



Access Today

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NCA Conducts Research on Assistive Devices for Beach Use



The use of an adapted beach wheelchair is one way to provide access over the sand to the water. There are a number of assistive devices currently on the market, however beach operators are often left with the question as to which design or model is best, most cost effective and preferred by people with disabilities.

In February, the National Center on Accessibility conducted a research study on the various beach wheelchairs presently on the market. Typically, beach wheelchairs take the structure of standard wheelchairs with some adaptations for beach use such as wider tires and water resistant seat and frame. This study picks up where NCA's first research study in 1993 leaves off, looking at usability and independent operation of these devices. People with mobility impairments tested a variety of devices in Daytona, Florida. Each individual transferred to a beach wheelchair and took it for a "test drive" across the

beach surface. After using the beach devices, individuals participated in focus groups to determine user preferences and drawbacks for each design. Overall, while the devices travelled better through sand than standard wheelchairs, not many of the beach devices facilitated independent use, as was the finding during the first study in 1993. The majority of devices were difficult to propel across sand independently or with limited mobility, requiring the assistance of another individual to push the chair from behind. The executive summary for the research study will be available later this season. It is hoped that the NCA research findings will assist product vendors in designing assistive devices based on the preferences of people with disabilities. In addition, the research findings will assist beach operators as they decide which types of devices to purchase based on user preferences.



Photos: (upper left) Devices tested during NCA research study from left: the Beach Wheeled Chair, Debug, Landeez and Surfchair. (inset) A research study volunteer transfers to a beach device.



The National Center on Accessibility is a program of Indiana University's Department of

Recreation and Park Administration and is funded in part by the U.S. Congress through the National Park Service. NCA focuses primarily on accessibility as it relates to parks, recreation, and tourism industries. Major objectives include: conducting research, providing technical assistance, developing resources and training materials, and conducting educational programs.

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Access Today is a free publication distributed by NCA with the purpose of updating and informing people in the recreation field of current developments in the area of accessibility. Access Today is available in alternative formats, back issues are also posted on the NCA web site. For more information:

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From the Editor's Desk

NCA & DBTAC's Team Up to Discuss Access to Recreation

This April the National Center on Accessibility hosted the 10 regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTAC) in Indianapolis to discuss access issues to recreation and outdoor developed areas. The 2 1/2 day workshop included a field visit to Bradford Woods where DBTAC trainers and technical assistance specialists toured the trails, beach, camping area, challenge course, and universally designed amphitheater to learn more about research findings and challenges faced by recreation providers and land management agencies. At the beach, DBTAC staff were able to test some of the newest temporary beach surfaces now on the market. While out on the trail, they learned more about how the existing terrain affects the application of the proposed trail accessibility guidelines and the conditions for departure.



Gary Robb (center) and DBTAC staff discuss the conditions for departure on an existing trail.

Session topics also included policy and procedure issues and enforcement in recreation agencies, new trends and research on playgrounds, amusement rides, swimming pools and golf. In addition to NCA instructors, guest speakers included Dr. Edward Hamilton, Roanoke College; Kay Ellis, Bureau of Land Management; David Park, National Park Service; Carol Stone and Jim Rogers, both of Bradford Woods.

The workshop concluded with an interactive discussion on new initiatives and future opportunities for the organizations to work together to further support the training, research and technical assistance needs of park and recreation agencies and create greater awareness amongst people with disabilities for advocacy to recreation areas within their communities.

On behalf of the National Center on Accessibility, we extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the DBTACs for their interest in participating in this workshop. We look forward to the continuing dialogue and developing future opportunities for collaboration.

In parks and recreation,
 Jennifer K. Skulski, Editor-Access Today

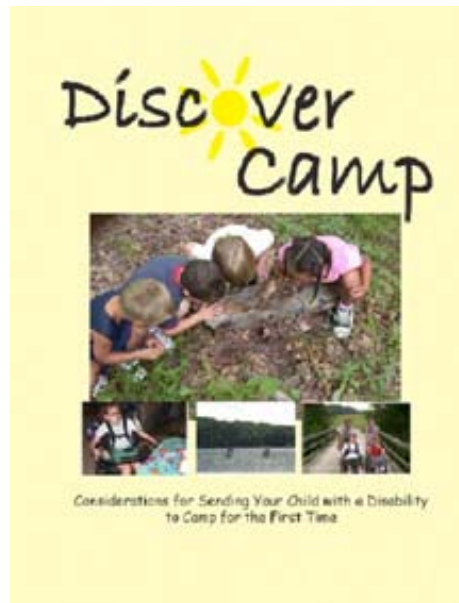
Discover Camp Resource Available for Parents

NCA has partnered with Bradford Woods and the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability to publish a new booklet for parents of children with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses selecting a camp for their child for the first time. The 26-page booklet includes considerations and questions for parents to use during the camp selection process. The resource guide is based on interviews with parents and the camp staff's experiences with planning camp programs for children with and without disabilities, working with parents sending their children to camp for the first time, answering their questions, addressing their concerns, and calming their fears.

Discover Camp is available through NCPAD to parents, hospitals, and resource organizations. www.ncpad.org

NCA & UIC Partnership Extends NCPAD Project

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has renewed a 5-year grant to support the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD). The Center is a collaborative partnership of the University of Illinois at Chicago, the National Center on Accessibility and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. NCA had developed monographs, fact sheets and distance learning programs in addition to providing technical assistance during the first 4-years of implementation of the project. NCA activities for the coming year include creating the *Discover Camp* resource guide as a web site for parents.



Training Tailored for Agencies In Demand

NCA staff continue to travel during the "off season" to meet the training needs of various recreation providers and land management agencies. NCA instructors consult with each agency to develop a program agenda based on the knowledge base of participants (new to accessibility or advanced) and the unique access issues for the agency. NCA recently provided training to Region 8 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. NCA will provide training for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in October.

National Alliance for Accessible Golf Forms Non-Profit

This winter, the National Alliance for Accessible Golf was incorporated in the State of Indiana and received 501(c)(3) designation by the IRS. The Alliance was formed in 2001 as a collaborative organization of the

golf industry and disability community. For the immediate future, the Alliance will continue its affiliation with Indiana University via an External Agency Agreement and will continue to be housed at NCA.

Project GAIN Underway

Four cities have launched Project GAIN this golf season, Salt Lake City, Sacramento, Baltimore and Chicago. In addition, the City of Las Vegas will kick off in July. Project GAIN (Golf: Accessible and Inclusive Networks) is a national research and development project funded by the United States Golf Association Foundation, the PGA of America Foundation and the PGA TOUR. The project, one of the first initiatives of the National Alliance for Accessible Golf, is designed to be a comprehensive community based program, using the game of golf as the primary medium, to maximize opportunities for inclusion into the fabric of the local community by people with disabilities. www.accessgolf.org



Dave Compton (right) talks with a golfer about club use during the Chicago kick off to Project GAIN.

www.ncaonline.org/distancelearning

NCA Offers New Distance Learning Programs

The National Center on Accessibility has long been committed to using technology to make training available at a distance. Through partnerships with the National Park Service and the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability, several distance learning programs are now available this season or in development for future release.

Introduction to the 2002 Recreation Rule

Streaming Video Program via the Web

In September 2002, the U.S. Access Board issued the final rule for accessibility guidelines for recreation facilities for inclusion in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines. The new recreation rule covers amusement rides, boating, fishing, golf, miniature golf, sports facilities and swimming pools. During this streaming video program Peggy Greenwell and Bill Botten, of the U.S. Access Board, highlight the major provisions of the newly released Accessibility Guidelines for Recreation Facilities. The web-based program is divided into 10 topical segments from 4 to 20 minutes in length. This distance learning program was designed to give professionals and consumers the opportunity to learn about the new rule directly from the Access Board staff through a widely available medium. The program is free and available for viewing at your leisure through the use of Real Player.

Recreation Access: Research to Practice

Streaming Video Program via the Web

Another NCA web-based streaming video program, this program highlights NCA research findings in golf, beach access, trail surfaces, swimming pools and visitor expectations. The program originally broadcast as a live webcast in June 2001.



The webcast has been archived and is also available through www.ncaonline.org for viewing using Real Player.

Products to Improve Access to Parks & Recreation

CD-Rom

This National Park Service funded project walks park staff through the critical considerations before purchasing products specific to improving access. The self-paced CD-Rom reviews considerations for recreation products such as picnic tables, benches, grills, trail and beach surfaces. In addition the program highlights case studies and includes an online catalog of vendors and available products. The CD is scheduled for release later this fall.

Access to Trails

CD-Rom

Another National Park Service funded project, this distance learning module highlights the proposed accessibility guidelines for trails, conditions for departure, and maintenance considerations. In addition, the CD contains monographs and resources for technical assistance. This CD will also be released later in the fall.

www.ncaonline.org

Making the Grade

Disney Introduces Handheld Captioning

How do you caption a moving amusement ride? Use technology. That's what the folks at Walt Disney World Resorts did.

Effectively communicating the story and message of moving amusement rides has long been a challenge for the amusement park industry. In many moving narrative attractions, such as Peter Pan's Flight, it's a small world, Pirates of the Caribbean and Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin, fixed captioning systems are not always effective as the ride is often moving too fast to read the captions. So the Disney engineers put wireless technology to work and developed a synchronized handheld captioning system. Upon entering the Magic Kingdom, Epcot or Disney-MGM Studios, guests can check out a handheld captioning device. (A \$100 refundable deposit is required.) The portable system is similar to a personal digital assistant (PDA). In locations throughout the parks, mostly the narrative moving attractions, the wireless handheld receiver displays the text narration corresponding to that location.

"Our challenge was finding a way to deliver captions in narrative attractions where fixed captioning systems weren't an option," said Greg Hale, vice president of Safety, Accessibility, and Advanced Technology for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. "When we couldn't find an 'off-the-shelf' solution, we developed our own technology. We are now exploring opportunities to make this technology available in venues outside of theme parks, where it could provide synchronized captioning, audio translations and other services in a wide variety of applications such as museums, movie theaters, tours and transportation."

The service debuted on Dec. 5, 2001 -- the 100th anniversary of Walt Disney's birth -- at the "Walt Disney: One Man's Dream" attraction at the Disney-MGM



"Our challenge was finding a way to deliver captions in narrative attractions where fixed captioning systems weren't an option."

*-Greg Hale, Vice President of Safety, Accessibility, and Advanced Technology
Walt Disney Parks and Resorts*

Studios. Handheld Captioning is currently available at twenty Walt Disney World® attractions. Disney announced plans to add at least ten more attractions at the Walt Disney World® Resort and begin testing this service in at least four attractions at the Disneyland® Resort during 2003.

"With our Handheld Captioning program, Disney has once again shown its commitment to provide an outstanding experience for our guests with disabilities," said Al Weiss, president of the Walt Disney World® Resort. "The program perfectly illustrates our willingness to meet challenges with creative, innovative solutions for exceptional guest service."

For additional information about the Walt Disney World® Resort services for guests with disabilities: *Walt Disney World® Resort Information, 407-824-4321 (voice), 407-827-5141 (TTY), www.disneyworld.com*

Product Review

Ramp Rider: A Tale of Two Installations



The Marina at Pier 39 San Francisco

One of the first Ramp Rider installations was made at the Marina at Pier 39 in San Francisco. Pier 39 is a 45-acre pier converted from shipping and receiving cargo to retail shops and an outdoor festival marketplace. The marina also has 325 berths for live-aboard, recreational, and commercial boats. Although the marina has gangways to access the pier, the water fluctuation causes these gangways to exceed maximum accessibility requirements for accessible routes.

Water fluctuation and steep land forms create challenges for designers planning access to docks and piers. The Ramp Rider is an innovative product designed to provide access to these otherwise inaccessible areas. The Ramp Rider is a relatively new product sold by Redd Team Manufacturing; a company that also makes ramps to stages and facility entrances. The Ramp Rider system consists of a specially designed carrier car positioned on a parallelogram rail system. Capable of carrying up to 500 pounds, the Ramp Rider transports a person from an upper landing to a floating pier while maintaining a slope of 1:12 or less. The car remains level while descending or ascending a slope and comprehensive safety components stop the car from operating when conditions are unsafe. The installation usually takes two days and is performed by a local elevator company. The Ramp Rider was invented by Roger Taylor of Marina Accessibility Products, Inc. Redd Team Manufacturing acquired the product in 2002 and Taylor continues as a consultant. Installations began in the late 1990's and the past three years have seen a number of installations on both coasts of the U.S. Customers include city, state and federal government properties as well as private entities.

A Ramp Rider system was purchased and installed at the marina in 1999 to enhance access to the pier for people with disabilities who may be uncomfortable on steep gangway slopes. Overall, the owners view the Ramp Rider as a well-built, unique, and safe device. In terms of operation, marina staff indicates that the Ramp Rider requires more maintenance compared with its low frequency of use. However, they were not surprised by the need for maintenance, as they regarded this installation as a prototype and some glitches with the system were expected. The most prevalent challenge with the Ramp Rider at Pier 39 marina occurs when the car is not returned to its charging station. The Ramp Rider must remain on the charger to ensure uninterrupted operation. On the subject of safety, the product is required to meet federal and state safety requirements for elevators. To this end, the Ramp Rider was engineered with a comprehensive system of safety components and back-ups. In response to user and customer feedback, Redd Team Manufacturing is developing a solar panel system for facilities that experience problems with users not returning the car to the charger.

Photos: (above) The Ramp Rider in use at Long Wharf Pier. (opposite) The Ramp Rider located on far right gangway at Long Wharf Pier, the Amistad in the foreground.

Long Wharf Pier, New Haven

On the East coast, the historic schooner Amistad finds its home at Long Wharf Pier in New Haven, Connecticut. (www.amistadamerica.org.)

The schooner is open for educational and youth programs, public schools and other charter programs.

Amistad's home berth is the 400-foot Long Wharf Pier

managed by the City of New Haven. Installed in 2000, this Ramp Rider is 30- to 40-feet long and cost \$80,000. The Ramp Rider was installed to adjust with the floating dock to maintain a slope of 1:12.



Peter Shmigelsky, Government Facilities Asset Manager for the City of New Haven, was involved with the installation of the Ramp Rider and continues to monitor the device's use and maintenance. In agreement with the information provided by Pier 39 representatives, Shmigelsky indicates that the device requires maintenance to ensure operation as it is located outside. The safety system is also recommended for periodic inspection. An added safety feature, the safety control will not allow the Ramp Rider to run if there is snow or ice on the track. Additionally, if the device is misused or is not perfectly aligned with the tracks, the safety mechanism will kick in and stop the car from moving. Staff at both Long Wharf Pier and Pier 39 believe the Ramp Rider to be an extremely safe device as there have been no safety problems or "runaway" cars. Originally, the Ramp Rider at Long Wharf Pier was left on so that a key was not needed by the user for access. This meant the device was left open to vandalism and misuse, causing the car to jump the track which stops its forward progression. The current policy at Long Wharf Pier requires a patron to call ahead to arrange use of the Ramp Rider. Crew members of the Amistad as well as city staff, have keys to operate the Ramp Rider when necessary.

While the Ramp Rider has received recognition from the California Governor's Award for Excellence in Universal Design and Technology (2001) and the Innovation Award of the 1997 International Marina Trades Exhibit and Conference, it is important to note that the system should not be considered as a replacement of accessible construction techniques. Facility managers and designers must meet accessibility guidelines for boating and fishing areas as defined in the U.S. Access Board's Recreation Facilities Final Rule. The Ramp Rider may be considered in addition to designing accessible facilities, to further improve the opportunity for site use by people of varying abilities. The Ramp Rider may also be a consideration for achieving program access in existing facilities.

For more information on the Ramp Rider, contact: Raymond Moseley Redd Team Manufacturing, Inc, 6587 S. R. 21, P.O. Box 658, Keystone Heights, FL 32656. (800) 648-3696, www.reddteam.com

NCA News On-line

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NCA Resources

The following resources are available through NCA. Call NCA for more information.

Functional Aspects of Accessible Picnic Elements

This 2001 study ascertains the perceptions of persons with and without disabilities regarding the design and function of certain accessible picnic elements. Full report \$15.

Temporary Beach Surface Accessibility Study

Full report, 78 pages. \$20.

Access to Outdoor Recreation Environments Satellite Seminar

A satellite seminar addressing proposed accessibility guidelines for trails, campgrounds, picnic areas and beaches. The seminar is available as a self study package including a 2-part video, training packet and web-based supplemental material. \$75

Retrofitting for Accessibility

A 26-minute video illustrating accessibility standards for parking, entrances, routes and restrooms. \$30

Upcoming NCA Training & Conferences



NCA training course participants discuss access to campgrounds during a field visit to Yellowstone National Park during the Retrofit for Accessibility course.

Retrofitting for Accessibility

September 22-25, 2003
Gatlinburg, Tennessee

A Universal Approach to Interpretive Planning, Programs and Design

December 8-12, 2003
New Orleans

Retrofitting for Accessibility

October 4-7, 2004
Yellowstone National Park

In addition to NCA Training Programs, look for NCA at the following upcoming events:

ADA/504 Coordinators & Accessibility Managers in the Cultural Arts Conference
August 5-7, Washington D.C.

PGA Golf Show
August 4-7, San Diego

National Institute on Recreation Inclusion
September 4-7, 2003
Bloomington, Minnesota

Mid- America Trails & Greenways Conference
September 21-24, 2003, Indianapolis

National Recreation & Park Association Conference
October 21-25, 2003, St Louis

National Interpreters Workshop
November 11-15, 2003
Sparks, Nevada

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