There are several programs and special events that we wish to highlight for this fall. On Staten Island the International Coastal Cleanup at Great Kills will happen on Sunday, September 21. Join the American Littoral Society for the Annual New York State Beach Cleanup, who have sponsored this activity for more than 30 years. Also on Staten the Annual Greenbelt to Great Kills Hike to Willowbrook Park - 1 Eton Place, Sunday, October 6. Join us and our friends from NYC Greenbelt Educators to travel (one way!) from Willowbrook Park to Great Kills Park, a distance of six miles!

Monarch Butterflies begin their migration south in the fall. The Monarch and Pollinator Festival will occur on Saturday, September 28 at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Sandy Hook has slated a Monarch Butterfly Walk on Saturday, October 5. Every Kid in a Park Adventure Day will be presented at Sandy Hook’s Fort Hancock and at Fort Tilden, Sunday, October 6. Every Kid in a Park is a national initiative that provides fourth graders with a free National Park Pass for themselves and their families to visit all of our federally managed public lands, waters, and shores. Come and pick up your pass, good for one year, and join us for a day filled with adventure. Learn about the special changes taking place in the fall season at Jamaica Bay, such as bird migration (live birds and hawks), fall equinox, hibernation (both plants and animals), fish migration, and weather.

Can you dig dirt? Join us for the Urban Soils Festival, Floyd Bennett Field – Ecology Village Saturday, October 12, with partner Urban Soils Institute for workshops, art-science exhibits, food, music, harvest festival with local urban farms, and games. Experience the world of soils in our city and how they secretly support our city and daily lives. This is an event for all ages. Jamaica Bay Raptorama, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Sunday, October 20. Activities include indoor slide programs, a presentation of live hawks and owls provided by a local rehabilitation center, and more.

The details of these events and many more are found in these program guides. – C. Markis

If you would like to be on our mailing list to receive notifications of events and this Program Guide, please send a message with ‘program guide’ in the subject line to Charles Markis@nps.gov.

The ♥ symbol indicates a program of moderate exercise. Pump up your heart as you enjoy the park.
Visitor Center Hours
Recruing Programs

Sandy Hook Lighthouse &
Keepers Quarters
Visitor Center Hours:
May 1 – October 31
Daily, 9 AM – 5 PM
Lighthouse Tours:
Daily, 1 PM – 4:30 PM

November 1 – April 30
Daily, 10 AM – 4 PM,
Lighthouse Tours:
Daily, 1 PM to 3:30 PM

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 free lighthouse tours, and see exhibits on New Jersey lighthouses, a rotating art exhibit, and visit the park store. Grounds and video in adjacent barn are always open. Groups must make advance reservations. Call (732) 872-5970 for more information.

America’s National Parks
Gift Shop
May 1 – October 31
Daily, 9 AM – 5 PM
November 1 – April 30
Daily, 10 AM – 4 PM,

History House
Fort Hancock’s Officers Row,
Building 1
May 1 – September 30:
Daily, 1 PM – 5 PM
October 1 – April 30:
Weekends, 1 PM – 5PM
An 1898 lieutenant’s quarters on “Officers Row” overlooking Sandy Hook Bay is furnished to the WWII era, the busiest time in the fort’s history.

Battery Potter
Saturday, September 7, 14, 21, 28
1 PM – 4:30 PM
Sunday, October 13
1 PM – 4:30 PM
Explore and tour one of Sandy Hook’s oldest gun batteries. Completed in 1895 it was the first concrete disappearing gun battery built in the United States.

Mortar Battery
Sunday, September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
1:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Sunday, October 13
1PM – 4:30 PM
Completed in 1894 the Sandy Hook Mortar Battery was the first Endicott Era concrete mortar battery built in the United States as part of New York Harbor’s defense against enemy attack from the sea.

Nike Missile Radar Site
Parking Lot L, Horseshoe Cove
Saturday, September 7 & 28,
12 PM – 4 PM
Sunday, September 15, 12 PM – 4 PM
(Cold War Day)
Saturday, October 5 & 26, 12 PM – 4 PM
Sunday, October 13, 12 PM – 4 PM
Saturday, November 2, 12 PM – 4 PM
Sunday, November 10, 12 PM – 4 PM
Guided tours of the Integrated Fire Control (IFC) will allow you to see the inner workings of the facility where the supersonic nuclear armed Nike Hercules missiles were controlled and guided using Cold War era computers and radars. While taking a guided tour of this one-time TOP SECRET missile site, you will have the opportunity to meet and talk with some of the veterans who actually worked on the Nike Air Defense System.

Birding on the Deck
Parking Lot M, Observation Deck
September, Saturday 7, 14, 21, 28
September, Sunday 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Visit a ranger on top of the observation deck. A scope will be set up to view and learn how to identify osprey, egrets, and songbirds.

Yoga on the Beach
Beach E, Center Chute
Saturday, September 7, 14, 21, 28
8 AM – 9 AM
Begin your Saturday with a peaceful, yet vigorous, traditional Vinyasa yoga practice on the beach. The practice is open to everyone and all levels, from beginners to advanced, and will focus on flowing through basic poses and maintaining poses with proper alignment. Please bring a large, sturdy beach blanket and wear light, comfortable workout attire. Hydration is also important, so please bring your own water (refillable bottles).

Boy Scout Environmental Science
Merit Badge Program
New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium
Building #22, Fort Hancock
Call for Date
Discover the ecology of Sandy Hook’s maritime environment in this highly interactive five-hour program at Sandy Hook, conducted both outdoors and in the NJSGC laboratory classroom. Open to all individual boy scouts. Advance registration required. Register online at www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs or contact Jody Sackett: JSackett@njseagrant.org or 732-872-1300, ext. 20. Fee

Boy Scout Oceanography
Merit Badge Program
New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium
Building #22, Fort Hancock
Call for Date
Explore Sandy Hook and experience the science of the ocean “hands-on” during this four-hour program, conducted both outdoors and in the NJSGC laboratory classroom. Open to all individual boy scouts. Advance registration required. Register online at www.njseagrant.org/education/scout-programs or contact Jody Sackett: JSackett@njseagrant.org or 732-872-1300, ext. 20. Fee

SEPTEMBER

Junior Ranger Color Guard:
Stars and Stripes Forever
Guardian Park, Fort Hancock Post
Monday, September 2 - Labor Day
1 PM – 2:30 PM
The Junior Rangers will learn about the history of the American flag, how it has changed several times throughout the nation’s 238+ years, and the meaning behind its symbolism.

Shorebirds and Wild Edibles
American Littoral Society
Parking Lot M
Saturday, September 7
10 AM – 12 PM
Join Littoral Society naturalists for a hike down a sandy path to one of the least visited beaches at Sandy Hook. Along the way we will identify some of the Hook’s edible plants that were an important food source for the early settlers and Native Americans that once inhabited this area. Once we reach the tip of Sandy Hook, we will have the chance to observe shore birds feeding along the mud flats. Bring binoculars, comfortable walking shoes, and lots of sunscreen!
Cost: $10 for Members/$20 for Non-Members. Contact: 732-291-0055 for more information and to reserve.
Canoeing on Sandy Hook Bay
U.S. Life-Saving Station Parking Lot (between Lot D and Lot E)
Saturday, September 7
9:15 AM – 12 PM
Take a two-mile morning paddle to explore Sandy Hook bay from an ideal vantage point—the water itself. Rangers guide a two and a half hour tour of the bayside waters and Skeleton Hill Island. Go to www.recreation.gov to make your reservation.

Canoeing on Sandy Hook Bay
U.S. Life-Saving Station Parking Lot (between Lot D and Lot E)
Saturday, September 14
9:15 AM – 12 PM
Take a two-mile morning paddle to explore Sandy Hook bay from an ideal vantage point—the water itself. Rangers guide a two and a half hour tour of the bayside waters and Skeleton Hill Island. Go to www.recreation.gov to make your reservation.

Battery Gunnison/
New Peck Restoration
Saturday, September 14
12 PM – 5 PM
The Army Ground Forces Association is a volunteer group in 1943 coast artillery uniform 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 about the historic time period of September 1943 and the restoration and preservation projects currently underway.

Cold War Day
Nike Missile Radar Site - Parking Lot L
Nike Launch Site – Park in Lot across from Hercules Missile on Hartshorne Drive (Main Park Road)
Sunday, September 15
12 PM - 4 PM
Guided tour of the Nike Integrated Fire Control (IFC) Area will allow you to see the inner workings where nuclear armed Nike Hercules missiles were controlled and guided during the Cold War defense of the New York metropolitan area. While taking a guided tour of this one-time top secret missile site, you will have the opportunity to meet and talk with some of the veterans who worked on Cold War era Nike Air Defense System.

Monarch Butterfly Walk
U.S. Life-Saving Station Parking Lot (between Lot D and Lot E)
Saturday, October 5
10 AM – 11:30 AM
This remarkable insect, whose migration route ends in Mexico, is featured on a ranger-led tour. Please call 732-872-5970 to make free reservations. ♥ 1 mile

Every Kid Outdoors
Fort Hancock Post
Sunday, October 6
11 AM – 2 PM
Every Kid Outdoors is a national initiative that provides fourth graders with a free National Park Pass for themselves and their families to visit all of our federally managed public lands, waters, and shores. Come and pick up your entry pass, good for one year, and join us for a day filled with adventure. Learn about the special changes taking place in the fall season at Sandy Hook, such as bird migration (live birds and hawks), fall equinox, hibernation (both plants and animals), fish migration, and weather.

“Big Sit” Bird Count
Monmouth County Audubon Society
Spermaceti Cove Boardwalk
Saturday, October 12
ALL DAY
Join MCAS to tally as many bird species that can be seen or heard in one day and in one spot from sunrise to sunset. This annual, international, noncompetitive birding event is hosted by Bird Watcher’s Digest to promote birds and the birding community. All are welcome to join for one hour or the whole day. Bring binoculars.

Lighthouse Challenge of New Jersey Weekend
Sandy Hook Lighthouse
Saturday, October 19, 8 AM - 6 PM
Sunday, October 20, 8 AM - 6 PM
The Sandy Hook Light is one of 10 New Jersey land-based lighthouses, museum and two life-saving stations along the Atlantic coastline and Delaware Bay open for tours this weekend. This weekend of fun and exploration will help raise funds for the continued preservation, education, and restoration of these historic structures. For more information, visit https://lhc challengenj.org or follow on facebook: Lighthouse Challenge of NJ.

Clean Ocean Action’s Fall Beach Sweep
Lot D
Saturday, October 26
9 AM - 12:30 PM
Clean Ocean Action’s Beach Sweeps are a biannual, statewide beach clean-up that occurs at over 70 locations throughout the state of NJ. 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. Bring gloves, attend rain or shine, and dress for the weather. Closed, hard-soled shoes are recommended. For more information, please visit Clean Ocean Action’s website www.CleanOceanAction.org or call 732-872-0111.
Secret Places of Sandy Hook: Rapid Fire Gun Batteries
Lot M
Sunday, October 27, 2019
2 PM - 4 PM
Join the park historian to learn about the rapid fire gun batteries at Fort Hancock. Explore Batteries Peck, Engle, Urmston, and Morris that date from 1898 through 1909. Bring flashlight/ head lamps, insect repellant and wear comfortable walking shoes.
Free. Call the Sandy Hook Visitor Center at 732-872-5970 to make a reservation. ♥ ½ mile

Fall Bird Walk
Monmouth County Audubon Society
U.S. Life-Saving Station Parking Lot (between Lot D and Lot E)
Sunday, October 27
10 AM – 12 PM
Join our 2-hour walk to look for arriving fall waterfowl, hawks and sparrows. Enjoy the spectacle of migration when birds are passing through to their wintering grounds, including many that leave North America for the winter. Wear layers and bring binoculars. ♥ 1 mile

Spooky Tales/ Ghosts of Historic Fort Hancock
American Littoral Society
Building #18, Fort Hancock
Wednesday, October 30
7 PM - 9 PM
Get into the Halloween Spirit on this moonlight walk around Historic Fort Hancock where ghosts have been known to linger. Cider and fall snacks will be provided. Bring flashlights.
Cost: $10 for Members/$25 for Non-Members. Call (732) 291-0055 for more information and to make reservations. ♥ 2 miles

NOVEMBER

Bird Banding
Monmouth County Audubon Society
Lot M, South of Grassy Field
Saturday, November 2
8 AM – 10 PM
Join Tom Brown to observe and learn about this long-term Sandy Hook bird banding project.

Holly Forest Ramble
U.S. Life-Saving Station Parking Lot (between Lot D and Lot E)
Saturday, November 9
2 PM – 3:30 PM
A ranger-led walk through Sandy Hook’s maritime holly forest at a prime time to visit the area. Learn how the plants and animals in this habitat adapt to extreme climate conditions. ♥ 1 mile

Surf Fishing Clinic
Building #18, Fort Hancock
Saturday, November 16
8 AM – 3 PM
Join American Littoral Society Tagging Director, Jeff Dement, for a day of surf fishing and instruction on the beach at Sandy Hook. Instructional skills include casting, knot tying, lure/bait selection, and “reading” a beach. All skill levels are welcomed. Rods, reels and tackle will be provided, but bring your own equipment if you have it. Children under 18 are welcome with a supervising adult. Coffee and doughnuts will be provided but please bring your lunch. Space is limited. Call (732) 291-0055 for more information and to make reservations. Fees: $30 per Member Family, $75 per Non-Member Family.

The ♥ indicates programs with moderate physical activity. Get some exercise as you participate in the program and enjoy the park.

Want to receive email notices of programs and events from us? Please send a message to Charles_Markis@nps.gov with program guide in the subject line, and we will add you to our mailing list.

FORT HANCOCK DAYS

WEEKEND
Mark the anniversary of the 1895 establishment of Fort Hancock and discover the fort’s role in the defense of our nation.

World War II Harbor Defense Lantern Tour
Fort Hancock Museum/
Post Guardhouse
Friday, October 11
6:30 PM - 9 PM
Volunteer living historians from the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) in uniform as World War II coast artillery soldiers will take you for a walk that includes several seacoast gun batteries of Fort Hancock, highlighting the restored Battery Gunnison/New Peck. Bring a flashlight and dress for the weather. ♥ 1.5 miles

Fort Hancock Day
Battery Gunnison/New Peck
Sunday, October 13
12 PM – 4:30 PM
Join us as we commemorate the renaming of the “Fortifications at Sandy Hook” to “Fort Hancock” in October 1895. As part of this commemoration, volunteers from the Army Ground Forces Association uniformed as World War II era Coast Artillery soldiers will bring Battery Gunnison/New Peck and its 6-inch guns to life as they were in October 1943. See the fully restored 1920s to 1940s vintage interior electric system, and learn about Fort Hancock Army medical support. Learn how the Army planned to counter chemical weapons with the fully restored Chemical Decontamination and Overpressure system. Learn about 1940s metal working machines and see machinists making parts to repair or replicate historic items. Participate in loading the guns, tracking ships, learn “artillery math” and experience a soldier’s life at Ft. Hancock in October 1943.

—end of listings—