

# Fire Island National Seashore

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



*Electronic Newsletter*

**GMP Updates**

**March 2007**

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Superintendent Mike Reynolds

## **Public Scoping Topics:**

### **Resource Management Issues**

- Coastal Erosion
- Sea Level Rise
- Deer
- Mosquitoes
- Invasive/Exotic Species
- Ticks
- Dogs
- Noise Pollution
- Viewshed/Visual Intrusions

## **Message from the Superintendent:**

After numerous scoping meetings during the summer and fall of 2006, and additional time allotted over the winter to receive written comments from our stakeholders, Fire Island National Seashore has concluded the first step in the creation of its new General Management Plan. We are grateful for the feedback and input. (See sidebar, left.)

We also received many comments regarding the designated wilderness area in Fire Island National Seashore, and how it relates to the GMP effort. We have decided to move ahead with an updated [wilderness management plan](#) as a part of the new GMP.

The next step on our quest for a new GMP is to re-examine the park's **purpose** relative to the intent of Congress when the park was established in 1964, and the park's **significance** within the context of the National Park System. From these statements, the park's **primary interpretive themes** can be identified. An understanding of the foundation upon which the park was "built" helps us appropriately plan for the future.

Planning consultants are working with the GMP planning team to organize and prepare for a **Foundation for Planning/ Visitor Experience** workshop with NPS staff and park stakeholders in New York in the Spring of 2007.

In the meantime, routine park operations continue. During the winter, park managers and staff prepare for the up-coming summer season. Budgets are balanced, seasonal staff is hired, publications and programs are developed, facilities that were secured for the harsh barrier island winter will soon be readied for late spring opening.

New facilities this year include the installation of a West Entrance sign, welcome shelter and restroom at the east end of Robert Moses Parkway, the western gateway to Fire Island National Seashore. The [Fire Island Lighthouse](#) is operating under a new 10-year cooperating association agreement between the [Fire](#)

- Water Quality/Marine Environment
- Poison Ivy
- Wilderness
- Wildlife

### **Operations and Facility Paradigms for location and use**

- William Floyd Estate
- Marinas
- Campgrounds
- Showers/Restrooms/Water Fountains
- Visitor Contact
- Beaches
- Boardwalks
- Universal Accessibility
- Staff Housing
- Water Trail
- Wilderness

### **Recreation**

- Clothing Optional Beach Use
- Personal Watercraft
- Boating
- Paddle Sports
- Recreational Driving
- Dog Walking/Dogs at Facilities
- Fishing
- Other

### **Transportation**

- Ferries
- Lateral Transportation
- Vehicle Access
- Bike Trails

### **Visitor Experience/Programs**

- Park Awareness
- Programming
- Ranger Presence
- More Staff for Tours/Maintenance/Patrols

### **Concessions**

[Island Lighthouse Preservation Society](#) and the National Park Service. The FILPS is working with the park to plan for the return of the Fire Island Lighthouse's original Fresnel lens to the site.

This summer, the park will welcome the resurrection of its full-service restaurant at Watch Hill, operated by the park's concessioner, [Fire Island Concessions, LLC](#).

New programs this year include staffing to tackle invasive plant species in the [Fire Island Wilderness](#) and at the [William Floyd Estate](#), and funding to paint the exterior of the [Fire Island Lighthouse](#), rehabilitate the [Watch Hill](#) and [Sailors Haven](#) boardwalks, and remove underground fuel storage tanks.

In February 2007, President Bush released an announcement that could benefit the park. As a part of the [National Park Service \(NPS\) Centennial Initiative](#), Fire Island National Seashore could see a one-year increase in its base budget next year. If passed, the additional \$461K would allow the park to hire 25 additional seasonal employees, spread among rangers, maintenance and lifeguard positions.

A National Park Service *Listening Session* conducted by our Washington headquarters is planned for Tuesday, March 20, 6 - 8 p.m. at Federal Hall on Wall Street in New York. If you're able to attend you'll have an opportunity to hear more about the Centennial Initiative program and voice your concerns.

An emerging issue that has been generating a lot of conversation among many outdoor recreation and education professionals concerns the declining connection between youth and outdoor activities in this country. Recently, Richard Louv, a writer and educator, delivered Congressional testimony that revealed some shocking statistics: only 6% of kids ages 9 - 13 play outdoors in a given week; over 90% of urban inner city kids don't know how to swim; 39% have never been to a beach. The proliferation of computers and video games are increasingly connecting our kids yet disconnecting them from direct outdoor experience and recreation. I would argue we all have a stake in this dilemma and I encourage all of you to engage children in your life in the outdoors whenever possible.

As we prepare for the present and plan for the future, we continue to appreciate and value your input and support. Please Stay Connected and Thank You!

*Mike Reynolds*

### **• Fire Island: Natural Resources**

#### **Fire Island Deer**



- Franchise Fees (Returns to the Park)
- Food Service
- Provisions

### Communities

- Smart Growth and Development
- Land Use/Zoning Problems
- Bayside Issues
- FIMP/Beach Management Issues
- Relationship to FINS
- NPS Authority and Oversight
- History
- Driving
- Commercial Activity
- Wildlife in Communities
- Shared Stewardship Concept with Mainland Long Island and Fire Islanders
- Partnerships and Regionalism across Communities

### Additional Concerns

- Marine Management / Protected Areas
- NPS Staffing/Jurisdiction
- Potential Legislative Changes to Enabling Legislation
- Integration with FIMP/Reformulation Plan

### Expressions of Support

- For the National Park Service
- For the Communities
- Other Comments
- Questions

Learn More

[GMP Scoping](#)

Fire Island National Seashore conducted its second [winter deer darting](#) program this year. This followed the routine fall darting project, which has been conducted since 1993. The National Park Service has been involved since 1998 to determine if an immunocontraceptive program can be effective in safely controlling the deer population on Fire Island.

FINS wildlife biologist Danny Barrera reports that "for winter 2007, a total of 72 PZP vaccines were successfully administered throughout the study site, during the five-week effort." Park staff and community members share a deep concern about the well-being of the wildlife, and hope that the program proves to be a successful tool.

For more information about Fire Island National Seashore's deer research program, visit the park's [Fire Island Deer](#) web site.

### Threatened & Endangered Species

Fire Island begins its annual piping plover protection program in mid-March. After March 15, pets and kites are not permitted on many Fire Island beaches, and driving is restricted. Symbolic fencing is installed after April 1, and protective exclosures are constructed after the eggs have been laid in each nest.

We appreciate your understanding and respect as we provide a little boost to help these shorebirds find their way off the [threatened and endangered species](#) list.

### [Visit FINS Nature & Science web pages](#) *(content is regularly being added)*

#### • Fire Island Facilities and Operations

Fire Island National Seashore's **West Entrance** facility is going in place. A proposed visitor contact station with restrooms and small offices for staff was downsized after a



period of public review. Respecting concerns about the impacts of a taller structure on the adjacent migratory hawk watch program, the National Park Service re-designed the west entrance station into an interpretive shelter. To provide even greater cost savings, the facility does not have electricity or running water.

The new west entrance facility will offer a vault toilet; outdoor exhibits on the park, the history, and the birdlife of this area; and a sheltered place for the safe

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**FINS Science Conference**  
**May 9-10, 2007**

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**Volunteer!**

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**Latest Press Releases**



**FINS Planning Team**  
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**Fire Island National Seashore**  
**<http://www.nps.gov/fiis/>**

drop-off of visitors to Fire Island National Seashore's Lighthouse and beach.

The Watch Hill Marina is being spruced up over the winter. An early summer opening of the Watch Hill Restaurant is anticipated. Over the past few years, many people have expressed their regrets about the closure of the restaurant at Watch Hill. Now that the new concession contract is in place and major infrastructure improvements have been implemented, families can again plan to have a sit-down dining experience at the edge of marina.

Winter storm damage was relatively mild this year, even though there were tremendous ice floes in late winter. Every spring, Fire Island National Seashore's dedicated maintenance staff readies the park for the arrival of the first boats and ferries, and for the thousands of school groups who visit.

This year, hikers will see new plastic lumber being installed on the boardwalks, which reduces the risk of splinters and slips. A safe visit is certainly a more enjoyable visit.

We look forward to seeing you in the park soon.

**Visit Fire Island National Seashore**  
**Facilities**