

[From Spring 2002]

Oversand Vehicle Permit Increases

The National Park Service has announced that the Oversand Vehicle Permit to Assateague Island will increase from \$60.00 to \$70.00 on March 15, 2002. The permit is valid for one year from the month of purchase and covers both the Virginia and Maryland portions of Assateague. Permits may be obtained at the Fee Booths, Refuge Visitor Center, Headquarters Office and the Tom's Cove Visitor Center. The increase was initiated as part of the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program mandated by Congress on a trial basis through 2002, and recently extended through September 30, 2004. The purpose of the fees is to generate money to fund much-needed operations, maintenance, and repair; improvements in visitor services, and recreation opportunities on Federal lands. This authority requires federal agencies to apply the fees collected to the sites rather than returning them to the U.S. Treasury.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is currently operating under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program where 80% of the fees collected remain at the refuge. In 2001, fee dollars were used for various projects including hiring a temporary Recreation Assistant, six public use interns, and a seasonal law enforcement officer. Additionally, several refuge signs were placed, brochures for trail maps and bird checklists were reprinted, and three Romtec toilets were purchased to replace restrooms which will be demolished at the Visitor Center parking lot. Fee demo money was also used to plan, and design new exhibits on three major trails. These will be installed in 2002. So, as you can see, good things are happening with your fee dollars at Chincoteague Refuge! Continue to support your National Wildlife Refuge and watch your fee dollars at work! Next time you come by the fee booths, show your pass and smile at your friendly fee collector!

Sally Bowden, Lead Park Ranger, CNWR