



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

101 Wheeler Street  
Saint Marys, GA 31558

912-882-4336 phone  
912-882-6284 fax

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## **Cumberland Island National Seashore News Release**

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For Immediate Release

Maggie Tyler 912-882-4336 ext. 257

### **CUMBERLAND ISLAND HAD A SUCCESSFUL 2010**

Saint Marys, Georgia-- 2010 was another strong visitation year at Cumberland Island National Seashore. Overall park visits increased 18% in 2010 by 11,771 visitors to 91,453 as compared to 77,588 in 2009. Total park visitation includes visitors to the seashore's mainland facilities in Saint Marys including both the visitor center and museum.

Cumberland Island's visitation remained stable at 42,087 in 2010 increasing slightly from 40,382 in 2009. Although there was a slight increase in visitation to the Island, that number has remained relatively consistent over the years. Several contributing factors limit the number of daily visitors including the size and number of ferry trips, and the limitations contained in the 1984 General Management Plan.

The seashore staff provided outstanding visitor services during 2010. Nearly every visitor to Cumberland Island via the park ferry receives the benefit of an Island orientation presented by park staff. Also, throughout the year, 796 interpretive tours were given to 52,163 visitors. This included the twice daily "Footsteps through History" walks offered to visitors at the Dungeness Dock. In addition, 2,359 visitors toured the 21,700 square foot 1898 Plum Orchard Mansion. This is especially noteworthy due to its remote location, although many visitors come via the twice monthly ferry trips offered on the second and fourth Sundays. The seashore also received strong attendance from curriculum-based educational groups who made 32 trips to the barrier island bringing 625 students to experience a Cumberland Island Outdoor Classroom. Here, students were able to discover history and nature first hand.

While paid park staff provided many visitor services, the park also relies heavily on volunteer support. In 2010, 516 volunteers contributed 27,350 hours to the park. Volunteers actively engage in every aspect of park stewardship from staffing the mainland museum, to offering tours at Plum Orchard, to clearing trails, to participating in our annual bird counts. "Some volunteers can only share a few hours while some can offer a few months. We appreciate all of the donated time and the immense contribution of the 516 individuals who chose to demonstrate stewardship by action," said Cumberland Island National Seashore Superintendent Fred Boyles.

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Strong visitation has other positive effects, as well. When visitors purchase books about Cumberland Island's cultural and natural history from the Park's bookstore, they are also increasing the park's income, as a portion of those sales remain in the park. Retail gross sales at the park's visitor center bookstore exceeded \$89,000 in 2010.

A great indicator of success is the park's annual visitor survey. Each year park's visitors are polled about Cumberland Island's visitor services and their overall experiences. This year the national seashore received a 97% visitor satisfaction score from the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho, who conducts the surveys.

The future looks bright for Cumberland Island in 2011. The park is expanding visitor services through the *Lands and Legacies Tours* to the North End of Cumberland Island. Additionally, a South End Shuttle will assist in a "drop on/ drop off" service from the Dungeness area to Sea Camp. We project the park's volunteer program will increase, as well.

Cumberland Island National Seashore is the largest and southernmost barrier island in Georgia. The park is the home to approximately 36,000 acres of pristine maritime forest, undeveloped beaches, freshwater lakes, wide brackish marshes and over 9,800 acres of Congressionally designated Wilderness. The Seashore was authorized by Congress in 1972 and is administered by the National Park Service. For more information call 912-882-4336 ext 254 or visit [www.nps.gov/cuis](http://www.nps.gov/cuis). Ferry and camping reservations are recommended and can be made at 912-882-4335.

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