

**Office of Special Park Uses**  
**Cape Hatteras National Seashore**  
**SPECIAL USE PERMITS FOR WEDDINGS**

Our sand dunes, beaches and lighthouses are important components of the park's renowned resources, as well as being important habitat for a host of plants and wildlife. These resources attract a great number of visitors seeking scenic vistas, the tranquility of the beaches and unspoiled landscapes. Preserving the seashore and its cultural resource unimpaired for our visitors remains our most important mission. Accordingly, special uses are strictly regulated to insure that we continue to meet that mission.

Our most popular special use of the national seashore is private weddings. Regulations that apply to special permits for weddings include:

1. A written permit that currently costs \$100.00 is required for all wedding ceremonies and fixes the date, time, and place of the ceremony.
2. Access for other park visitors must not be impeded. Permits do not authorize exclusive use of any public lands, and the permittee must insure that the rights of the general public visiting Cape Hatteras National Seashore and its memorials are not infringed. The permit is not a reservation of the site; rather, it is your permission to use the site for a wedding.
3. Available parking is limited in the park. Permittees and their guests must park within designated parking areas. Carpooling or private shuttle is recommended and may be required for some sites. Horse-drawn carriages are prohibited.
4. Amplified music, CD's, radios and public address systems are prohibited. One acoustical music instrument (and/or human voice) may be permitted for ceremonies taking place on beach area.
5. The releasing of balloons, birds or butterflies and the throwing of rice, birdseed, flower petals or other natural or artificial material is not permitted.
6. No chairs, altars, flower containers, arches, railings, ropes, torches or candelabras are permitted. Exception: elderly guests or guests with disabilities may use chairs.
7. Permittees must exercise particular care to avoid disturbing wildlife and vegetation. Visitors, photographers and weddings are not permitted in undisturbed dune areas.
8. All activities must stay within open public areas. No weddings may be held upon (or in) any walkway, roadway, public park structure or its approach or steps.
9. Affixing signage to buildings, property, signs, poles or plants is prohibited.
10. All trash must be placed in onsite trash containers. If the site does not have containers or if trash volume exceeds container capacity, permittee must bag and remove trash from parklands. Permittees failing to affect such cleanup will be charged the cost for such services.

11. Permits for weddings on the grounds of any lighthouse between Memorial Day and Labor Day each year will only be issued for weddings occurring before 10:00 AM or after 4:00 PM daily.

The foregoing summarizes some of the conditions set out on each permit. The actual conditions contained within the permit are binding upon the permittee and may be changed from time to time.

If you would like to apply for a wedding permit, you may simply address a letter to our park in care of the Superintendent:

Superintendent  
National Park Service  
1401 National Park Drive  
Manteo, NC 27954

**Include in the letter your name, mailing address and telephone number including area code; the date, time and place of the proposed wedding and approximately how many people will be attending. Send this about 30 days before the wedding date together with a personal check, bank check or money order in the amount of \$100.00 made payable to: "National Park Service" to the address above. You can expect your permit in about 15 days after it is received.**

You can obtain a permit sooner than 30 days if you like. However, because the fee is non-refundable, we recommend that you wait until 30 days before the wedding to insure your plans are finalized. Please understand that if you send in the requested information and fee and you agree to abide by the above stated regulations, you **will** receive a permit.

If you have any questions about the process or your permit, please contact our Special Park Uses Coordinator at (252) 473-2111, Ext. 121.

## SELECTING A WEDDING SITE

### Lighthouses

Certain areas of the national seashore are better suited for wedding ceremonies than others, particularly given the limited parking resources available within the park. Our three lighthouses have different parking space availability. Please note that all of our sites may be used for wedding ceremonies only; we have no facilities for receptions. However, there are a number of such facilities available privately in the communities surrounding the parks. Please check some of the links provided below.

Ocracoke Lighthouse on Ocracoke Island. Immediately south of Cape Hatteras, Ocracoke Island must be reached by ferry operated by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Travel time by car and ferry

averages about two hours from Nags Head, depending on the time of day. The ferry operates at different times during the day, and the schedule is published at <http://www.ncferry.org/>. Parking is extremely limited at the lighthouse, and the lighthouse itself is closed to the public. Because the area is immediately adjacent to wetlands and fragile grasses, this site is best suited for very small and intimate wedding ceremonies of three to twelve people. From Memorial Day until Labor Day, permits will only be issued for weddings occurring before 10:00 AM or after 4:00 PM daily.

Cape Hatteras Lighthouse at Buxton, NC. Buxton is approximately 40 miles south of Manteo and Nags Head, NC. This is perhaps the most famous of all lighthouses on the Atlantic Coast, and it is the tallest. Thousands of visitors visit this lighthouse on a daily basis during the summer months. While this lighthouse is open to the public from time to time, weddings cannot be performed within the lighthouse itself or on its steps and paths. Continuous public access to the lighthouse is required at all times. Parking and restroom facilities are readily available, and this area is more suitable for larger weddings of up to 50 people. However, the area is less intimate given the great number of people visiting the lighthouse on a daily basis. From Memorial Day until Labor Day, permits will only be issued for weddings occurring before 10:00 AM or after 4:00 PM daily. Larger weddings can more easily be accommodated at the beach area just beyond the lighthouse. See the information below on **Beach Areas**.

Bodie Island Lighthouse. Situated approximately 8 miles south of Nags Head and Manteo, NC, this is perhaps the most accessible of the park's lighthouses for most visitors. The site includes a nice expansive grassy area, parking facilities for up to 50 cars and restroom facilities. This is ideally suited for larger wedding parties. From Memorial Day until Labor Day, permits will only be issued for weddings occurring before 10:00 AM or after 4:00 PM daily.

## **Beach Areas**

Ocracoke Island. There are a number of sites that are well suited for wedding ceremonies along the magnificent coastline of the Atlantic Ocean. Just north (approximately 4 miles) of the Village of Ocracoke is the **day use beach** area with parking spaces for 35 cars. During the summer season, it is also a lifeguarded beach. Approximately one mile north of the day use beach is the **campground** with parking spaces for 50 cars. And, approximately 3 miles north of that is the **pony pen** area with parking for 20 cars. All provide beach access and spectacular views of the ocean.

Cape Hatteras. Adjacent to the lighthouse are a number of beach areas ideally suited for weddings. Entering the park and across from the **visitors parking lot** is a beach access that leads to a large and picturesque expanse of beach suitable for larger weddings. Most days there is adequate parking for larger numbers of people, and immediately nearby is our new restroom facility. Above that site are the stones marking the **original site of the lighthouse**. This area and the adjacent beach are also nice sites for a wedding. Past the ranger's

station, one can follow the park road leading to the **Point** and a smaller parking area for approximately 15 cars. This is a beautiful and usually less populous section of beach. Most beach locations provide an excellent view of the lighthouse for special photo opportunities.

Bodie Island. Immediately east of the Bodie Island Lighthouse is the **Coquina Beach** day use area with parking spaces for 115 cars. The beach is very popular with visitors to the seashore. Vehicles are not permitted on the beach north of the ramp access. Restroom facilities are available during the summer and fall months.

## ORGANIZED PARTIES & WEDDING RECEPTIONS

Organized parties and receptions are not permitted activities within our park. The park has no pavilions or shelters appropriate for such activities. Such parties are required to seek private facilities outside the park which are plentiful in the surrounding areas.

## OTHER SITES

While the National Park Service neither endorses nor promotes public or private business activities, the following sites are offered to assist you in planning your visit to the Cape Hatteras area:

<http://www.co.dare.nc.us/>

<http://www.outerbankschamber.com/>

<http://www.outerbanks.org/>

<http://www.outerbanksweddingassoc.org>

Our park welcomes all to enjoy the seashore and its many natural and cultural resources. We look forward to seeing you at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore soon!

If you have any questions about the process or your permit, please contact our Special Park Uses Coordinator at (252) 473-2111, Ext. 121 or by [e-mail](#) to our Special Park Uses Coordin

(NPS Form 10-930A)  
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(OMB No. 1024-

(NEW 06/06)  
12/31/2008)

National Park Service

(Expires

Outer Banks Group  
1401 National Park Drive, Manteo, NC 27954  
Application for Wedding Special Use Permit

Please supply the information requested below. **Attach additional sheets, if necessary, to provide required information.** Allow at least four (4) business days for processing. A permit charge of \$100.00 will be required at the time of making application. Payment must be by personal check, money order or bank check; cash can not be accepted. Make checks payable to: National Park Service. Permit fees are not refundable.

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Applicant Name:

Intended's  
(optional)

Name:

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Street/Address:

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City/State/Zip Code:

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Telephone #:

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Cell phone #:

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Description of Proposed Activity: Conducting a wedding ceremony on Park land.

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Requested Park Location (Please circle one):

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Wright Brothers National Memorial

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site

Location within the Park or nearest village: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

How many attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant represents that he/she has read the wedding permit regulations and will abide with the same.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your permit will be mailed to you at the address set forth above. It can be FAXed if you provide a FAX number\_\_\_\_\_. The Park does not have wedding reception facilities. Such facilities are readily available within the twelve villages in and surrounding our parks. If your wedding is delayed or rescheduled for another time and date, please provide that information to the office of the Special Park Uses Coordinator at 252-473-2111, ext. 121.

*(SEE REVERSE-SIDE FOR CURRENT REGULATIONS)*

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Return this application to: Special Park Uses Coordinator  
National Park Service  
1401 National Park Drive  
Manteo, NC 27954  
Phone 252 473-2111x121 Fax 252 473-2595

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