

Plan for Kiteboarding at Pocomo Point during the Summer

Prepared by the Nantucket Kiteboarding Association

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The Nantucket Kiteboarding Association Plan for Kiteboarding at Pocomo Point Summary

This plan will be in effect from Memorial Day to Labor Day and the enforcement of these rules will ensure that kiteboarding will be practiced in a safe fashion with no negative impact on other beach goers.

1. Kiteboarding will only take place at Pocomo Point when there is a sufficient amount of beach space to allow the launching of kites with a safety zone of 100 ft downwind of the kite boarder.
2. All Kiteboarders launching from Pocomo Point will be members of the Nantucket Kiteboarding Association and will be certified as proficient kites. This certification will include
 - a. Membership in the Professional Air Sports Association and certification by that organization as a competent kiter
 - b. Acknowledgement of the specific rules in effect for Pocomo Point
 - c. Possession of \$500,000 liability insurance
3. Kiteboarders will only use Pocomo Point as access to the waters of Nantucket Harbor. Only the very end of the point will be used for launching and landing. Kiteboarders will immediately go on the water after launching their kite.
4. Kiteboarders will remain 100 feet off shore at all times, except when launching or landing.
5. Kiteboarders will land their kites at the very end of the point; they will not keep their kites in the air after coming on shore.
6. Kiteboarders who cannot land on the very end of the point may not land on the inside of the point. No kites can be landed or flown on the beach on the inside of the point. Kites must be landed in the water and rolled up before walking back upwind.
7. No kites will sail inside the point at any time. The water from the east side of the point to the start of the mooring area is off limit to kites at all times when there are swimmers and beach goers in the area.
8. Kiteboarders will consolidate and clean up their equipment when it is not in use so that it does not clutter up Pocomo Point Beach.

Introduction:

Nantucket is, as we all know is a rare find. It offers many diverse beaches and opportunities to engage in water sports on all different levels. Fishing and snorkeling, swimming and windsurfing have all been part of island life for years. The introduction of a new sport called kiteboarding has stirred lots of interest. Because it is a new sport some people don't understand quite how it works. In fact it is very easy, and with proper training is easier to learn than windsurfing, water-skiing or snowboarding.

This season is the fifth season that kiteboarding has been practiced at Pocomo Point Beach. We estimate that Kiteboarders have flown 20,000 hours from Pocomo in these past five years all without incident. In that time there have been no incidents in which a beachgoer or bystander has been hit by a kite or board and there have been no incidents in which a kite boarder has been injured. This is because Pocomo Point is inherently a very safe place to practice the sport of kiteboarding and because the members of the Nantucket Kiteboarding Association (NKA) has instituted rules and its members have been on hand to facilitate safe kiting at that beach.

In this document we propose to respond to Mr. Mannix's memo and to lay out our plan lessen the impact of kiteboarding at Pocomo Point Beach and ensure that kiteboarding can exist in harmony with the myriad other activities that take place at Pocomo every summer season. Pocomo point is by far the best and safest beach on Nantucket to practice kiteboarding in the summer.

Our Assessment of the Situation:

Kiteboarding is not done on Pocomo Point, or for that matter on any beach. Kiteboarding is done on the water, the same as windsurfing, kayaking, sailing, water-skiing and many other sports popular and prevalent on Nantucket Harbor. Proficient Kiteboarders only use Pocomo Point as access to the waters of Nantucket Harbor.

However we acknowledge that last summer Kiteboarders did have an impact on Pocomo Point Beach. This was especially true on crowded beach days. Kiteboarding is one of the fastest growing water sports in the world and that growth is also evident on Nantucket. We estimate that last summer there was a three-fold increase in the number of non-local kites seen in the waters of Nantucket Harbor although not necessarily at Pocomo Point specifically.

At Pocomo Point the impact of kiteboarding on other beachgoers occurred mainly in three fashions.

- The first being the clutter of kiteboarding equipment on the beach.
- The second being competent people doing the sport in close proximity to the beach.
- **And the third being people trying to learn the sport on the beach itself.**

This third type of impact was the most egregious type, the most problematic and the only one that can be considered a clear safety issue effecting beachgoers at Pocomo Point. People who are learning to fly kiteboarding kites will, without question, crash them in the

process. Therefore the space requirements of a novice kite boarder and an experienced kite boarder are vastly different. We estimate that last summer, perhaps 50 commercial lessons were given at Pocomo Point. We believe that it was these lessons, especially when they were given during peak beach use times, that caused a great deal of the perception that kiteboarding was being practiced in an unsafe manner at Pocomo and was putting other beach goers at risk.

This issue has been effectively dealt with by the passing of the Regulation of Kiteboarding Schools on Nantucket article at the most recent Town Meeting. This article was proposed by the Selectmen at the urging and in consultation with members of the NKA. It is clear that there will be no more commercial teaching of kiteboarding at Pocomo and that will drastically curtail the flying of kiteboarding kites on the beach at Pocomo. Therefore we believe that to a great extent the safety issue has already been addressed. Our plan specifically addresses the other two points of impact and the safety issues as related to proficient Kiteboarders.

On the safety issue as it relates to proficient Kiteboarders at Pocomo:

The nature of kiteboarding is that the kite boarder is propelled through the water by a large, powerful traction kite. As with all kites, the natural direction of the pull of the kite is downwind. However the proficient kite boarder can counteract the natural pull of the kite and redirect the force of the kite in a way that allows Kiteboarders to travel up and downwind like a sailboat or windsurfer.

During the launching procedure the kite boarder on the beach also has to counteract the natural pull of the kite and on occasion can be pulled in the direction of the kite or downwind. The prevalent wind direction in the summer is southwest. The southwest wind blows perpendicularly across Pocomo Point basically in the direction of the Haul-over, significantly to the left of the Wauwinet House if you are looking with your back to the wind from Pocomo Point towards the head of the harbor. Therefore if a kiter launches from the point and does get pulled downwind, they will be pulled out into the water, in the direction of Coskata, well away from and in the opposite direction of the primary swimming area on Pocomo Beach. Therefore beachgoers along the downwind side of the dune (the primary location for families to set up camp) are not at risk even if a kiter is pulled by, or even loses control of his kite. Regardless of the specifications laid out by Mr. Mannix in his letter the above statement is the true nature of the safety situation at Pocomo. Our plan also proposes to tighten our own safety regulations to ensure that in future summers, kiteboarding will be done in an even safer fashion than it has been done in the past.

One additional and personal note. Over the past 15 years I have been somewhat of a fixture at Pocomo Point. Over the course of that time I have seen a windsurfer mast flipped over by the wind, after being left on the upwind side of the board, and smack into a lady standing downwind of the board watching the water. I have seen two windsurfers collide with each other not 10 feet off the beach on the inside of the point. I have seen kids on floats blown offshore and eventually requiring rescue by boats. This I have witnessed several times. In fact it is more than once that the Kiteboarders have used our own boat to facilitate the rescue of people who have gotten into trouble in the water off

Pocomo Point. I have seen a rigged windsurfer sail sitting in the parking lot picked up and hurled across the parking lot, smacking into a parked car on the other side. And I have seen two women drop a kayak off the roof of their truck and have it just barely miss landing on a little kid who was getting out of the car parked next to them.

Clearly many activities that occur at Pocomo have some inherent degree of danger. However that danger can be mitigated in many ways and it is a fact that there has not been an incident at Pocomo Point where a kite boarder or a bystander has been injured that can be called “kiteboarding related”. Still we recognize that warranted or not, kiteboarding has the “appearance of danger” and we propose the following points to our overall plan to ensure that kiteboarding at Pocomo will be carried out in the safest way possible, with the minimum risk to both participants and non-kiteboarding beachgoers.

Adherence to these safety related rules is a prerequisite to kiting at Pocomo during the peak season of Memorial Day through Labor Day.

- Kiteboarding will only take place at Pocomo Point when there is a sufficient amount of beach space to allow the launching of kites with a safety zone of 100 ft downwind of the kite boarder.
- Kiteboarders will, based on a common sense evaluation of the conditions of a specific day, designate Pocomo Point as an area only suitable for proficient Kiteboarders.
- In order to be considered a “Proficient Kite boarder” a person will be required to achieve a PASA or IKO certification as a proficient kite boarder and display a specific symbol of that certification that is designated for Nantucket every time they kite at Pocomo. By a system of streamers attached to kites it will be clear that everyone launching from Pocomo is a proficient kiter, who understands the particular rules associated with Pocomo Point and is able to handle the kite in a way that ensures safety for everyone involved.
- Proficient Kiteboarders must be able to demonstrate coverage of \$500,000 in liability insurance. Usually this will be in the form of “Homeowners” or “Renters” insurance with an additional “Umbrella Liability” policy if necessary.
- Members of the Nantucket Kiteboarding Association will, as much as is reasonable possible, endeavor to promote and enforce this policy during busy days at Pocomo.
- Based on a common sense evaluation of the conditions of the day, particularly busy days may be considered “Not Kitable” from Pocomo.

Our Plan:

The goals of our plan are as follows:

- Reduce the footprint of kiteboarding at Pocomo Point beach.
- Have less of an impact on the beachgoers.
- Take steps to ensure that kiteboarding at Pocomo is practiced in a way that is safe to beachgoers and participants alike.

To mitigate the impact of kiteboarding on Pocomo Point beach and non-kiteboarding beachgoers:

Last summer there were some very busy days at Pocomo and kiteboarding was certainly a part of that busyness. There were a few days where there were between 10 and 15 Kiteboarders launching from Pocomo. This use was in addition to powerboats launching and landing from the inside of the point, kickers coming and going from the point, swimmers, small sailboats being launched from the point, windsurfers coming and going from the point and other recreational beach activities. With all of this activity and use of the point, of course some days were frenetic, even hectic. This high volume of use may be attributed to the fact that Pocomo is one of the few access points to the harbor available for to recreational users.

We propose the following regulations to ensure that this summer kiteboarding has less impact on the beach scene at Pocomo:

These rules will be enforced from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and will be in effect on any days that Pocomo Point Beach has a significant number of beachgoers. These are practical; procedural rules that will be in effect over those kites that have already met the “proficient kiter” criteria laid out previously.

- Kiteboarders will use Pocomo Point only for launching and landing and spend as little time as possible on the beach while flying a kite. That is they will immediately go on the water after launching the kite and immediately land the kite after coming on shore.
- Kiteboarders will launch and land their kites only from as far out on the point as is possible, based on the tide conditions and taking into consideration the location of people on the beach.
- Kiteboarders will never land their kites anywhere but the tip of the point. They will never fly a kiteboarding kite on the beach except to launch and immediately go onto the water. Kiteboarders will never come into the beach on the inside or downwind side of the point
- Kiteboarders will sail out in the harbor, well away from swimmers in the water on the inside of the point. This will be predicated on a common sense assessment of the beach conditions of the day. In general, on days when there are swimmers and other beach goers, Kiteboarders will remain 100 meters off of the point at all times and will at no times kiteboard on the downwind side of the point, near the swimming area.
- Kiteboarders will consolidate their equipment on the beach as much as possible. Flying lines will only be laid out during the rigging and launching procedure and

then quickly put away after landing the kite. Inflated kites will be nested or broken down to minimize the amount of space that they take up on the beach when not in use.

- Kiteboarding kites will not be flown on the beach unless specific conditions of the day allow it to be done with no impact on other non-kiteboarding beachgoers.

Photo Illustrations



This photo shows the extent of the beach at Pocomo Point. The Person on the point is standing the distance of the kiteboarding lines from the tip of the point. The wind direction is southwest, which is the prevalent wind direction during the summer. The direction of the large arrows is the wind direction and the direction that a kite boarder will be pulled by the kite. That direction is down wind, this is in fact away from the location of most beachgoers and swimmers.

Below the same picture shows the location of a kiter two line lengths from the point. This shows that as the tide comes in, the safety of launching from the point is not diminished.



This picture shows the view from the end of the point. This is where our rules will require that all kites are launched and landed. The wind direction arrow also shows the direction that the kite will travel after being launched.

This image shows that even as the tide comes in, the point will still remain a safe place for proficient kites to launch a kite.



These pictures show the areas around Pocomo Point where Kiteboarders will not go. They show that most beachgoers will not be affected by kiteboarding.

