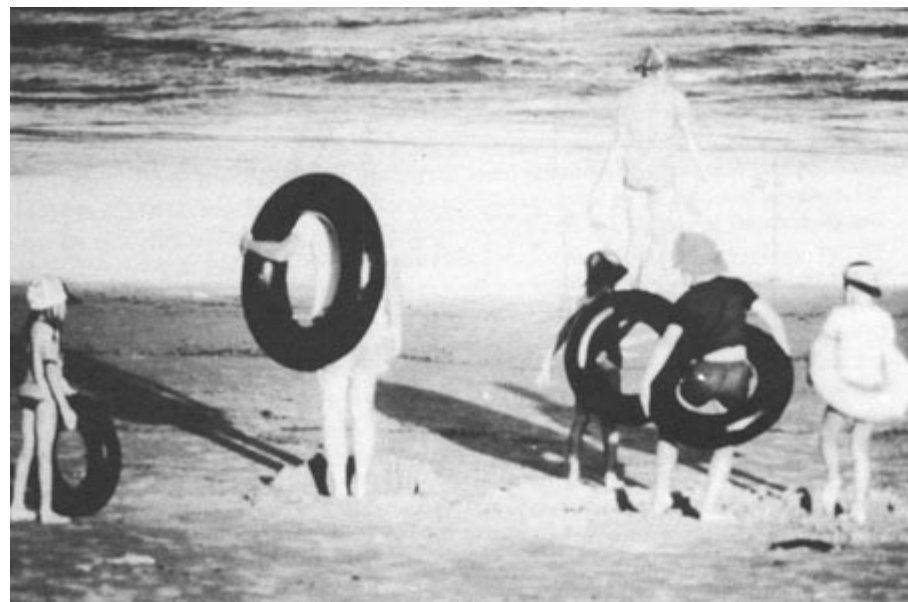
Hurricane Bret made landfall near the 50 mile marker on August 22, 1999. Bret breached the fore-island dunes in 21 places making 10 washover channels in the island between the 44-mile marker and the Mansfield Channel. These 10 breaches reached the Laguna Madre and were still flowing by the 27th. These averaged 2-4 feet in depth and 75-100 yards in width. The beach was hard-packed for several days following Bret but within 1-2 weeks the areas of soft sand began to reappear and grow.

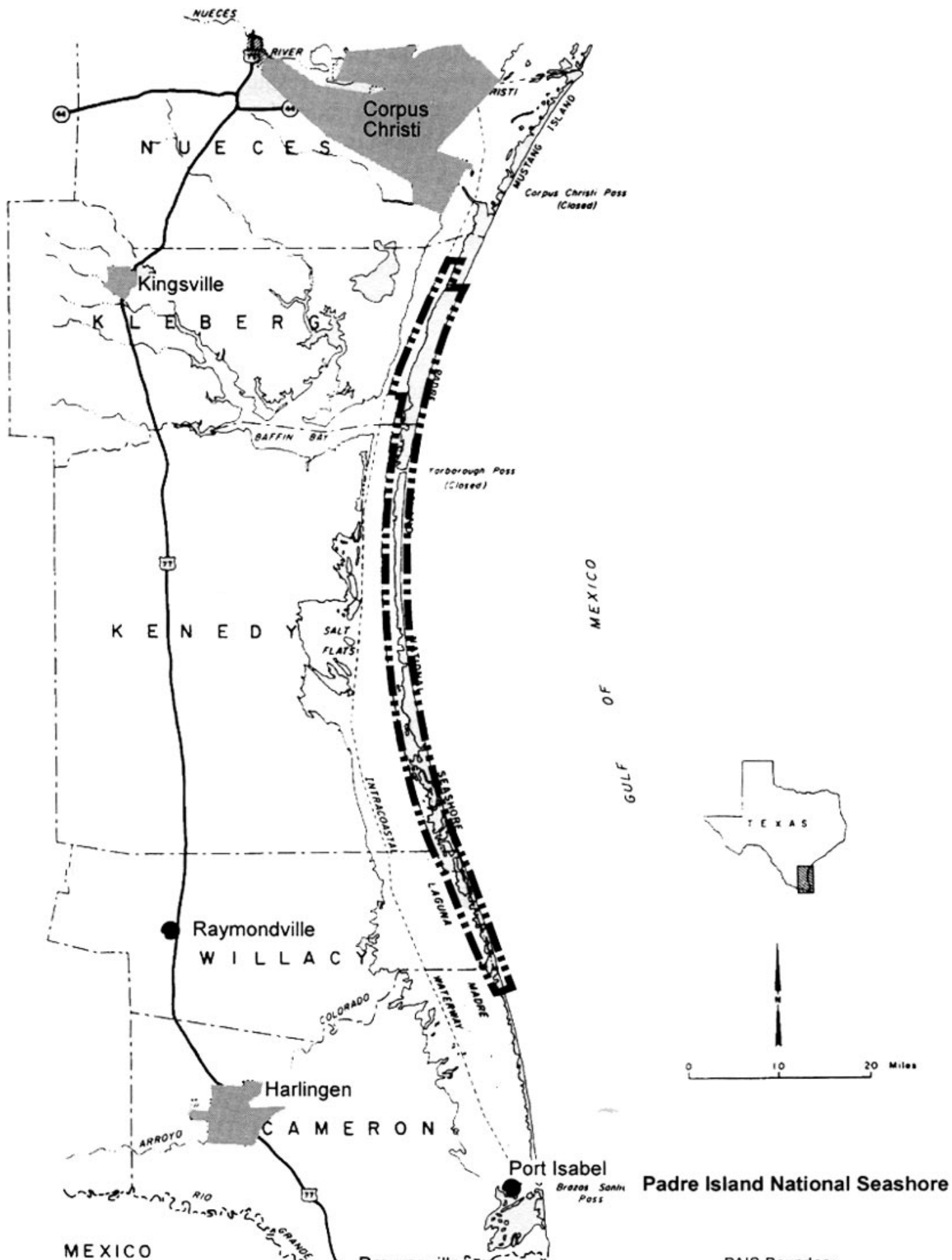
Soon after the hurricane the superintendent closed the portion of the park beyond the 44 mile marker to vehicular traffic. Many people had attempted to ford the new channels or circumvent them by driving through the surrounding mudflats and had become mired down. Consequently, the drivers often faced a variety of financial charges ranging from towing bills in the hundreds of dollars, fines in the thousands for damaging the park's natural resources, and the occasional loss of a vehicle. By October however, the channels north of the 57 mile marker had filled and access to that point was restored. The remaining channels filled in by the end of December, 1999.

Damage from Bret to park facilities consisted mainly of the loss of shingles, signs, and siding. The buildings receiving the most damage were two cabins at the 30 and 50 mile marker which had been built during the spring for use as camps by biological technicians patrolling for sea turtles. The camp at the 30 mile marker was completely destroyed, while the one at the 50 mile marker lost shingles and three pieces of plywood from the roofs and sides. The park's cultural resources (the line camps, the Nicaragua, and several other sites) were unaffected and appear to be stable. The oil and gas facilities were all shut down prior to Bret and appear unaffected. The spoil islands in the park were unaffected and all nesting colonial waterbirds had left.

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Padre Island National Seashore



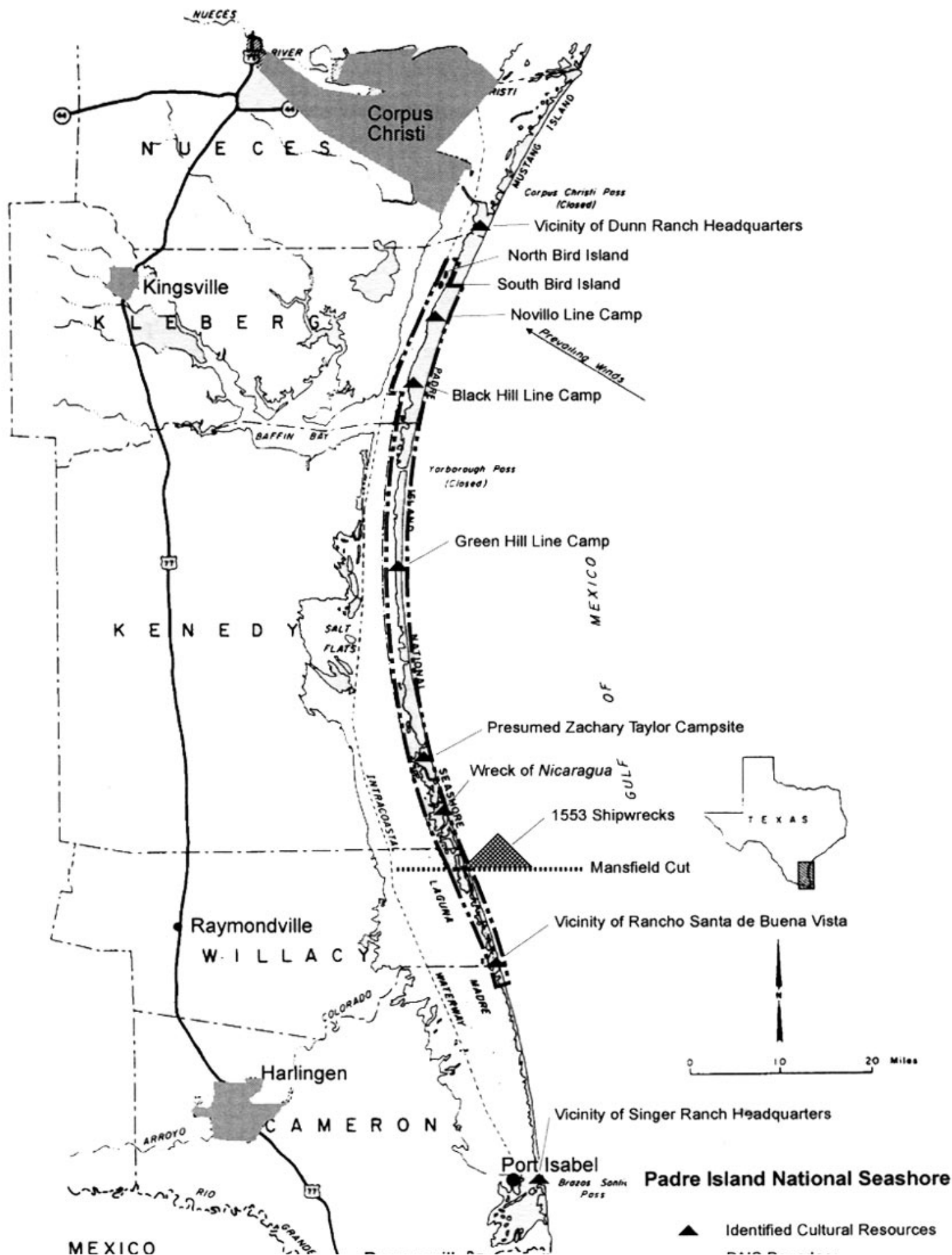
--- PAIS Boundary

Base Map: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
September 1967

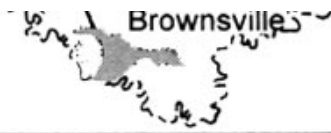






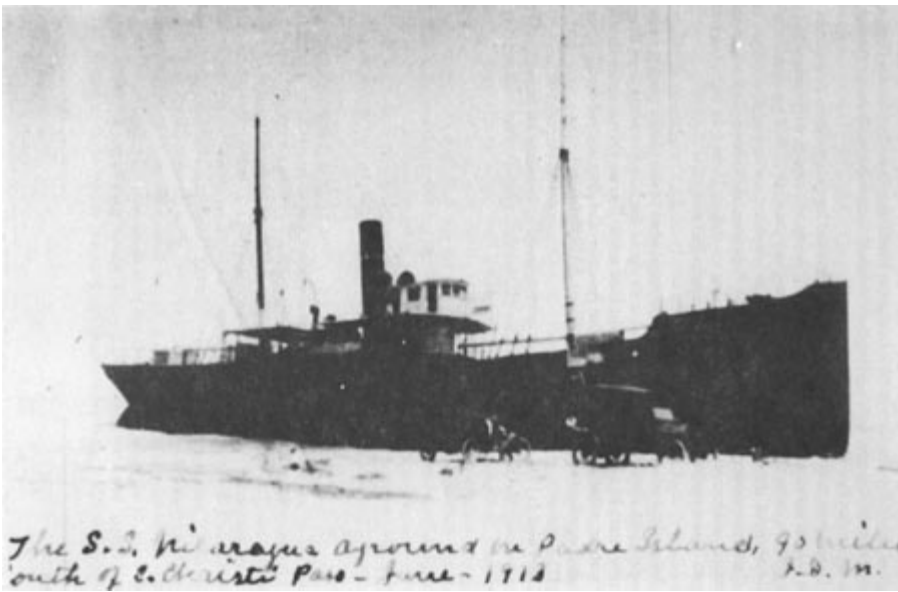


▲ Identified Cultural Resources



--- PAIS Boundary

Base Map: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
September 1967



The S.S. Miramonte aground on Padre Island, 93 miles
south of S. Christi Pass - June - 1912 J.D.M.

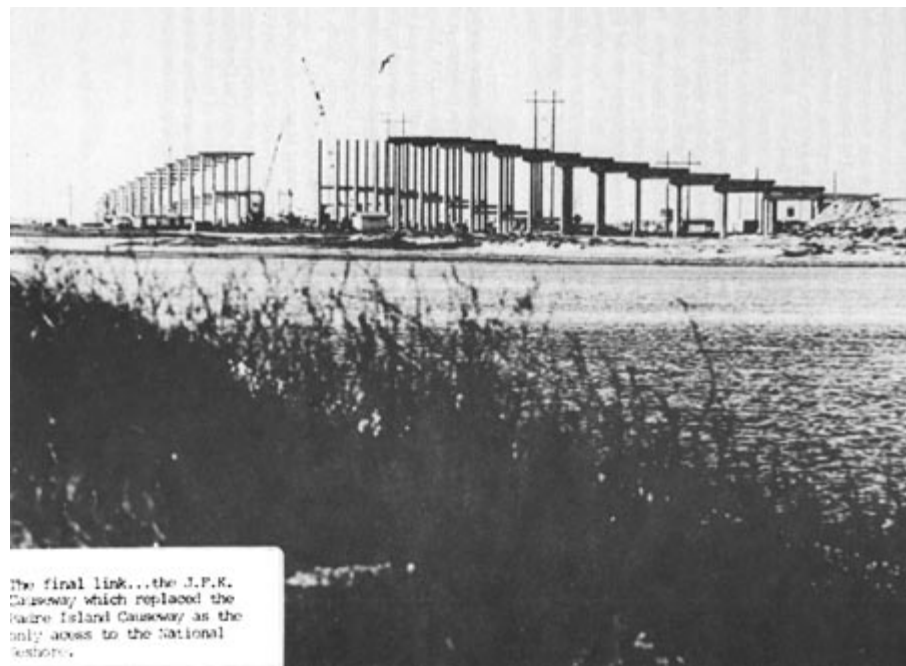




loading crates - at Padre Island - June 1913





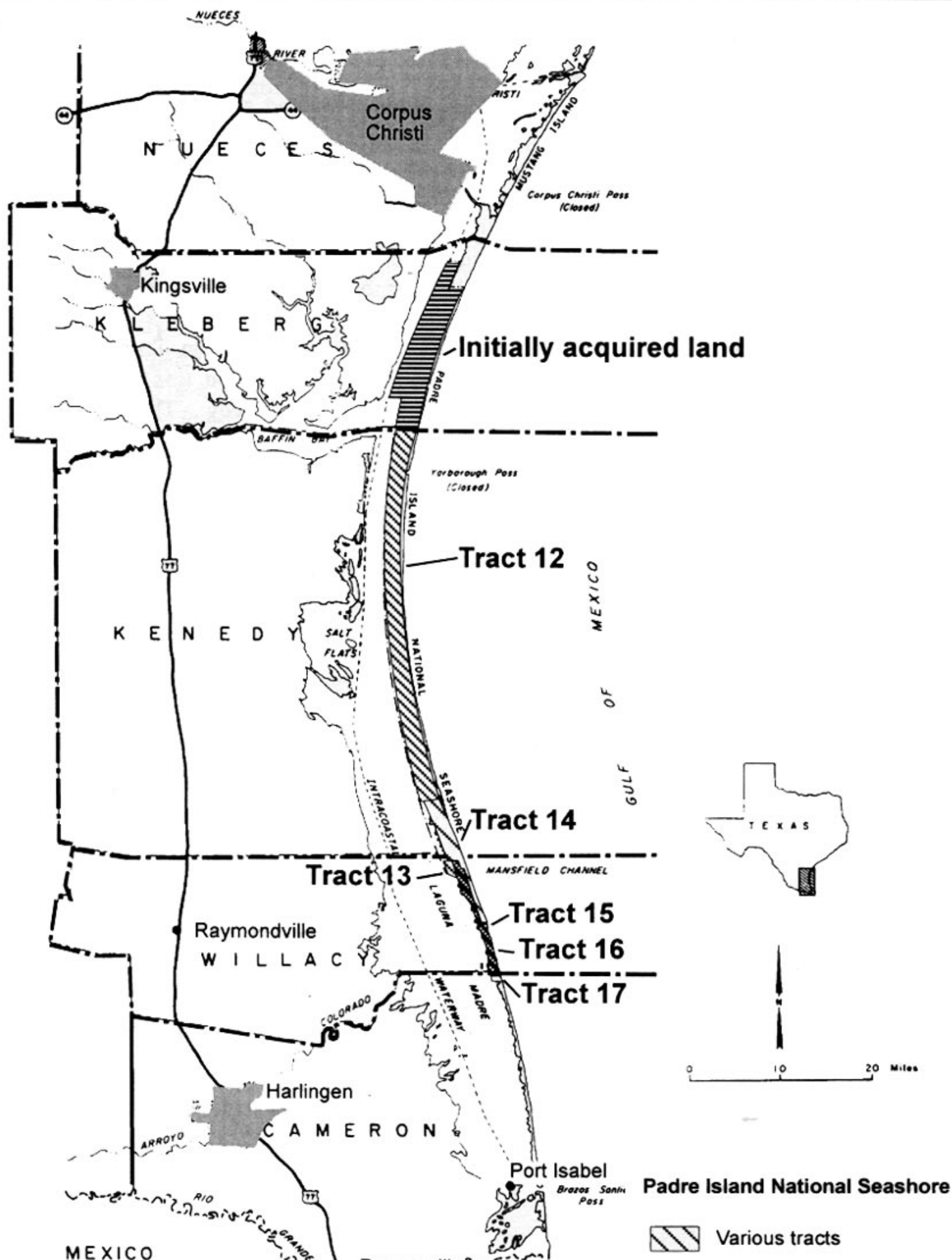


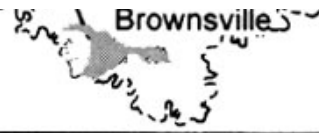
The final link...the J.P.K. Causeway which replaced the Padre Island Causeway as the only access to the National Seashore.











Base Map: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
September 1967

