National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

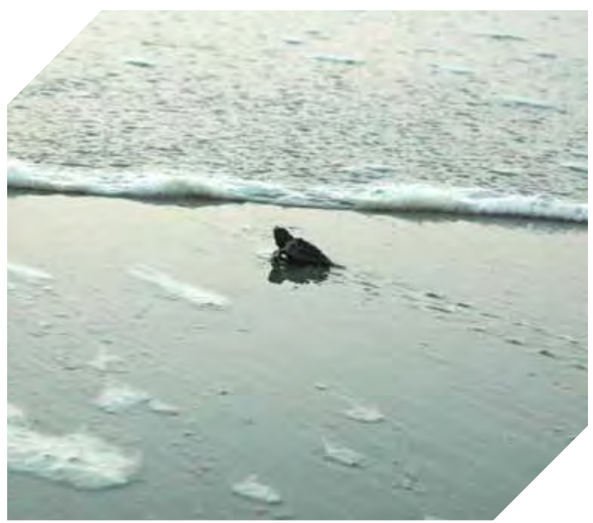
Cumberland Island National Seashore
101 Wheeler Street
St. Marys, GA 31558

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Adopt a Sea Turtle Nest on Cumberland

By JOHN FRY

One of the most successful programs on Cumberland Island has been the decade's long effort to protect and monitor sea turtle nesting. Last year's 700 nests was evidence that long term monitoring and stewardship will move our nesting sea turtles in a positive direction. Although there has been great public interest in this program, there has been very little that an interested citizen can do to help in this effort. Despite that level of interest, the park's sea turtle program came close to being cut due to the federal budget sequester. For those who love Cumberland and want to help, there is now a way to pitch in and assist. For $25 you can adopt a sea turtle nest on Cumberland Island through seaturtle.org. Your tax deductible donation is split between the park and seaturtle.org, an international conservation organization that supports research and conservation efforts in the sea turtle community. The park receives $15 for each adopted nest that will go towards our efforts to monitor and protect nests on the island. It's an easy process. Just go to SeaTurtle.org and follow the adopt-a-nest links. You will receive a certificate and a number to use to monitor your nest and see when hatchlings emerge. Ten nests have been adopted already, let's make that 200 by the end of the summer. The turtles are depending on us!

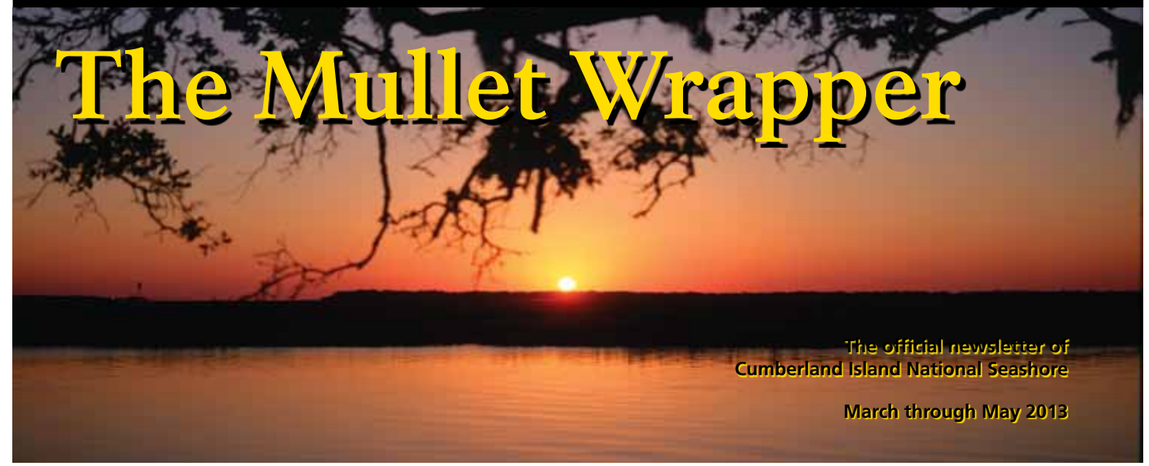


A turtle hatchling has almost reached it's destination after emerging from the nest.
You can help make this moment a reality.

Park News

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Mullet Wrapper



The official newsletter of
Cumberland Island National Seashore

March through May 2013

The sun sets on Cumberlad Island National Seashore. (NPS Photo)

Letter From The Superintendent

By FRED BOYLES

Of late, the question I have been asked the most often is, "How has the sequester affected the park?" Like all things dealing with our budget, it is complex and has been a moving target as we have adapted to it since we began planning for it before the New Year.

The sequester translated into a 5% cut in the park's operational budget. That is $150,000 from our budget at the end of the fifth month with seven months left in the year. The NPS had provided each park with a six step sequence to follow to make the cuts that would arrive at the targeted amount. The sixth step was to furlough permanent employees. Other steps that were considered were cutting travel, purchasing supplies/materials, training, overtime, contracts paid out of the operational base funds and cutting temporary positions.

The largest cost savings item for Cumberland Island was not filling vacant permanent positions. Although we were able to reduce in nearly every category, the great savings came from not filling permanent positions. Currently three permanent positions are vacant, all of which has hit our operations hard. The budget technician position (who also happens to be the park's safety officer), a visitor use assistant position and mechanic position are all vacant and cannot be filled. Other members of the park staff have been able to fill in for some of the missed duties that those positions did, but many things just are not being done. Not filling these vacancies prevented us from furloughing our employees.

Perhaps the greatest visual casualty of the sequester has been the Footsteps Walk. This is a twice daily interpretive program that is very popular with our visitors. Since the sequester hit, that program has only been offered a few times. Another very visible cut has been the elimination of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) which is a program that allows us to hire six high schools students to work in the park during the summer. These are just two of the areas where these reductions have impacted the park.

Every division has been affected by these cuts to our operations. I am hopeful that these cuts will be restored but am also planning for further cuts in the future.

Fred Boyles
Superintendent

Safety Corner

By ODY ANDERSON

I have been asked and have accepted the duties for the Cumberland Island National Seashore Safety Officer and thought I would take a moment to introduce myself and share some of my thoughts.

As a long time wildland fire fighter, my entire career has revolved around my personal safety and the safety of others. There is not one emergency incident that does not have priority number one set as the safety of firefighters and the public. Being from Colorado I have seen tragedy strike within my own districts with the South Canyon Fire of 1994, Battlement Creek Fire of 1976, and more incidents involving Federal co-workers than I care to remember. I was also on the Field Office Safety Committee with the BLM at my past job. What we do can be difficult and dangerous and it's up to all of us to assess the risk and mitigate those identified risks to an acceptable level.

There are several tools available to us to identify and assess risk before we take on a task. Common sense is the most important tool we have and should be used at all times. We have job specific Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) to help guide us through identifying and mitigating risk, and they should be used and reviewed. No job is more important than each of us going home in the same condition as we came to work in.

It's summer time on the island and even though we have many hazards here, there is no bigger one than heat disorder this time of year. This is a hot and humid environment and we all need to review the symptoms and treatment for heat disorders. This is a very good document to review with your co-workers http://www.wildfirelessons.net/documents/6MFS_HeatDisorders.pdf. We all need to keep an eye on each other and the visitors that come to enjoy our Park.

If you have any questions in regards to safety, please feel free to contact me and we will discuss and try to find remedies for the issue. Remember safety first, it's better than a hearse!

Collateral Duty Safety Officer Ody Anderson

Detail Rangers

By BRIDGET BOHNET

Some of you may have noticed some unfamiliar faces in the law enforcement staff over the past several months. During Shad's convalescence, law enforcement rangers from several different Southeast Region parks volunteered to help us with patrol coverage. Jill Jaworski , the Patrol Supervisor from Castillo de San Marcos, was here in February. Sean Reier and Lynne Belanich, Patrol Rangers from Cape Hatteras National Seashore were here in March and April respectively. Ocmulgee National Monument allowed us to borrow Courtney Murphy in May and Big Cypress sent Luke Conrad to help us out in June. We have been fortunate to have these rangers here at Cumberland Island. Each have provided valuable assistance with Navy patrol coverage and response to emergency situations during their time on the island. We thank them for their help and service!

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

Hurricane Preparedness

By BRIDGET BOHNET

Each year coastal communities prepare for hurricane season which is recognized as running from June 1st through November 30th, although tropical weather can occur at any time. Residents along the Atlantic coastline should be prepared for storms including hurricanes, tropical storms and nor'easters. Storms that form in warm water found in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico have the potential to bring storm surge, high winds, tornadoes and inland flooding to the Island. The hurricane forecast for 2013 is for sixteen (16) named storms. Of those, nine (9) storms may become hurricanes and five (5) may reach major hurricane intensity (Category 3 strength and higher).

Those living in coastal areas should be prepared for all aspects of tropical weather including storm surge. Storm surge is often the most overlooked, hardest to predict, and very dangerous facet of tropical weather. Storm surge can very quickly and without warning cause total inundation of coastal and upland areas. Powerful storms can easily produce storm surge of over 15 feet without tidal effects. Since most of the United States' densely populated Atlantic and Gulf coast areas are less than 10 feet above sea level the danger from surge is tremendous. In October 1898 a category four hurricane caused severe damage to Brunswick and the surrounding communities including Cumberland Island. This storm brought a 16 foot storm surge to the area killing hundreds. In 1964, Hurricane Dora did serious damage which included both storm surge and winds.

Meteorologists with the National Weather Service recommend that all of Georgia's barrier islands be evacuated prior to the arrival of hurricane force winds. If a storm forecast area includes Cumberland Island, the evacuation of all park personnel living on the island will be mandatory and the Park will be closed. Island residents will be notified when this mandatory evacuation order is issued and should be prepared to evacuate as well. Once the park is closed, emergency services will not be available, and the ferry service will not run as long as the Park is closed.

When it appears that a hurricane/tropical storm is within 96 hours (4 days) of striking South Georgia, Cumberland Island National Seashore will implement its 2013 Hurricane Plan. This plan is broken into several operational phases using the National Weather Service's advisories for tropical weather and hurricanes. Our plan creates a system which allows preparations to begin early enough to secure Park facilities on both the island and the mainland, allow the safe evacuation of visitors and allow more time for employees to complete hurricane preparations of their homes and evacuate to areas of safety. During the 96 hour window, the Superintendent will issue a closure order for Park facilities and the ferry will stop running. While the Park's plan is based on 96 hours, the plan is flexible based on the speed and intensity of the projected storm arrival. Estimates of possible tropical weather landfall will be based on information received from the National Weather Service and local authorities. The primary objective of this hurricane plan is to safely prepare for the arrival of tropical force winds and weather while securing park facilities and allowing park staff to prepare and evacuate.

During storm preparation, the park will implement the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS is based on the premise that the Superintendent delegates specific authority to an Incident Commander and staff to resolve an incident in a manner consistent with the overall agency goals. In this plan, the Superintendent will normally delegate authority to the Incident Command Team (ICT) to manage hurricane preparations and subsequent actions following hurricane landfall on Cumberland Island National Seashore. This Incident Command Organization is designed to allow flexibility to adjust in response to the size of the storm incident.

Once the park is closed in anticipation of hazardous conditions, visitors, including island residents and their guests will not be permitted on park property until Damage Assessment teams have determined that all health and safety related issues have been mitigated. Reopening of the park will be coordinated with Camden County Emergency Operations Center, and conducted in conjunction with applicable cooperating agencies. This means that island residents and their guests will not be permitted to tour park facilities, have access to park roads and trails, or access beach crossings and beach areas until the park is re-opened to the public. Those individuals that are found within closed areas during damage assessment/recovery operations will be cited for entering closed areas and/or creating an unsafe condition.

While I hope we are never faced with a massive storm preparation or recovery managing a park on the Atlantic Seaboard means that we must be prepared. The devastation that Hurricane Sandy brought to the New York and New Jersey area last fall shows us that no one area is immune to the path of a massive storm and the best plan to recovery is to have a good plan in place.

Shipwreck Discovered

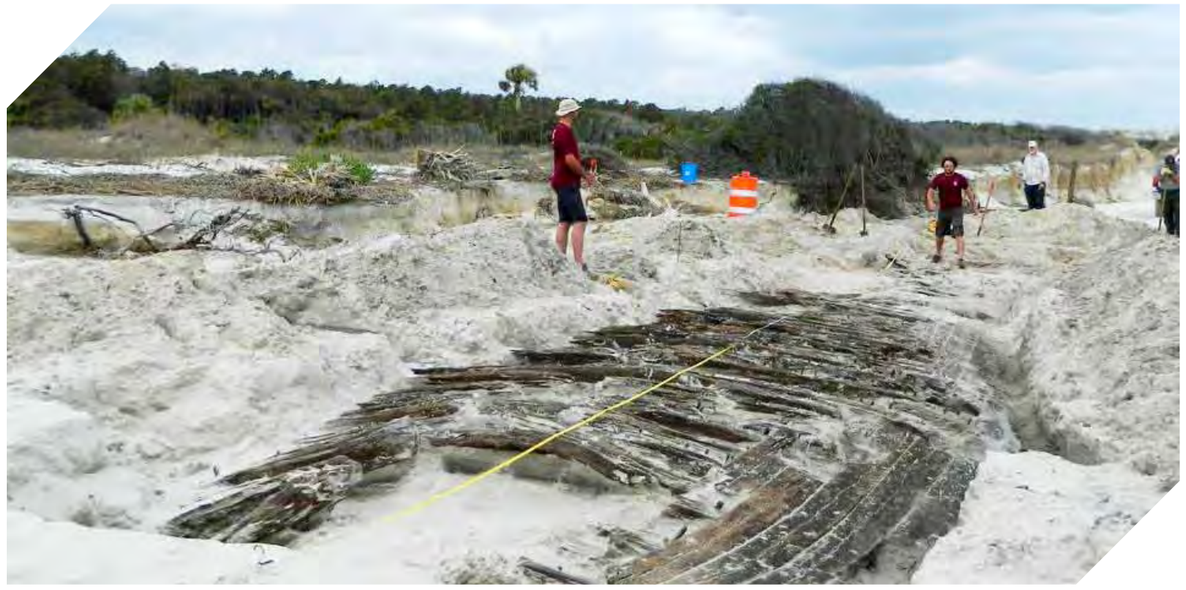
By JOHN FRY

Cumberland Island made quite a stir back in January when a previously undocumented shipwreck was found on the beach. The wreck, first discovered by Cumberland Island maintenance staff and island residents, was uncovered during a period of unusually high tides and surf. The park's Resource Management staff made an initial assessment and National Park Service Archaeologists based at the Southeast Archaeological Center (SEAC) in Tallahassee, Florida conducted excavations during the week of January 14, 2013.

Archaeologists uncovered a section of wooden vessel approximately 80 feet long. This is only a portion of the boat and is not the full craft. Due to the broken nature of the wreck, archaeologists were unable to determine the function. However, based on the boat's construction, it is believed that it was built in the mid-19th century. The two most prominent features uncovered are the 30+ ribs and approximately 10 pieces of the outer shell planking. The wooden timbers are fastened together by pegs or treenails. Archaeologists were unable to identify the wood type used in the construction.

Historical records document several shipwrecks off Cumberland Island. However, due to the lack of artifacts and identifying information associated with this piece of shipwreck archaeologists are unable to determine the ship's name, origin, or type of vessel. Further historical research will be needed before identifying characteristics are attached to this wreck and it is possible that this wreck will always remain unidentified.

After excavating the shipwreck, including measuring, photographing and mapping, the wreck was covered for its protection. This is a common practice for protecting shipwrecks along the Atlantic barrier island coast. Wooden objects which have been submerged in a marine environment will quickly deteriorate once exposed to the air.



Quote Corner

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

-Abraham Lincoln

Beach Driving Regulations – A Reminder

By BRIDGET BOHNET

With the approach of the summer season, visitation to the beaches of Cumberland Island will increase. Consequently, there will be an increase in vehicles accessing and driving on the beaches. Summer is the nesting season for sea turtles and shore birds. An increase in visitation and beach driving can adversely affect these resources. The Shore Protection Act was enacted as an effort to protect and manage Georgia's shoreline features including sand dunes, beaches, sandbars, and shoals. Beach driving, as indicated by Title 12, Rule 391-2-2, is allowed only under very specific criteria and is administered by Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division staff through the authority of the Shore Protection Committee.

A Beach Driving Authorization is required when a motor vehicle is used on, over, or across the dynamic dune field or beaches. Those individuals seeking an authorization must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Shore Protection Committee that they meet one or more of the following criteria which justify driving on the beach:

- Are engaged in a bona fide educational activity or scientific research that requires beach driving.
- Are a legal resident or full-time resident on the island for which the authorization is requested.
- Are involved in beach maintenance or security which makes driving a vehicle necessary.
- Own or have an interest in real property on the island in question, or are the spouses, parents, children, grandchildren or other lineal descendants (and spouses) of such individuals.

Beach driving authorizations are issued to individuals only. They are non-transferrable, and must be in possession of the person to whom the authorization is issued when that person is engaged in beach driving.

During the period of May 1 to October 31, beach driving is restricted to daylight hours (1/2 hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset). Driving is permitted only on the wet sand beach. Access to the wet sand beach is from existing access points only. Authorizations may be revoked for failure to comply with the rules and regulations. Blocking the beach or any designated route by any means (such as vehicle, camping gear, fishing equipment, etc.) in such a manner that prevents safe, legal flow of vehicular traffic is prohibited.

In an effort to ensure compliance with the Shore Protection Act, park law enforcement rangers, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources law enforcement staff, will be checking permit compliance for those residents/visitors that are contacted on the beach with a vehicle. Please be sure to comply with the Shore Protection Act regulations. Failure to do so may result in revocation of your authorization and State and/or Federal fines.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Welcome 2013 Sea Turtle Interns

By DOUG HOFFMAN

This summer's sea turtle interns arrived in mid-May. Corie O'Brien is no stranger to Cumberland Island, having served as a turtle intern in 2011. Corie received her Bachelor's Degree in Integrative Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne in the spring and hopes this summer's internship will help further her career goal of working in the wildlife conservation field. Her internship responsibilities include managing the daily duties of the park's turtle project through the entire season, ending in October. Our second intern, Brooke Fleming, is currently attending Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas where she is majoring in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She is interested in gaining valuable experience in wildlife conservation this summer. Brooke will work with the sea turtle program through early August.

Sea Turtle Interns Corie O'Brien (left) and Brooke Fleming (right) at the Resource Management Field Office.

Even Sea Turtles Cannot Escape the... Effects of Sequestration

By DOUG HOFFMAN

Budget cuts, employee furloughs, closure of government offices – all words commonly heard earlier this year throughout the United States as Congress implemented the sequestration process. What was not heard was "sea turtles." However, Cumberland's sea turtles did not escape the impacts. Early planning for the mandatory 5% park-wide cuts identified funding for the park's annual sea turtle internship program as an item that would be cut. The program was indeed cut this year, but was temporarily saved at the last minute with salary savings resulting from not filling three permanenet positions.

For well over a decade, the park has funded the annual summer internship program through the Student Conservation Association. Interns conduct daily patrols of the beach; locating nests; monitoring those nests; protecting them from tidal wash overs and predation; and finally inventorying them after hatching to evaluate success. The interns provide a much needed service to the park and gain valuable experience in their field of study that helps with future employment opportunities. Cumberland's 18- mile undeveloped beach is arguably one of the most important nesting beaches in Georgia, accounting for 25 to 30 percent of the statewide nesting total each year. The CUIS sea turtle program is also one of the most highly acclaimed among the 15 nesting beaches in the state. News of the potential budget impacts is troublesome to sea turtle managers throughout the coast, especially with recent nesting trends suggesting that Georgia's sea turtle population is well on its way to recovery.

MAINTENANCE

By CARL DAVID

Shower House Improvements

The showers at the Seacamp Campground are getting a new look. Work has been completed on replacing the floor boards in each of the showers and the walkway between the showers. Metal drain pans that were located under the decking in the shower stalls were removed to prevent the accumulation of moisture and promoting rot in the floor joists. This repair will help the deck boards dry out and extend the life of the framing. In the shower stalls, a recyclable material was used for the decking and five quarter board was used on the walkway entering the showers. These repair efforts have generated many positive comments from visitors as we continue to make improvements to benefit the visitor's experience.

Employees Richard Hagford and Fred Forbes install new floor boards at Sea Camp Campground showers.

Accessibility Assessment

In March of 2013, a team from Indiana University's National Center on Accessibility came to the park to provide Cumberland Island, with an assessment and consultation of various park programs and facility's. This was their second visit to the park. The team gathered information on the physical and programmatic barriers that may affect the parks visitors. The team was here for three days and spent time with the Ranger and Maintenance Divisions. The park should begin receiving the "Assessment" teams findings and recommendations within the next few months. The park will then make comments on the findings and return to the team prior to receiving the final document. This whole process will allow the park to move forward with "Accessibility" in the park. Thanks to all involved.

Facility Manager Carl David and Jeff Townsend take measurements as a part of the Seashore's Accessibility Assessment conducted earlier this year.

Newly installed cedar shingles on the roof of the Ice House Museum.

Roof Repairs

Our maintenance staff is replacing a small section of cedar shingles on the Ice House Museum. This repair will prevent rain water from entering the building and causing more severe damage to the structural framing of the building. The park will be receiving funds to do a complete roof replacement on this structure and five other Historic structures in the Dungeness District in Fiscal year 2014.