



### Sandy Hook, New Jersey



*Piping plovers are among the first shorebirds to return to this area to breed; NPS photo by Daphne Yun.*

#### Nature and art as therapy

Many researchers say that ecotherapy (also known as green or nature therapy)—a term coined by Howard Clinebell in his 1996 book of the same name, can have regenerative power, improving mood and reducing anxiety and stress. Certainly this is known by millions of hikers, birders, anglers and nature lovers. And did you know that there's a natural antidepressant in soil? A micro-organism called *Mycobacterium vaccae* is found to mirror the effects on neurons that drugs like Prozac provide—which may explain why the knee-busting, back-breaking labor of gardening is pursued so avidly. While we did not need the scientific research to support what we already knew, it is nice to have it corroborated – but anyone who has taken a walk in the park or gardened could have told you that.

Many park visitors enjoy going to the next level by combining outdoor activity with poetry, guided meditation, art and yoga, and we have offered these programs at all three units for a long time.

At Jamaica Bay there are numerous hikes, walks and strolls will get you out into nature and include yoga. Check the JBU Program Guide for “Yoga with Rebecca,” get your mat out and come on down.

At Staten Island there are several Arts & Crafts programs, so if this kind of meditative reflection appeals to you check the offerings and join us. Also, our walks and hikes, as well as beach sweeps will get you involved in being outside and exercising productively.

At Sandy Hook we have a new program offered by Mary Gambarony, an art therapist and artist. She has been serving Monmouth and Ocean counties since 1993. Her art therapy practice is based on

the belief that the creative process promotes and sustains healing, growth and well-being in, individuals, groups, and communities. Mary's art therapy work has included chronic/terminal illness, bereavement, abuse, trauma, disaster recovery, promoting workplace wellness and art therapy education. She is the manager of art therapy in, oncology at Riverview Medical, she operates a private practice in Red Bank, NJ, and creates art in her studio Heart4Prints. Join us for Mary's program “Bringing Art to Life,” offered on May 31.

Check all three units of the Program Guide for these and many other events and remember that a walk in the park may help rejuvenate your sagging spirit, improve your mood, and help relieve stress.

Have a wonderful and safe spring, and enjoy Gateway, your National Park.

—C. Markis

## **Sandy Hook Keepers Quarters-Visitor Center**

Daily, 10 AM - 4 PM, March & April  
Daily, 9 AM – 5 PM, Starting May 1

## **Sandy Hook Lighthouse Lighthouse Tours:**

Daily, 1 PM – 3:30 PM,  
March & April

Daily, 1 PM – 4:30 PM,  
Starting May 1

Tours are first-come, first-served. Visitors must be 48 inches tall to climb the tower. Sign up in the 1883 Keeper's Quarters for a free lighthouse tour, view the exhibits on New Jersey lighthouses and visit the gift shop. Grounds and video in adjacent barn are always open. Groups must make advance reservations. Call (732) 872-5970 for more information.

## **Eastern National Gift Shop**

Visitor Center/Keepers Quarters  
March & April: Daily, 10 AM – 4 PM  
Starting May 1: Daily, 9 AM – 5PM

## **History House**

Fort Hancock's Officers Row, Building 1  
Weekends, 1 PM – 5PM

An 1898 lieutenant's quarters on "Officers Row" overlooking Sandy Hook Bay is furnished to resemble the WWII era, the busiest time in the fort's history.

## **Nike Missile Radar Site**

Parking Lot L at Horseshoe Cove  
Saturdays, April 18 & May 30  
Sundays, April 26 & May 3 & 17  
12 PM – 4 PM

Tour the site where radar once guided nuclear armed Nike missiles during the Cold War era. Veterans of the Nike System serve as tour guides, pointing out and explaining all the radars and controls used to steer the Nike Guided Missiles.

## **MARCH**

### **Seal Walk**

Building #18,  
Littoral Society Headquarters  
Wednesday, March 4  
10AM – 12 PM

Bring your binoculars and take a trek throughout Sandy Hook to observe the seals and waterfowl that overwinter in New Jersey. The program will include car caravanning to multiple locations on Sandy Hook. Afterwards, warm up at Littoral Society Headquarters with snacks and toasty beverages. Cost: \$10 member/ \$20 non-member. Registration and payment is required ahead of time, please call (732) 291-0055. ♥ 1.5 miles.

## **Battery Gunnison Open House**

Army Ground Forces Association

Saturday, March 7

12 PM – 5 PM

The Army Ground Forces Association, dressed in 1943 era coast artillery uniforms, is a volunteer group restoring and interpreting Battery Gunnison/New Peck and its 6-inch guns. Visitors are invited to stop by on this work and training day to chat and learn more about the historic time period of March 1943, the preparation for the May 1943 reactivation of Battery Gunnison/New Peck, and the restoration and preservation projects currently underway.

## **Searching for Seals in the Surf**

U.S. Life-Saving Station at Spermaceti Cove (between Lot D and Lot E)

Wednesday, March 18

10 AM – 12 PM

Hike to the Sandy Hook bayside with a park ranger to search for seal activity during their annual migration; and learn about marine mammals that dwell in the waters of Sandy Hook at different times of the year. Reservations required, please call (732) 872-5970. ♥ 1 mile

## **Spring Equinox Walk**

Building #18, Littoral Society Headquarters

Thursday, March 19

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

It is called the equinox because it's one of two days in the year when daylight and darkness agree to equally share the 24 hours in a day. Celebrate the equinox with an early evening walk on the Hook. Free, call the American Littoral Society at (732) 291-0055 to make a reservation. ♥ 2 miles.

## **Animal Tracking—FOR KIDS**

### **Junior Ranger**

U.S. Life-Saving Station at Spermaceti Cove (Between Lot D and Lot E)

Sunday, March 22

10 AM – 11:30 PM

Identify tracks from the beach to the forest. A park ranger will teach children between ages 7 to 12 the skills of tracking wildlife by discovering tracks or remains that are left behind. Please call (732) 872-5970 to make reservations. ♥1 mile.

## **Holly Forest Walk**

U.S. Life-Saving Station Lot at Spermaceti Cove (Between Lot D and Lot E)

Sunday, March 29

4 PM – 6 PM

Some of the oldest American Holly trees in the country can be found among Sandy Hook's nearly 300 acres of holly forest. We will hike through the restricted 64-acre maritime forest area and get to see an undisturbed holly forest with some of its oldest, rarest, and largest trees. Waterproof footwear is recommended. Please call (732) 872-5970 to make reservations. ♥1 mile.

## **APRIL**

### **Boy Scout Oceanography**

#### **Merit Badge Program**

Building #22, NJ Sea Grant Consortium

Call for Date

10 AM – 2 PM

Explore Sandy Hook and experience the science of the ocean during this four hour "hands-on" program, conducted both outdoors and in the NJSGC laboratory classroom. Open to individual boy scouts. Advance registration required. Register online at [www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs](http://www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs) or contact Jody Sackett: [JSackett@njseagrant.org](mailto:JSackett@njseagrant.org) or 732-872-1300, ext. 20. This is a fee-based program.

### **Shark Watch Beach Walk**

American Littoral Society

Building 18, Littoral Society Headquarters

Wednesday, April 1

12 PM – 2 PM

Join a coastal naturalist for an early spring walk through a maritime forest and dune system, out onto the beaches of Sandy Hook, to look for coastal shark species that have been known to hunt the local surf. Keep on the lookout for seals and whales also. Free. ♥ 2 miles

### **Junior Ranger Day – FOR KIDS Operation Osprey**

Guardian Park – Fort Hancock

Saturday, April 11

1 PM – 2:30 PM

Join a park ranger to learn about Osprey behavior and habitat. This will be followed up with a clean-up along Sod Banks, near Horseshoe. Wear comfortable shoes.

### **Spring Bird Walk**

Monmouth County Audubon Society

U.S. Life-Saving Station at Spermaceti

Cove (Between Lot D and Lot E)

Saturday, April 18

10 AM – 12 PM

Look for returning osprey, herons, egrets and other migrants. Bring binoculars and wear comfortable shoes. ♥ 1 mile.

### **Holly Forest Walk**

#### **Arbor Day Tree Walk**

American Littoral Society

Parking Lot E

Friday, April 24

10 AM – 12 PM

Some of the oldest American holly trees in the country can be found among Sandy Hook's nearly 300 acres of holly forest. We will hike through the restricted 64-acre maritime forest area and get to see an undisturbed holly forest with some of its oldest, rarest, and largest trees. Waterproof footwear is recommended. Cost: \$10 member/ \$20 non-member. Contact: 732-291-0055 for more information and to reserve. ♥ 2 miles.

### **Dune Grass Planting**

American Littoral Society  
South Maintenance Area  
Saturday, April 25

10 AM

The American Littoral Society will be hosting a beach grass planting. The public is invited to help plant American beach grass on dunes in need of restoration. The entrance to the south maintenance area is the first right after passing the Ranger Station in the middle of Hartshorne Drive. Turn into the chain-link fenced area on the right, across from the missile. There will be signs marking the location. It is a volunteer event that is open to the public and will also involve students who have been growing American beachgrass (*Ammophila breviligulata*) plants in area schools through the *Beach Grasses in Classes* program. If possible, please bring a stick or shovel to help with planting. Event will be held rain or shine. Dress for the weather. For more information call the American Littoral Society at 732-291-0055 or email [info@littoralsociety.org](mailto:info@littoralsociety.org).

### **Spring Beach Sweep National Volunteer Day**

Clean Ocean Action's 35<sup>th</sup>

Parking Lot D  
Saturday, April 25  
9 AM – 12:30 PM

Clean Ocean Action's Beach Sweeps is a biannual, statewide beach cleanup that occurs at over 70 locations throughout the state of New Jersey. Each beach sweeper becomes a citizen scientist for the day as they record each piece of debris that they collect. This turns a one-day, cleanup event, into a legacy of data that impacts research and legislation. For more information, please visit Clean Ocean Action's website: [www.cleanoceanaction.org](http://www.cleanoceanaction.org) or call (732) 872-0111.

### **Battery Gunnison- Open House New Peck Restoration**

Saturday, April 25  
12 PM - 5 PM

The Army Ground Forces Association is a volunteer group in 1943 era coast artillery uniforms restoring and interpreting Battery Gunnison/New Peck and its 6-inch guns. Visitors are invited to stop by on this work and training day to chat and learn more about the historic time period of April 1943 and the restoration/preservation projects currently underway.

### **Explore the Holly Forest Sandy Hook Nature Rx Day**

Healthy Parks Healthy People  
US Lifesaving Station  
Sunday, April 26  
1 PM – 2:30 PM

Join a park ranger on a prescribed walk through the Holly Forest with your family and friends. Enjoy the sights, sounds, and smells of nature, while getting fit and healthy.

## **MAY**

### **Boy Scout Environmental Science Merit Badge Program**

Building #22, NJ Sea Grant Consortium  
Call for date  
10 AM – 3PM

Discover the ecology of Sandy Hook's maritime environment in this highly active five hour program, conducted both outdoors and in the NJSJC laboratory classroom. Open to all individual boy scouts. Advance registration is required. Register online at [www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs](http://www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs) or contact Jody Sackett: [JSackett@njseagrant.org](mailto:JSackett@njseagrant.org) or 732-872-1300, ext. 20. This is a fee-based program.

### **Rapid Fire Gun Batteries Secret Places of Sandy Hook**

Parking Lot M  
Sunday, May 3  
2 PM – 4 PM

Explore with a park ranger, the longest concrete gun battery built by the U.S. Army in the United States for harbor defense. Constructed in stages from 1897 to 1904, the "Nine Gun Battery" was in service at Fort Hancock from 1904 to 1944. Bring a flashlight and walking shoes. Call the Sandy Hook Visitor Center at (732) 872-5970 to make a reservation.

♥ 0.5 mile

### **Surf Fishing Clinic**

Building #18, Littoral Society Headquarters  
Saturday, May 9  
8 AM – 3 PM

Join Jeff Dement, Tagging Director, for a day of surf fishing and instruction on the beach. He will cover the basics of casting, knot tying, lure/bait selection, and "reading" a beach. All skill levels are welcome. Rods, reels and tackle will be provided. Children under 18 are welcome with a supervising adult. Coffee and doughnuts will be provided but please bring your lunch. Call (732) 291-0055 to make a reservation. Cost: \$30 for Members, Non-members \$75.

### **International Migratory Bird Day**

Parking Lot M  
Saturday, May 9  
10 AM – 12PM

Celebrate bird migration with a park ranger and commit to protecting birds today and in the future. Visitors will look for osprey, herons, egrets, songbirds and other migrants. A spotting scope will be set up on the observation deck. Bring binoculars and wear comfortable shoes.

### **Clean Ocean Action's 31<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Student Summit**

Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> &  
Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>  
9 AM – 12:30 PM

Applications are available at [www.cleanoceanaction.org](http://www.cleanoceanaction.org)  
For more information call 732-872-0111.

## **COASTAL DEFENSE WEEKEND/ OCEAN FUN DAY- May 15 – May 17, 2020**

### **Lantern Tour**

Battery Gunnison/New Peck  
World War II Harbor Defense  
Post Guardhouse (Fort Hancock Museum),  
Building #28

Friday, May 15  
6:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Volunteer living historians from the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) will be in uniform as World War II era coast artillery soldiers and will take you for a walk that includes several Harbor Defense gun batteries of Fort Hancock, portions of the Sandy Hook Proving Ground and highlighting Battery Gunnison/New Peck. Bring a flashlight and wear sturdy shoes.  
♥ 1.5 miles

### **Coastal Defense Day**

Battery Gunnison /New Peck in  
World War II

Sunday, May 17  
11 AM – 4 PM

Volunteers from AGFA in WWII uniform bring Battery Gunnison/New Peck and its 6-inch guns to life, as if they were in final modernization and activation in May 1943. Learn about Army Harbor Defense Operations, restored 1920s to 1940s vintage electric and telephone systems, and Fort Hancock Army medical support in May 1943. Visitors can participate in loading the guns, tracking ships, learn artillery math, machine shops and experience soldier life.

### **Lighthouse Tours**

Sunday May 17  
12 PM – 4:30 PM (Special Hours)

### **Mortar Battery & Battery Potter**

Sunday, May 17  
12 PM – 4 PM

Batteries will be open with tours provided by park rangers and volunteers.

### **History House & Fort Hancock Post Museum (Building 28)**

1 PM – 5 PM

### **Ocean Fun Day**

Building #22,  
New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium  
Sunday, May 17  
11 AM – 3 PM

Spend the day with your family enjoying hands-on fun while learning about our environment. Join NJSJC and their Ocean Fun Days partners for this popular pre-summer event. Learn how to use a seine net or join the youth fishing clinic. Test your boating safety knowledge or become a beachcomber and search for natural treasures on a guided tour. Hear from NJ scientists and researchers all about the inner workings of the ocean and how to protect it for generations to come. The event includes dozens of exhibits and children's activities. Free admission.

### **Horseshoe Crab Walk**

American Littoral Society

Parking Lot B

Friday, May 22

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Get up close and personal with a living fossil. Take an evening walk along Plum Island to look for spawning horseshoe crabs. Wear foot gear that can get wet. Please call 732-291-0055 for more information and to reserve. Cost: Members \$10/Non-members \$20. ♥ 1 mile.

### **Horseshoe Crabs —FOR KIDS (Conservation Status: Near Threatened)**

#### **Junior Ranger Program**

Parking Lot B

Saturday, May 23

7 PM – 8:30 PM

Celebrate National Endangered Species Day a day late. Meet up with a park ranger and learn about the natural history of horseshoe crabs, and why they annually visit Sandy Hook's shores during the full moon phases in May & June. Wear shoes that can get wet. Reservations required, please call (732) 872-5970.

### **Stars of Sandy Hook**

Parking Lot E

Thursday, May 28

8:30 PM – 10:30 PM

Join a park ranger and S.T.A.R. Astronomy Society to observe a waxing crescent moon, Mercury in the west, and possibly a setting Venus.

### **Twilight by the Bay**

Lighthouse Keepers Quarters/Visitor Center

Saturday, May 30

7 PM – 8:30 PM

Experience Fort Hancock at twilight with a park ranger. Learn about Fort Hancock's history over the past 124 years. ♥ 1.5 miles

### **Bringing Art to Life**

Fort Hancock Museum, Building 28

Sunday, May 31

10 AM— 12 PM

Engaging in creative activity and nature has positive effects on our well-being. All are welcome to connect and reconnect with each other and the natural world around us in this enjoyable art therapy activity, led by Mary Gambarony. Using art materials and natural materials from the park each participant will leave with their own decorated quahog shell. No artistic talent is needed. Please call the Visitor Center to make reservations, (732) 872-5970.

### **Marine Science Day Camp Registration Open**

NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Building #22

July – August

9 AM – 3 PM (weekdays)

Registration is now open for NJ Sea Grant Consortium's Marine Science Day Camp.

This camp is for children who love the ocean and want to learn more about it. The camp is held at NJSGC's Sandy Hook Headquarters and led by experienced NJSGC science educators for boys and girls in grades 3 through 9. Camp begins July 8, 2019. For details including registration information visit our website [www.njseagrant.org/education/marine-science-day-camp](http://www.njseagrant.org/education/marine-science-day-camp) or call 732-872-1300, ext. 19. This is a fee-based program.

—end of listings—