

Carl Zimmerman Eco Tourism Questions.txt

From: Carl_Zimmerman@nps.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2006 1:50 PM
To: podowd@comcast.net
Cc: Allison_Turner@nps.gov
Subject: Re: Eco Tourism Questions

Dear Ms. O'Dowd:

Thanks for your interest in Assateague Island National Seashore. This message responds to your request to Allison Turner regarding our management of the feral horses inhabiting National Park Service lands on Assateague Island.

Unfortunately, most of the information you've requested is either not applicable to our situation at Assateague or is not available. Horse management is but one small component of our overall resource and visitor use management program. With a few exceptions, we do not track expenditures of money and manpower in ways that are amenable to teasing out what portion of, for example, our vehicle maintenance and fuel costs are directly related to horse management activities. And in all cases, personnel with responsibilities for some aspect of horse management are also involved in numerous other management programs or park functions.

The following are the only areas where I can provide specific responses to your questions:

Herd size: Currently 149. Since 1990, the population has ranged from 142 to 175.

Contraceptive costs: Since 1994, an average of 70 mares per year have been treated with the PZP contraceptive vaccine. The current cost for a single dose of vaccine is \$21.00 (our source is ZooMontana; not the Humane Society, although HSUS holds the FDA license for the drug). The following is our best estimate of the current annual expenses associated with the contraception program. Please note that this is only for the contraception program and not the overall horse management program:

Personnel:	\$33,500.
Transportation:	\$5,200.
Equipment and supplies	\$1,000.
Vaccine:	\$1,500.
Total	\$41,200.

Volunteers: We utilize volunteers in several aspects of horse management. The most significant, in terms of number of hours per year, is our "pony patrol" program in which trained volunteers patrol park roads and campgrounds to mitigate inappropriate interactions between horses and humans, and educate visitors about the horses. Since 1997, an average of 1,400 hours of volunteer time have been committed to this activity. Our other uses of volunteers are highly variable year to year and not as closely tracked.

Income: The only income directly attributable to the horses are proceeds from our Foster Parent program (participants receive a photo, certificate, lineage info, newsletter, etc.). The annual income from this program (after deducting associated costs) ranges from \$10-15,000. The park also charges a general entrance fee but there is no way to determine the proportion of visitors entering the park for the dominant purpose of viewing the horses. I suspect that it is a relatively minor percentage by comparison to those seeking opportunities for beach recreation.

I hope you find this information of value. If you have any further questions, please contact either Allison or myself.

Sincerely,

Carl S. Zimmerman
Acting Superintendent

Carl Zimmerman Eco Tourism Questions.txt
Assateague Island National Seashore
7206 National Seashore Lane
Berlin, MD 21811
(410) 641-1443, extension 213
(410) 641-1099 Fax