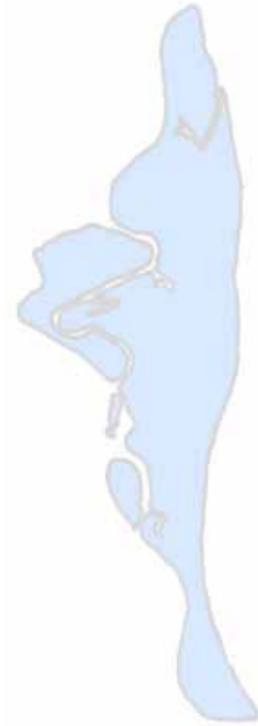




National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cumberland Island National Seashore  
101 Wheeler Street  
St. Marys, GA 31558



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



Park News

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



# The Mullet Wrapper

The official newsletter of  
Cumberland Island National Seashore

June through August 2012

Firefighters use a drip torch to ignite bakfire along Grand Avenue as a control measure for the 2008 South Cut Fire. (NPS Photo)

## Letter From The Superintendent

By FRED BOYLES

**T**his past summer brought home the danger of wildland fires as a record hot and dry summer spawned devastating fires all over the west. It was tragic to see the loss of life and property in so many places on the evening news. Of course, our situation on Cumberland Island is different, but in the past we have had some major fires that have also taken their toll. On the other hand, after the smoke had cleared some of our fires have had a positive effect on vegetation and wildlife.

One of the steps the park has taken in the last two years has been to make a major change in how we manage fire on Cumberland Island. For most of the park's 40 year history fire management has been driven by suppression. After consulting with many fire professionals, I came to the conclusion that this direction could lead to an undesired outcome. Suppression can lead to high fuel loading and that can lead to fires that can have a disastrous outcome. That could be the loss of homes and even threaten public and employee safety. Since fire is a natural part of our environment on barrier islands, there are ecological advantages to bringing fire back into the environment.

In 2010, the park moved the responsibility of fire into the Resource Management Division. Our Chief of Resource Management, John Fry, hired Ody Anderson as our Fire Management Officer. Thanks to his extensive experience in the field, Ody began the long process of turning the direction of the program towards fire management from fire suppression. The most important step in that process is the

development of a new Fire Management Plan. By working with other agencies and relying on good science, that process is well underway.

The planning process will always emphasize that employee and public safety is the top priority closely followed by the protection of property. Towards that end, Ody has secured funding and completed projects to develop fire buffers for those properties that have been most vulnerable in the past. He has also acquired funding for contractor assistance for the plan. In addition, Dr. Cecil Frost has completed his study on pre-settlement vegetation and natural fire regimes for the Island.

An important step in the planning process is a series of public scoping meetings that will be held in November. On the evening of Monday, November 19 at 7:00 PM at the Camden County Fire Department and then on Tuesday, November 20 at 1:00 PM at the Black Barracks on the Island following our traditional lunch at the YCC Kitchen. The Monday meeting will offer the local community a chance to provide input into the process while the Tuesday gathering will be aimed specifically for those Island residents who have a special interest in fire management on the Island. I hope you can join us to offer your input.



Fred Boyles  
Superintendent

# Safety Corner



By JAMES OWENS

## Seven Common Accident Causes

Consider this statistic: 80 out of every 100 accidents are the fault of the person involved in the incident. Unsafe Acts cause four times as many accidents & injuries as unsafe conditions. Accidents occur for many reasons. In most industries people tend to look for “things” to blame when an accident happens, because it’s easier than looking for “root causes,” such as those listed below. Consider the underlying accident causes described. Have you been guilty of any of these attitudes or behaviors? If so, you may have not been injured-but next time you may not be so lucky.

- **Taking Shortcuts:** Every day we make decisions we hope will make the job faster and more efficient. Short cuts that reduce your safety on the job are not shortcuts, but an increased chance for injury.
- **Being Overconfident:** Confidence is a good thing. Overconfidence is too much of a good thing. “It’ll never happen to me” is an attitude that can lead to improper procedures, tools, or methods in your work. Any of these can lead to an injury.
- **Starting a Task with Incomplete Instructions:** To do the job safely and right the first time you need complete information. Ask for explanations about work procedures and safety precautions.
- **Poor Housekeeping:** Housekeeping is an accurate indicator of everyone’s attitude about quality, production and safety. Poor housekeeping creates hazards of all types. Good housekeeping involves both pride and safety.
- **Ignoring Safety Procedures:** Purposely failing to observe safety procedures can endanger you and your co-workers.
- **Mental Distractions from Work:** Having a bad day at home and worrying about it at work is a hazardous combination. Dropping your ‘mental’ guard can pull your focus away from safe work procedures. You can also be distracted when you’re busy working and a friend comes by to talk while you are trying to work. Don’t become a statistic because you took your eyes off the machine “just for a minute.”
- **Failure to Pre-Plan the Work:** There is a lot of talk today about Job Safety Analysis. JSA’s are an effective way to figure out the smartest ways to work safely and effectively.



# Rep. Kingston Visits Cumberland

By FRED BOYLES



On August 20th, Congressman Jack Kingston dropped by the park for a report on the Lands and Legacies tours as pictured here. What’s in store for Lands and Legacies in the future? The park is currently conducting (with the help of our dedicated cadre of volunteers) a survey developed by the University of Idaho to assess the program from those who have taken the tours along with those who chose not to.



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

Cumberland Island National Seashore  
101 Wheeler Street  
St. Marys, Georgia 31558  
www.nps.gov/cuis  
cuis\_superintendent@nps.gov

**Park Visitor Center:**  
(912) 882-4336 ext.254  
1-877-860-6787 (Reservations)

**Park Headquarters:**  
(912) 882-4336

**Graphic Designer:**  
Justin Helton  
Administrative Support Assistant

**Editorial Consultant:**  
Doug Hoffman  
Wildlife Biologist



Here ye! Here ye! Please take note that you are invited to the 2012 Annual Thanksgiving Cumberland Island Luncheon that will take place on Cumberland Island National Seashore on Tuesday, November 20th at the YCC Kitchen. Lunch will be served promptly at 12:00pm. All Island Residents , park staff, and volunteers are welcome as well as their families. Please plan on bringing a dish to share and please RSVP to Administrative Support Assistant Justin Helton by November 16th with how many people we are to expect in your party as well as what dish you will be bringing. Lunch will be followed by a Fire Public Scoping meeting at the Black Barracks at 1:00pm. As usual the boat will leave for the Island at 11:00am. Look forward to seeing your smiling faces! Oh.... and Happy Thanksgiving! Gobble, gobble!



# Special Use Permits

By BRIDGET BOHNET

So, what is a Special Use Permit? This article is intended to provide an overview of the Special Park Uses Program which has the primary responsibility for reviewing special use permit requests. The Special Park Uses Program includes all activities for which regulations contained in 36CFR Parts 1-7 and Part 14 specify that a permit is required. Special use permits are required for special events, First Amendment rallies, filming, telecommunications, and right-of-way permits for utilities and roads, as well as for other non-visitor activities occurring on park land. A special park use may involve either rights or privileges, and may or may not support the purposes for which a park was established. The park is required to follow the specific regulations regarding issuance of special use permits. In accordance with RM-53 guidelines, the National Park Service will permit special events when there is a meaningful association between the park area and the event, and when the event will contribute to visitor understanding of the significance of the park area.

The National Park Service **will not** permit the staging of special events that are conducted primarily for the material or financial benefit of organizers or participants; or are commercial in nature; or that demand in-park advertising or publicity; or for which a separate public admission fee is to be charged. However, park buildings, or specially designated locations that are suitable and appropriate may, at the discretion of the superintendent, be made available for private, “by-invitation-only” events.

As an overall requirement, special use permits that may cause damage to park resources, are contrary to the park’s purpose, interfere with normal visitor activities, or impede park concession operations are not allowed.



Kelly's Zeros, a WWII historical reenactment group, spent a weekend on Cumberland Island conducting military exercises after obtaining a Special Use Permit

# Interpretation and Education

By MAGGIE TYLER

It's been a busy season for the Interpretation and education Division. We've had lots of faces come and go. In an earlier Mullet Wrapper article I wrote about special project funds and how they would support additional interns for the Park. We were very lucky in that two interns joined us this summer through this program. Patty Carillo and Cecilla Walenza spent 12 weeks working on various projects throughout the Seashore. Patty focused on interpretation by helping with our traveling trunk program. Soon, we will have these valuable learning tools in the Camden County Elementary schools. Cecilla's time on the island was devoted to Wilderness management; sign inventory and new map text will help us track our next path to visitor enjoyment.



From left to right: Cecilla Walenza, Misaki Ohkura, Patty Carillo and Superintendent Fred Boyles.

Returning for a second year was the Japanese SCA program. This program matches a student from International Christian University in Tokyo with a park in the NPS. Our student this year, Misaki Ohkura came to us wanting to improve her English through working at the Sea Camp Ranger Station and studying American Sea Turtles. Over her eight short weeks she made quite the impression on the staff and we wish her well!

Two other interns came and went and their presence is missed. Audrey Bohl finished her year long internship this June. Her time here focused on staffing Sea Camp and helping with the volunteer program. Finally, while not working for the Interpretation Division, Resource Management intern Angela Gedvillas spent many an afternoon staffing the St. Marys museum.

While Cumberland Island has never really adjusted to the life of a "seasonal" ranger, we have jumped in to the program full speed ahead with our Lands and Legacies park guides. Sara Cote, Alexander Altvater and Rebecca Lucas have all left for other job opportunities. In July, we welcomed three new park guides: Roy Williams, Laurabeth Johnson, and Marilee Akland. They have made the transition quite well and are enjoying being the newest team members on the Interpretation and Education team.



New park employees (from left to right) Laurabeth Johnson, Roy Williams and Marilee Akland.

## Lands and Legacies Tour

By JUSTIN HELTON

In early August the park completed its first year of the Lands and Legacies Tours on Cumberland Island. The legislatively mandated tours served 3,999 visitors in its first full year which ended up being roughly 10% of the Island's visitation. Of those visitors 47% were seniors, 41% were adults and 11% were children. Over 90 of those visitors had some level of special need that were accommodated by the tours. The average number of visitors per day that took the tour was 12.47. The overall response was extremely positive mostly due to the outstanding job done by our interpreters (park guides, regular staff and volunteers) who conducted the tours.



## Quote Corner

"It is curious - curious that physical courage should be so common in the world, and moral courage so rare."

-Mark Twain

## Long-term Terrestrial Monitoring Continues

By MICHAEL W. BYRNE, SARAH CORBETT HEATH, AND BRIANA SMREKAR

The Southeast Coast Inventory and Monitoring Network continued the implementation of its long-term vegetation, dead-downed materials, amphibian, reptile, and bird monitoring programs at the Seashore this spring and summer. These "Vital Signs", or information-rich attributes that are used to evaluate the condition of a resource, are monitored once every three years. Monitoring previously occurred in 2009.

Several measures for each of the Vital Signs were collected at 30 spatially balanced and randomly selected sampling locations across the Seashore. Measures of the vegetation community include cover, species composition, and frequency collected in three structural (i.e., height) strata: groundcover, shrub, and canopy. Dead-downed materials are a component of fire fuels and include duff, litter, fine woody debris, and coarse woody debris. The amphibian, reptile, and bird monitoring focuses on detection/non-detection.

The Seashore hosts 19 known amphibians; which includes 14 species in the Order Anura (i.e., frogs and toads) and five species in the Order Caudata (i.e., salamanders, newts, amphiumas, sirens). Because of their complex life histories, habitat requirements, anatomy, and physiology, amphibians are considered to be good indicators of changes in ecosystem conditions as they are affected by climate change, land use development and conversion, contaminants, and changes in hydrology. Commonly observed amphibians species during the 2012 monitoring include Green Treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*) and Squirrel Treefrog (*Hyla squirella*). Although the monitoring protocol focuses on amphibians, reptiles are also detected and this information is also used to improve our understanding of all herpetofauna at the Seashore. Examples of reptiles observed on Cumberland Island in 2012 include the Coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*) and Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*).

Over 300 species of birds are known to use the Seashore, many of which are year-round residents, while others use the Seashore during their migration or specifically for nesting and brood-rearing. The composition of the bird community provides a plethora of information about the condition of the resources available to wildlife in an area. For example, an area with many generalist species (e.g., American Robin, Northern Cardinal) or non-native species (e.g., House Sparrow, European Starling) is generally in poorer condition or more impacted by anthropogenic stressors than are area composed of a many specialist species (e.g., warblers, woodpeckers). Commonly observed bird species during the 2012 monitoring on Cumberland Island include the White-eyed Vireo and the Northern Parula Warbler.

Plants are the most conspicuous attribute of the landscape, and because their role as primary producers of integral importance to ecosystem function. Plant composition and structure often reflects less obvious characteristics of an area (e.g., changing hydrology) and ecosystem condition. The Seashore has 790 known species, subspecies, and varieties of plants. Anecdotally, the effects of fire suppression and drought were observed during the 2012 monitoring. The

Terrestrial Monitoring continued from page 4.



Green Treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*)



Squirrel Treefrog (*Hyla squirella*)



Plants observed during the 2012 field season. Clockwise from top left: fiddlehead of Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Common blue violet (*Viola sororia*), Southern dewberry (*Rubus trivialis*), and Pinebarren frostweed (*Helianthemum corymbosum*).

# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

## Another Record Sea Turtle Nesting Year

By DOUG HOFFMAN

The 2012 sea turtle nesting season was the highest on record in Georgia, logging over 2,200 nests along the state's 14 nesting beaches. Cumberland Island experienced it's highest nest numbers ever recorded, tallying 700 nests and far surpassing our previous high of 486 nests in 2010. Warmer-than-average March and April temperatures caused turtles to arrive earlier. CUIS recorded the first nest of the state's season on April 25th, a full 2 weeks ahead of normal. Genetic analysis of egg samples from nests this year shows that roughly half of the nesting females on CUIS are new turtles that we have no record of along the Georgia coast for the previous 4 years. This suggests 1) that conservation efforts enacted 40 years ago are beginning to show results; and/or 2) the early season warm temperatures caused some Florida nesters to stop short and begin nesting on Cumberland. The Park's turtle season will draw to a close at the end of October. Despite several tropical storms and high tide events this year, the overall success of the CUIS turtle program was one of the best in the state as usual. The last three years have been CUIS' highest since recordkeeping began in the 1970's. The 2010, 2011, and 2012 seasons produced 1,558 nests on Cumberland.



Terrestrial Monitoring continued from page 3.

widespread decline and mortality of the Red bay (*Persea borbonia*) due to Laurel Wilt disease was also noted. As a component of the vegetation monitoring, a simplified fire fuels monitoring was implemented in 2012. Fire fuels data will help resource and fire planning for the sites at which this sampling was conducted, as well as similar areas across the park.



Red-bellied Snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata*)



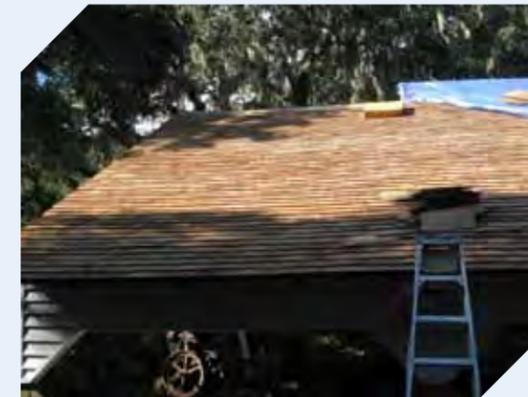
Coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*)



By CARL DAVID

## Repair & Replace

The park has three different contractors on the island performing work at different locations. We have a "Roof Replacement" project that will replace the cedar shingles on five historic structures. The structures are the Dairy Manager's House, Dungeness Servants Quarters (Turtle Dorm), Black Barracks, Black Barracks Outbuilding and the Carpenters Shed.



New roof is installed by contractors at the Dungeness Carpenter's Shed.

The second contractor is doing interior repairs and painting at the Phillips House in Davisville.



Interior repairs and painting done by contractors at the Phillip's House.

When these repairs are complete, a new A/C system will be installed. The last project that has just begun is the "Emergency" clean-up of the parks trail system and stabilization of small section of the Dungeness Seawall. After Tropical Storms Beryl and Debby, many of the parks trails were rendered impassable due to downed trees and the Dungeness Seawall had some extensive erosion occur just to the Southwest of the Captain's House. All of this work should be completed within the next few months and everything should be back to normal until the next round of contracts are awarded.

## Accessibility

In late August of 2012, the park had an A/E Firm do a site visit to the Sea camp Campground. They will be designing a new restroom and shower building that will be compliant with ADA standards and also provide a much needed upgrade to the facility.



A&E firm conducting site survey for a restroom design at Sea Camp Campground.

The building will be designed to be constructed of concrete block and the exterior will have wood siding so we can maintain the outdoor look that the visitors want and that fits in with the natural surroundings.



A&E firm along with NPS employees work to locate the septic tank at the Sea Camp Campground restrooms in order to conduct elevation tests to ensure proper slope in the line.