



June 2017, version 1.0

Fire Island National Seashore

Visitor Experience Plan

*Engaging the Public through Interpretation,
Education, and Volunteerism*



*A surveyor inspects
what would
become the Otis
Pike High Dune
Wilderness of Fire
Island National
Seashore.*

PHOTO: NPS



Foreword from the Superintendent

Since the earliest days of the National Park Service (NPS), engaging national park visitors, as well as the non-visiting public, has been both an exciting endeavor as well as a daunting challenge. National park visitors are enthusiastic and eager to immerse themselves in the park they are visiting. Many arrive having researched and prepared for their visit, while at the same time, large numbers of visitors arrive with little or no knowledge of the park they have just entered. The larger public of non-visitors is very similar, having a range of knowledge and interest in national parks and what their purpose is, and what they have to offer. Then there are those who have no knowledge, interest, awareness, or understanding of national parks.



Superintendent Chris Soller at an "Alive After Five" outdoor summer fair in Patchogue, a gateway community to the park.

PHOTO: NPS

Managers of national park areas are constantly asking how do we best engage with our visitors; how do we ensure that their experience is high quality; and how do we protect the resources of the park that are being loved to death. It is no different at Fire Island National Seashore (the Seashore) where we have been asking these and similar questions since the Seashore was created in 1964. The recently completed (December 2016) Fire Island National Seashore General Management Plan (GMP) provides a framework for decision-making for the next 15–20 years, including how the Seashore can engage its visitors.

A central theme of the GMP is the need for collaboration and cooperation between the NPS and the Seashore's many partners and constituent groups. Within the boundary of the Seashore exist a mosaic of governmental entities, property owners from private to federal, public and private interest groups, private citizens that make Fire Island their permanent residence, all of whom have a stake in Fire Island. Outside the Seashore's boundary the various entities are even greater, and their interest in Fire Island ranges from intense support and protection, to complete indifference.

The Fire Island National Seashore Visitor Experience Plan will play a key role in engaging partners in the cooperative stewardship of Seashore resources. Preparation of this plan came at a perfect time to test the ideals of the GMP, and implement a collaborative approach to communication, education, and resource stewardship. As a result, the Visitor Experience Plan reaches beyond the traditional format of identifying interpretive themes and goals, existing conditions, and desired visitor experiences.

Through the development of the Visitor Experience Plan, Seashore staff, partners, volunteers, community members, and educators built a synergy that will translate into a more integrated visitor experience, linking natural and cultural features across the Seashore, from the Fire Island Lighthouse to the William Floyd Estate. This synergy and collaborative approach will

help the Seashore better communicate the challenges we face in managing resources within a dynamic coastal environment, as well as help us engage with our partners and the public in exciting opportunities we are taking to ensure the protection of Seashore resources.

To be successful, the Visitor Experience Plan recognizes the need to remain relevant both in our messages and our means of delivering our messages. It relies on the use of contemporary mediums and technologies to engage and connect to people. It recognizes how critical it is to communicate through mediums people are “plugged” into. Enhancing our interpretive tools and methods that include co-creating education materials with teachers, creating citizen science opportunities, and using digital media to tell our stories, builds on the foundation of interpretive excellence built over the first half century of Fire Island National Seashore. To do this, we must make the investment in our employees to build and support the skills necessary to create a 21st century public engagement program.

I look forward to seeing this dynamic plan in action. I am encouraged by the plan’s goals and commitments to work together to ensure that interpretation, education, and volunteerism continue to evolve, just as our little slice of barrier island five miles off the coast of Long Island has done, and will continue to do over time.

*Salt spray pruned
Hollies give the
Sunken Forest its
unique character.*
PHOTO: NPS

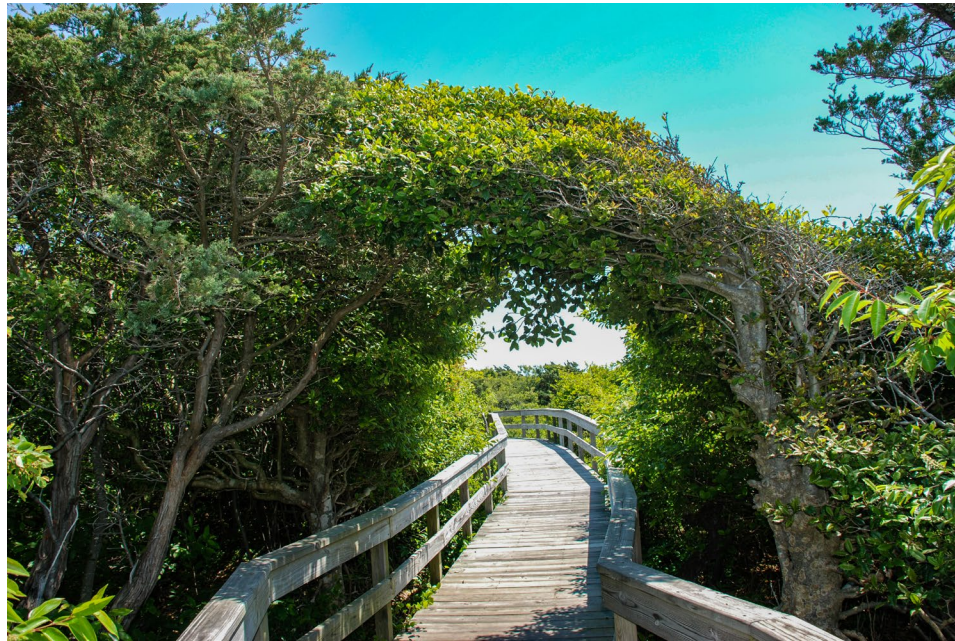


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About the Visitor Experience Plan

Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Fire Island National Seashore's (the Seashore) Visitor Experience Plan (VEP) is to define park goals, recommendations, and prioritized actions relating to visitor experiences,

interpretive media and programming, partnerships, and volunteerism. The VEP also outlines opportunities for visitors and nearby communities to develop their own connections to the resources and history of Fire Island and participate in its stewardship.

Park staff, partners, and stakeholders collectively developed this comprehensive plan and together comprise the Visitor Experience Team

(VET), whose principal responsibility is to coordinate and collaborate on efforts to implement this plan and update it periodically.

The VEP builds on the Seashore's General Management Plan (GMP) of 2016, which sets the overall direction for park management and subsequent planning efforts for the next 15 to 20 years. Data, evaluation, interviews, and other information also informed decisions about the direction, priorities, and allocation of park resources outlined in this plan.

Contents of the Plan

The VEP is organized into four principal sections: the Foundation for Interpretive Planning, Recommendations, Implementation, and Appendices.

The Foundation for Interpretive Planning sets the context by presenting the Seashore's purpose, significance, interpretive themes, and visitor experience goals as established in the GMP, as well as NPS goals for interpretation, education and volunteerism.

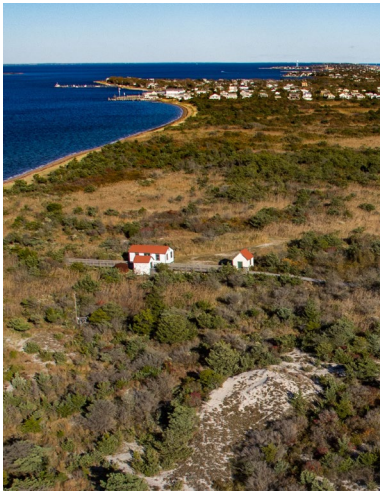
Based on the Foundation, the Recommendations section presents the strategy that the Seashore will undertake over the next five years in order to engage the public and help reach visitor experience goals. This strategy will be updated annually to continually have a five-year strategy. The Recommendations section presents summaries of each recommendation with a more detailed description of each recommendation in the appendix.

The Implementation section focuses on the actions the Seashore and partners will take to carry out the recommendations. A detailed Action Plan identifies specific actions and a timetable for implementation of the stated recommendations.

Finally, the Appendices provide additional reference material cited throughout the plan, including a detailed interpretive theme matrix, information about existing conditions, and more details on the planning process.

The sidebars found throughout the document link to supplemental narratives in the back of the plan. These narratives, authored by staff and partners, help interpret key elements of the plan and provide personal perspectives about the visitor experience and park resources. The first sidebar is an interpretive piece, told from the point of view of an overflying gull, offering the reader an integrated sense of the park in all of its rich complexity.

Fire Island
Experienced
from Above



To understand the natural and cultural resources of Fire Island National Seashore in its entirety, experience this imaginative journey from the perspective of a gull.

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Site Description

Designated in 1964 as part of the National Park System, Fire Island National Seashore is located along the south shore of Long Island in Suffolk County, New York. The Seashore encompasses 19,580 acres of upland, tidal, and submerged lands along a 26-mile stretch of the 32-mile barrier island, part of a much larger system of barrier islands and bluffs stretching from New York City to the very eastern end of Long Island at Montauk Point. Easily accessed on Fire Island are nearly 1,400 acres of federally designated wilderness, an extensive dune system, centuries-old maritime forests, solitary beaches, and the Fire Island Light. Nearby on Long Island, adjacent to the Village of Mastic Beach, the 613-acre William Floyd Estate preserves over 250 years of history. William Floyd, a Revolutionary War general and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was born in the house in 1734, and the family continued to occupy the property until 1975. The park maintains a house museum, cultural landscape, and archival collection that include items that pertain to both the Estate and other areas of the Seashore.

On Fire Island, interspersed among the federal lands within the Seashore are 17 residential communities that predate the Seashore's authorization. Resort development on Fire Island began as early as 1855, with a number of the communities having been established prior to the 1930s. The Seashore's enabling legislation includes provisions for private land to be retained and developed if zoning requirements are met. No hard-surfaced roads connect the communities either to each other or to the mainland of Long Island. They are accessible mainly by passenger ferry or private boat. Vehicle use is restricted within the boundary of the Seashore on Fire Island. Without paved roads and with limited traffic, the communities have retained much of their original character. Some of the communities have hotels or facilities for overnight guests,

while others are strictly residential. There are approximately 4,200 developed properties on Fire Island with approximately 300 residents living on the island year-round. The number of year-round residents has slowly and steadily declined in recent years. Vehicle access is limited for year-round residents, contractors and other service providers (telephone, fuel, garbage, etc.), as all vehicles crossing federal lands must have a National Park Service driving permit.

During the summer season, the population of Fire Island swells to approximately 30,000, with a total of two to three million visitors each year. Recreational visitation to sites and facilities owned or managed by the Seashore in 2016 was 389,075. The Seashore's primary visitor facilities on Fire Island are the Fire Island Light, Sailors Haven, Watch Hill, and the Wilderness Visitor Center. Fire Island Light is maintained and operated by the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, an NPS cooperating association, which offers tours and other visitor programming. NPS concessioners operate the marina at Sailors Haven, as well as the marina and campground at Watch Hill. The Seashore maintains visitor service facilities at Sailors Haven, Talisman, Watch Hill, and at the eastern end of the Wilderness Area. The Seashore offers three protected swimming areas at Sailors Haven, Talisman, and Watch Hill. Also, located on Fire Island are ranger stations, maintenance facilities, and several units of park housing. Located at either end of Fire Island and accessible by vehicle are major state and county beaches with sizable visitation.

Detailed descriptions may be found in the [General Management Plan](#).

What It's Like to
Live in Fire Island
National Seashore



Set within the boundaries of Fire Island National Seashore, 17 communities host a summer as well as year-round population.

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Foundation for Interpretive Planning

Legislation

As a result of state and local interest, Fire Island was authorized by public law (16 USC § 459E).

“Purposes; authorization for establishment: For the purpose of conserving and preserving for the use of future generations certain relatively unspoiled and undeveloped beaches, dunes, and other natural features within Suffolk County, New York, which possess high values to the Nation as examples of unspoiled areas of great natural beauty in close proximity to large concentrations of urban population, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to establish an area to be known as the “Fire Island National Seashore”.

October 9, 1965: Public Law 89-244 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to accept a donation of the William Floyd Estate for addition to Fire Island National Seashore.

More management documentation can be found [here](#).

Park Purpose

Building on the NPS Organic Act, which states the fundamental purpose of the national park system, park purpose statements describe why Congress or the President set aside an area and the specific reasons for its establishment. Purpose statements derive from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule making.

The General Management Plan identifies the following park purpose statements for Fire Island National Seashore:

- Together with the Fire Island communities, government agencies, and other partners, Fire Island National Seashore conserves, preserves, and protects for the use and appreciation of current and future generations Fire Island’s larger landscape including its relatively undeveloped beaches, dunes, and other natural features and processes and its marine environment. These resources possess high natural and aesthetic values to the nation as examples of great natural beauty and wildness in close proximity to large concentrations of urban population.

The Wreck of the Bessie White demonstrates how heritage emerges from the interaction of natural and cultural phenomena.

PHOTO: NPS



- Fire Island National Seashore conserves, preserves, and protects the historic structures, cultural landscapes, museum collections, and archeological resources associated with the Seashore including the Fire Island Light Station and the William Floyd Estate.
- Fire Island National Seashore preserves the primitive and natural character of the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness and protects its wilderness character.

Park Significance

Significance statements describe a site's national significance including a National Park System unit's distinctive natural, cultural, and recreational values that are specific rationale for national recognition of the site. The statements below are from the [General Management Plan](#), and are linked to the purpose of Fire Island National Seashore.

- Fire Island National Seashore is part of a barrier island system within close proximity to the largest concentration of population of any national seashore in the United States.
- The barrier island environment of Fire Island has attracted and influenced a variety of human uses over hundreds of years. It has also been shaped by this continuum of human involvement, giving rise to the distinctive relationship between the built and natural environments.
- Fire Island's old growth maritime forest ecosystem running from Davis Park to Point O' Woods as exemplified by the Sunken Forest, just west of Sailors Haven, is globally rare. This 250–300-year old American holly-shadblow-sassafras maritime forest is one of only two such forests known in the world.
- Fire Island National Seashore provides important habitat for marine and terrestrial plants and animals, including a number of rare, threatened, and endangered species. Additionally, it is an important part of the Atlantic Flyway and provides shelter for more than 330 migratory, over-wintering, and resident bird species.
- The Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness (Fire Island Wilderness), the only federally designated wilderness in New York State, offers a rare opportunity for a broad spectrum of the American public to experience wilderness.

*The Elizabeth
Sank for Better Life
Saving Services*



The loss of the *Elizabeth* prompted the expansion of the U.S. Life Saving Service.

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*William Floyd
Estate history
can be explored
by rubbing
tombstones in
the Floyd family
cemetery.*
PHOTO: NPS

A Cultural
Preservation:
The Old Mastic House



The William Floyd Estate encompasses a very old house, several outbuildings, a cemetery where generations of family members repose, and 613 acres of land bordering Moriches Bay.

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- Continuously owned and occupied by the Floyd Family from 1720 to 1976, the William Floyd Estate was the home of General William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The family's multigenerational tenure on the property not only tells their story but also reflects the dynamic social, economic, and political changes that took place over time on Long Island and throughout the nation.

- Since 1826, Fire Island has served as a location for aids to navigation for ocean going vessels. The current Fire Island Light was constructed in 1858 and has served as a critical navigation aid for the port of New York for more than 150 years. An active light has been at this location since 1826.

Park Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are organizational tools. They provide a conceptual framework for visitor

experience planning and programming. Themes are derived from and capture the essence of park purpose, park significance, resources, and values. Themes help explain why a park story is relevant to people who may be unconnected to an event, time, or place. They go beyond descriptions of fact to reflect the context and effects of events or processes to foster opportunities to experience and consider the meanings, concepts, and values represented by park resources.

Interpretive themes serve to focus the development of visitor experience, services, and programming. The following Fire Island National Seashore interpretive themes are as described in the GMP.

- **Nature's Rhythms of Change and Renewal:** Fire Island is constantly changing and always on the move. The very existence of this barrier island, the plant and animal communities that it supports, as well as human engagement in

this landscape, is dependent upon nature's rhythms of change and renewal.

- **Island Resources from Ocean to Bay:** From the pounding surf of the ocean, to the swift flow of inlets, to the relative calm of the bay, Fire Island encompasses a myriad of marine and upland environments that support a diverse assemblage of species and provides opportunities for maritime recreation and livelihood.
- **Fire Island: A Story of People and Place:** For centuries, people have been and will continue to be intertwined with Fire Island's delicate environment; actions today will shape Fire Island and its surroundings into the future, challenging all to become stewards of Fire Island's natural and cultural legacy.
- **Three Centuries of Change at the Floyd Estate:** The Floyd family's personal stories and 250-year residency at the Floyd Estate in Mastic Beach provide a lens through which to understand the dynamic social, economic, and political changes that took place over that time on Long Island and throughout the nation.
- **The Life and Times of a Patriot:** As a signer of the Declaration of Independence, William Floyd, prominent New York political leader and wealthy plantation owner, provides a personal perspective on the risks to life, property, and reputation associated with being a patriot in New York during the War for Independence.

NPS Management Goals

The NPS Strategy, [A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement \(2014\)](#) identifies a framework for park management goals:

- **Connects People to Parks** and helps communities protect what is special to them, highlight their history, and retain or rebuild their economic and environmental sustainability.

- **Advances the Education Mission** by strengthening the NPS role as an educational force based on core American values, historical and scientific scholarship, and unbiased translation of the complexities of the American experience.
- **Preserves America's Special Places** and is a leader in extending the benefits of conservation across physical, social, political, and international boundaries in partnership with others.
- **Enhances Professional and Organizational Excellence** by adapting to the changing needs of visitors, communities, and partners; encouraging organizational innovation; and giving employees the chance to reach their full potential.

NPS Interpretation and Education Outcomes

In [Achieving Relevance in Our Second Century \(2014\)](#), the National Park Service Washington Office of Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers worked with parks and partners across the country to identify the following outcomes for interpretation activities:

- **Relevance and Inclusion:** The National Park Service facilitates thematic, inclusive, and inquiry-based interpretation.
- **Educational Leadership:** The National Park Service is a valued and significant educator.



- **Active Engagement:** The National Park Service works hand-in-hand with communities to engage people of all ages and backgrounds in meaningful and mutually beneficial volunteer opportunities.
- **Business Acumen:** The Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers program employs excellent business practices to maximize and leverage resources.

Fire Island National Seashore Visitor Experience Goals

The goals listed here were derived from issues explored in the GMP and during this planning process.

- **Inspire collaborative stewardship and civic engagement to promote responsible management of park resources.** A primary product of the GMP and the public process that created it is a strong focus on greater public engagement and collaboration in stewardship of park resources. National parks belong to the public and the challenges of managing a park are greater than the Seashore can address on its own. Because this is a foundational goal, it supports more recommendations and actions than any other.

The Lighthouse
Welcomed
Immigrants to
America



As far back as the 1800s, the Fire Island Lighthouse's comforting light of safety was for many immigrants their first sight of America.

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Children's artwork
reflects their
experiences at the
Seashore.

PHOTO: NPS

Reaching Latino Audiences at Fire Island



From 1990 to 2000, Patchogue's Latino population grew over 22% and today Latinos represent almost 30% of the town's population.

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Visitor engagement is constantly evolving and allows for a blend of traditional and new techniques.

PHOTO: NPS

- **Expand engagement with under-represented populations.** The NPS seeks to bring value to its communities and all of their residents, so the park will focus on serving and collaborating with local residents. The park will make a special effort to engage local people who are currently under-represented among park visitors and supporters, and who may encounter challenges to participation. The

Seashore used strategic criteria to identify populations and steps to work with them to improve access, and provide opportunities to enjoy, and steward the park.

- **Integrate the park's natural and cultural resources of its many sites into a more holistic park experience.** The unique overlay of human experience on the park's natural landscapes is a key component of park significance. This goal highlights the importance of interpreting the interconnection of the Seashore's natural and cultural resources.



- **Enhance innovation and relevance of interpretation, education, and volunteer programs based on current interpretive best practice and historic and scientific scholarship.** While experts may describe the national significance of a park resource, only individuals can determine its personal relevance. This goal underscores the importance of innovation in staying relevant to park audiences.
- **Increase integration within the park, with partners, and within the context of the National Park Service.** Greater collaboration, communication, and integration between park divisions, among partners, and with other NPS parks and programs can build capacity, and increase effectiveness and efficiency of interpretation, education, and volunteer program efforts.

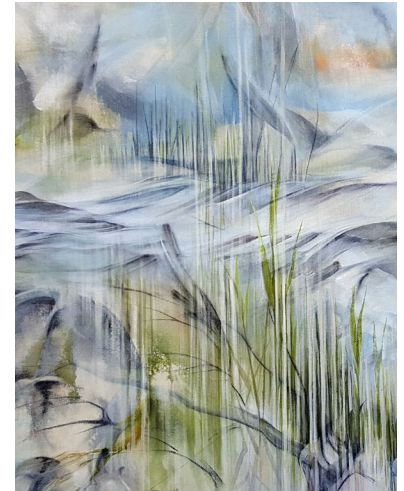
Challenges and Opportunities

The following challenges and opportunities relate to the visitor experience goals outlined in this plan:

- **Collaborative Community Stewardship:** Given limited financial and human resources, complex issues, and diverse social demands on parks, the Seashore cannot meet all challenges alone; its needs the assistance of partners to support and participate in its stewardship. Engaging in and aligning partnerships provides opportunities for greater sustainability and impact.
- **Underserved Communities:** Some local communities are underserved and underrepresented in park collaboration, outreach, and programming. In order to build support for the Seashore and meet the needs of local constituents, special emphasis is needed to engage people in gateway communities and others in close geographic proximity to the park.

- **Visitor Experience:** Due in part to the difficulty of transportation between sites and the seasonality of operations, and because communications at individual park sites is often site-specific, it has been difficult to create visitor experiences that integrate park-wide messages and information. Providing tools and strategies for staff will help to bridge communication across key park locations.
- **Integration of Natural and Cultural Resources:** Interpretation often highlights either natural or cultural resources rather than interpreting the integration of the two. An interdisciplinary approach to program development can lead to more integrated programs.
- **Interpretive Techniques:** Some interpretation, education, and volunteer programming relies on approaches that may no longer be effective in engaging today's learners. Staff and partners would benefit from more opportunities to develop and experiment with innovative approaches.
- **Interpretive Capacity:** Seasonal staff, volunteers, and partners lack ample opportunities to improve interpretive capacity to tell stories outside of their immediate experience and background.
- **Exhibits:** Park exhibits are dated and in poor condition, providing opportunities to rethink the role of exhibits and visitor contact stations in meeting visitor experience goals.
- **Technology:** To enhance the visitor experience both onsite and virtually, the park would benefit from experimenting with digital media to explore and exploit its benefits.
- **Institutional Knowledge:** Wider implementation of organized approaches to preserve institutional knowledge, personal expertise, and promote learning can prevent loss of knowledge and information when individuals leave the park, and provide turnkey-ready resources for new staff.
- **Volunteers:** Some aspects of program continuity and the park's ability to staff interpretive and education programs become compromised as volunteers leave the park. The park can experiment with and adopt new strategies to attract and retain new volunteers to help address changing visitor expectations.
- **Safety:** Access and outdoor programming in some areas of the park is impacted spring through fall due to safety concerns associated with the prevalence of ticks and mosquitoes. Implementing shifts in operations, exploring options for facility development, and expanding the use of offsite and virtual experiences can help address this challenge.

Artists-in-Residence
Create New Ways
to See Fire Island



Dawn Lee, the Seashore's first Artist-in-Residence, spent two weeks of uninterrupted time immersed in the park's beautiful and complex environment.

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Partnerships with organizations like Environment for the Americas extend park reach to new audiences.
PHOTO: NPS

Priority Audiences

While all people are invited to participate as park guests, the Seashore has identified some audiences for focused attention because they may not be served by existing services, may require different strategies for engagement, or are underrepresented in the park's visitor demographics.

Factors to consider when developing interpretive and educational programs and services include the life experiences of the individual or group, level of education, learning styles, languages, cultural traditions, and time available for interaction. In the planning workshops, participants agreed on the following priority audiences, from which the VEP recommendations were created:

- **Underserved/Underrepresented:**

Audiences may be underrepresented or underserved in the park for a variety of reasons, some of which are easier to address than others. Reasons may include economic (transportation to and within the park is expensive), language, lack of awareness, or cultural barriers. In pursuit of the park's

goal to serve a broader demographic, the park dedicates some additional resources to this priority audience.

- **Local Educators and Students:**

Consistent with the education goals of the NPS, the Seashore recognizes that educators are able to help expand park reach. Working with local schools (K–12, as well as nearby colleges and universities) especially in gateway communities, allows the Seashore to reach a younger and larger population. The education community can be an important source of sustainable partnerships and provide access to future volunteers and stewards.

- **Fire Island and Gateway Communities:**

Residents of gateway communities, including Fire Island community residents and visitors, are literally the park's neighbors, and as such can have direct influence on the park. They are important constituents for engagement as stakeholders and stewards.

- **Virtual Audiences:** Because of their potentially large numbers, as well as the fact that local residents who do not currently visit the park can become visitors through virtual channels, reaching this audience supports several goals.

- **Staff, Volunteers and**

Partners: The quality of the visitor experience depends heavily on interactions with staff, volunteers, and partners. Investment in time, training, and support for the Seashore's staff and partners is important in accomplishing the goals identified in this plan, and for the continued protection of Fire Island and the William Floyd Estate resources.

Beauty in the Breach



Spellbound by the view after hiking to the breach, she said to the ranger, "I don't know about all the sand stuff you were talking about, but this is beautiful."

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SUNY Stony Brook international students discover Fire Island.

PHOTO: NPS

Recommendations: Moving Forward

Each recommendation emerges from highly iterative conversations among park staff and partners. They were developed specifically to help achieve visitor experience goals, address challenges, and capitalize on opportunities. Realistic actions to implement recommendations were prioritized and sequenced over the plan's five-year span. Actions already underway appear as near-term priorities, while projects with less urgency or that require greater preparation appear later in the Action Plan.

Recommendations fall into three broad categories that reflect strategic steps toward the broad goal of collaborative community stewardship for Fire Island National Seashore:

- Partnership Development (7 recommendations)
- Internal Capacity Development (3 recommendations)
- Collaboration and Program Integration (4 recommendations)

The following are brief descriptions of the recommendations grouped under each broad category. The Implementation Section provides specific timelines and action items. More detailed descriptions of each recommendation can be found in Appendix G.

Recommendations for Partnership Development

1. Collaborate with Neighboring Parks

Fire Island National Seashore shares its borders with neighboring parks, as well as ecological zones, visitors, stories, issues, and other elements. Exploration of the Seashore's themes requires the larger context around the Great South Bay and beyond. This recommendation is grounded in the premise that partnership opportunities exist between the Seashore and at least three significant neighboring parks.

2. Collaborate with Youth Corps for Preservation and Maintenance

Engaging youth in active park stewardship improves chances for the continuity of public support. This recommendation aims to expand youth involvement, especially with underrepresented groups, in park maintenance and historic preservation projects.

3. Conduct Annual Analysis of Community Partnerships and Programming

The GMP includes goals to enhance cooperative stewardship by building collaborative relationships with local communities and organizations. To do this, the park seeks to learn about its neighbors in order to work with them, make better decisions about serving them, and ask how the park may be relevant to them. The park will conduct an annual analysis to identify gaps in coverage in order to make strategic investments in programming.

Wilderness on
the Edge of a
Great Metropolis



In the wilderness, a visitor can freely explore, discover a natural barrier island ecosystem, and savor the solitude.

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Managing Deer
Includes Managing
Messages About Deer



The Seashore's education and outreach efforts can facilitate meaningful conversations about the critical need for deer management.

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4. Connect to Underserved Neighbors and Families

The park seeks to connect to more of its neighbors, specifically with underserved families who live in gateway communities. The goal is for them to feel welcomed and valued as members of the Seashore community. This way, they can experience and enjoy what the park has to offer and decide if they want to participate in its

stewardship. The park will start by working with local Latino populations and later, with other underserved groups. In all cases, the park will make an earnest attempt to identify, understand, and resolve barriers that stand in the way of greater public engagement with the park.

5. Enhance Citizen Science and Research with Schools and Universities

At Fire Island, citizen science opportunities geared for the general public, especially local youth and families, can begin to build meaningful engagement with the park. Working with partners, the Seashore will expand efforts to involve K–12 and college students in citizen science programs, and integrate those activities into interpretive and education programming.

6. Evaluate, Promote, and Create Education Resources with Educators

The Seashore will work with educators to evaluate and create resources that they can utilize with their students. Educators bring current education philosophy, methods, and techniques that work with modern students. By working through educators (rather than direct delivery to students), information about the park reaches more students, more effectively than the park could do alone.

7. Increase Programming and Partnerships with Fire Island Communities and the Fire Island School

Resident and community perspectives and the value they place on Fire Island are assets to the park. Local communities, organizations, and businesses provide complementary experiences and services. The 17 Fire Island communities attract large numbers of visitors who may not visit NPS facilities. Community residents can be allies for resource protection and management.

Recommendations for Internal Capacity Development

8. Develop a Strategy for Visitor Contact Stations and Exhibits

The Seashore will develop a strategy to update and improve aging visitor contact facilities. The goal is to improve environmental sustainability, interactivity, and update exhibit content with current scholarship on topics such as climate change, sea level rise, marine resource management, coastal land use history, shoreline management planning, and cooperative stewardship.

9. Increase Interpretive Skills for Staff, Volunteers, and Partners

A firm grounding in current interpretive methods and skills is necessary to engage the public through personal services and interpretive media. Professional development will also include opportunities to enhance skills in supervision, customer/visitor service, and the coaching and mentoring needed to achieve high performance, confidence, and productivity.

10. Prioritize Recruitment of Volunteers and Interns

Volunteers strengthen community relationships and increase a park's ability to steward its resources. The park is fortunate to have strong partnerships and a dedicated volunteer corps and interns that assist with all program areas. Chief among them is the

Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, Friends of Fire Island National Seashore, and Student Conservation Association. Recruitment goals will be identified and efforts prioritized to engage public citizens in volunteer activities. The park seeks people with technical skills, vision, and creativity and who can help address needs in program planning, development and evaluation; as well as non-personal media. A flexible approach will allow the park to adjust the volunteer program to adapt to changing needs and audiences.

Recommendations for Program Integration

11. Develop Relevant Programming

In a world of increasing competition for people's attention and as generations change and technologies evolve, sustaining public support for the park is not a given and grows increasingly challenging. This recommendation will seek training and tools to research, develop, test, and promote programming with greater relevance using audience-centered approaches.

12. Integrate Social Media into Interpretive Services

Today's population, especially younger generations, use social media often in their interactions with their surroundings—including interactions in the outdoors. By integrating social media into interpretation and education, there are opportunities to reach wider numbers of visitors of all ages. This includes incorporating technology into live programs to allow virtual visitors to participate.



Involving the public in scientific research can generate new knowledge and engagement.

PHOTO: NPS

13. Integrate Natural and Cultural Resources in Interpretation

Natural and cultural resource interpretation will be more fully and holistically integrated throughout Fire Island sites and at the William Floyd Estate. This will be achieved through building strong interpretive media and personal services programming.

14. Promote All Seashore Sites at All Seashore Sites

This recommendation suggests multiple approaches to provide more holistic experiences for visitors and staff through comprehensive, parkwide promotions and information. The Seashore's diversity of resources and sites are geographically spread out, so it can be a challenge to understand the park in an integrated way. Cross-training of staff, partners, and volunteers and promotion of parkwide programs and information across sites can build greater familiarity with more of the park and a better understanding of all that the park has to offer.

Implementation: Getting It Done

The VEP should be viewed as the first step in a continuous planning process, which includes cyclical feedback between experimenting, trying, learning, modifying, and trying again. This process will have at its heart not a document, but rather a group of people – the Visitor Experience Team (VET). It will take time to develop such a team, identify its proper composition, culture, and protocols. Park staff and partners must make every effort to build and then ensure the integrity and social cohesion within the VET and the continuity of planning/implementing/learning process that the VET upholds. The actual plan is merely a mechanism to document the VET’s thinking and doing.

This section helps define both the action items necessary to implement the recommendations and a playbook on how the VET will continue to operate, adapt, and evolve to meet new challenges.

Action Plan

The action plan shows how recommendation tasks distribute over upcoming years. Because recommendations are organized according to the three general categories as they are elsewhere in this document, it is difficult to see which recommendations initiate in which year. Thus, the following table summarizes start times for recommendations. This table will be reviewed and updated annually. The beginning years were determined using three factors:

1. Actual tasks already underway or planned to begin
2. Proposed start times during the planning workshops
3. Postponement of two recommendations to later years to avoid too much frontloading of recommendations at the outset of the planning period

Start Years for Recommendations	
2017	
	Connect to Underserved Neighbors and Families
	Increase Programming and Partnerships with Fire Island Communities and the Fire Island School
	Increase Interpretive Skills for Staff, Volunteers, and Partners
	Integrate Natural and Cultural Resources in Interpretation
	Evaluate, Promote, and Create Education Resources with Educators
2018	
	Integrate Social Media into Interpretive Services
	Prioritize Recruitment of Volunteers and Interns
	Enhance Citizen Science and Research with Schools and Universities
	Collaborate with Youth Corps for Preservation and Maintenance
	Develop Relevant Programming
	Promote All Seashore Sites at all Seashore Sites
2019	
	Collaborate with Neighboring Parks
	Develop a Strategy for Visitor Contact Stations and Exhibits
2020	
	Conduct Annual Analysis of Community Partnerships and Programming

Fire Island National Seashore Action Plan

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT						
1. Collaborate with Neighboring Parks						
Plan and conduct workshop with representatives from neighboring parks to determine potential collaborative programs/projects.			X			Asst. Supt., Chief IEV
Implement collaborative programs/projects.			X	X	X	Chief IEV
2. Collaborate with Youth Corps for Preservation and Maintenance						
Integrated park team identifies projects and funding sources.	X				X	Asst. Supt., VIP Coordinator, Chief IEV, Cultural Resource Mngr., Facility Mngr.
Set up meetings with youth organizations.	X	X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt.
Set timeframe for projects and identify clear scope of work, begin compliance work.	X	X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt, VIP Coordinator, Facility Mngr.
Identify leadership and support roles for park staff and partners.		X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt., Facility Mngr.
Coordinate training for park staff in youth leadership.		X	X		X	Asst. Supt., Chief of IEV
Identify and obtain required tools and supplies.		X	X	X	X	Facility Mngr., Maint. Supv.
Determine project logistics.		X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt, VIP Coordinator, Facility Mngr.
Recruitment and hiring (by partner or NPS) and onboarding.		X	X	X	X	Partner
Regular meetings/progress reports with crew/partner organization.		X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt., VIP Coordinator
Conduct educational activities for crew.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, VIP Coordinator
Inventory and clean WFE out-buildings		X				Cultural Resource Mngr.
Complete Carrington interior finishing work and repair the boardwalk.		X				Facility Mngr.

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Prepare drawings for Fire Island Lighthouse (FILH) boathouse deck.			X			FILPS Exec. Dir., Facility Mngr.
Repair the WFE cemetery fence, boathouse flooring, and head-stone covering.			X			Cultural Resource Mngr.
Replace boardwalk from WFE parking lot to Old Mastic House.				X		Cultural Resource Mngr., Facility Mngr.
Build FILH boathouse deck.			X			FILPS Exec. Dir., Facility Mngr.
Paint FILH outbuildings.				X		Facility Mngr.
Project evaluation/close out with crew & partner.		X	X	X	X	Team
3. Conduct Annual Analysis of Community Partnerships and Programming						
Develop methodology with a university sociology department.				X		Asst. Supt.
Facilitate partner analysis workshop.				X	X	Asst. Supt.
Take action based on results of the analysis; evaluate success of initiatives in the following semester.				X	X	Asst. Supt., Chief of IEV
4. Connect to Underserved Neighbors and Families						
Design, translate, and print park-produced bilingual flyer.	X					Interp. Spec., Chief IEV
GPO translation and printing of Spanish language park unigrid brochure.		X				Interp. Spec., Chief IEV
Print Spanish language Fire Island Lighthouse rack card.		X				FILPS Exec. Dir.
Attend the Patchogue Ecuadorian Festival to plan for participation in 2018.	X					Chief IEV, Asst. Supt.
Latino Heritage Intern researches Latino media outlets and revises contact list.	X					Chief IEV
Latino Heritage Intern provides assistance with Spanish translation of flyers and Spanish language media posts.	X					Chief IEV, PAS
Contact NPS Partnership Office to explore the feasibility of a swearing-in at WFE.		X				Asst. Supt.

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Conduct swearing- in ceremony at WFE; Multiple-language translators accompany Old Mastic House tour after ceremony.			X	X	X	WFE Site Mngr., WFE Park Rangers
Recruit Spanish speaking volunteers, interns and staff.	X	X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Asst. Supt., WFE Site Mngr., FILPS Exec. Dir.
Meet with leaders from local Latino Community to plan activities for Patchogue Watch Hill Ferry Terminal (PFT) and street fair for the 2018 Ecuadorian Festival and/or 2019 event.		X	X			Asst. Supt.
Develop and conduct activities at PFT and street fair.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Asst. Supt., Interp. Spec., Supv. PR
Coordinate in-school programs, explore transportation funding opportunities, and implement park visits.	X	X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Supv. PR
Research US Census Bureau and local data on languages spoken at home in the local community and prioritize next in line for translation of unigrid brochure.				X		Chief IEV
Translate and print unigrid brochure in additional foreign languages in priority order as feasible.					X	Chief IEV, Interp. Spec.
5. Enhance Citizen Science and Research with Schools and Universities						
Determine with NER Archeology the feasibility of a public archaeology project at the WFE, or other cultural resources citizen science projects.		X				Asst. Supt., Cultural Resource/WFE Site Mngr., Park Planner
Contact local colleges and the Suffolk County Archeological Society to explore opportunities for partnerships, including public archeology.			X			Cultural Resource / WFE Site Mngr.
Identify one or more partners for archeological dig at WFE.			X			Cultural Resource/WFE Site Mngr., WFE Staff
Interpret archeology findings and participate in project.			X			WFE Staff

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Develop guidelines for researchers on how to fulfill science communication requirements utilizing best practices in interpretation.			X			Chief IEV, PAS
Meet annually to update IEV staff and volunteers on new research findings and to discuss integration into IEV programs/media.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Chief NRM, Culture Resource Mngr.
Research school science curriculum standards and explore potential citizen science activities with schools and local youth programs.			X			Chief IEV
Conduct annual meeting with IEV and NRM staff to identify overlaps between education community interests and park citizen science opportunities; identify and implement pilot or ongoing projects.		X	X	X	X	NRM staff, Chief IEV
Offer tutorials of citizen science databases.		X				NRM staff
Prepare/print science research briefs.			X	X	X	NRM staff
6. Evaluate, Promote, and Create Education Resources with Educators						
Revise stats collection forms and analyze statistics.	X			X	X	Chief IEV, Interp. Spec.
Promote CORE-aligned education programs.	X	X	X	X	X	Supv. PR, Chief IEV, PAS
Pilot existing CORE programs as ranger guided.	X	X				IEV staff
Plan and implement Day in Life of Fire Island.	X	X	X	X	X	IEV, RM and FILPS staff
Conduct annual educator workshop.	X	X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Supv. PR
Submit proposals for Park for Every Classroom and Teacher-Ranger-Teacher.		X				Chief IEV, Asst. Supt.

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
7. Increase Programming and Partnerships with Fire Island Communities and the Fire Island School						
Plan and participate in Fire Island School annual student/commu- nity fair.	X	X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Interp. Spec., Interp. Spec.
Meet with FIA to provide assis- tance with annual Fire Island Trek.	X					Asst. Supt., Chief IEV
Plan and conduct Trek w/ Fire Island community leaders.	X	X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt., Chief IEV, Supv. PR, Field Staff
Plan and conduct Cherry Grove to Sailors Haven with Cherry Grove community leaders.	X	X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt, Chief -IEV, Supv. PR, IEV staff
Plan/Implement Cherry Grove to Carrington Tour.	X	X	X	X	X	Asst. Supt., Park Planner
Conduct oral history interview with Fire Island School.	X					IEV staff/former Long Cove resident.
Develop/conduct Fire Island Legends program at Fire Island Lighthouse. Formulate video utilizing oral history interviews from family members of former Lighthouse Keepers.	X					FILPS staff and volunteers
Develop/conduct Point O’ Woods Day Camp program: “Keeping Wildlife Wild”	X	X	X	X	X	IEV staff
Plan/implement Day in the Life of Fire Island.	X	X	X	X	X	IEV, RM and FILPS staff
Develop the Fire Island communi- ties’ Sustainable Gardens and Buildings Tour.		X				Park Planner, IEV and NRM staff
Offer garden tour annually in coordination with Fire Island resident gardeners.		X	X	X	X	Park Planner, IEV staff

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
DEVELOP INTERNAL CAPACITY						
8. Develop a Strategy for Visitor Contact Stations and Exhibits						
Document exhibits into the FMSS.			X			Interp. Spec., Facility Mngr. Spec.
Contract with HFC and outside facilitators.			X			Chief of IEV
Carry out assessment with facilitators.			X			Chief of IEV, Interp. Spec., Asst. Supt.
Evaluate current exhibit funding requests and adjust to address gaps. Explore additional funding opportunities including establishing fundraising agreement with Sons of the American Revolution for WFE.			X	X		Chief of IEV, WFE Site Mngr., FILPS Exec. Dir., Asst. Supt.
Once funding is secured, manage projects to develop new exhibits or adjust current use of visitor contact spaces.				X	X	Chief of IEV, WFE Site Mngr., FILPS Exec. Dir.
Implement short-term improvements to Watch Hill Visitor Center, exhibits, and Dune Station.	X					Chief of IEV, Interp. Spec., Facility Mngr.
9. Increase Interpretive Skills for Staff, Volunteers, and Partners						
Align employee IDPs with training goals.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, WFE Mngr.
Share info/resources		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV
Plan/implement interpretive/customer service training sessions (including field trip, brown-bag lunches, guest trainer, etc.). Ensure that RM and CRM staff offer training on relevant park science/cultural resource topics.	X	X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Supv. PR, PAS, Asst. Supt., Cultural Resource Mngr.
Participate in Audience Centered Techniques training and other professional development opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	Interpretive staff, partners, volunteers
Incorporate National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation (NOC CI) into Sunken Forest tours programs. Review NNOCCI and adjust tour content.	X	X	X			IEV staff

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
10. Prioritize Recruitment of Volunteers and Interns						
Implement monthly garden days at Pollinator Garden.	X	X	X	X	X	VIP Coordinator
Meet with VIP program managers to review current volunteer.gov VIP position descriptions; revise based on current and upcoming park needs.		X	X	X	X	VIP Coordinator, FILPS and WFE VIP Supervisors
Develop list of recruitment pools, create contact list; begin targeted recruitment efforts.		X				VIP Coordinator, FILPS and WFE VIP Supervisors
Develop volunteer onboarding calendar, and an organized clear process for onboarding.		X				VIP Coordinator, FILPS and WFE VIP Supervisors
Coordinate and collaborate on volunteer recognition events, expand recognition via media, expand training opportunities and provide incentives for retention.		X	X	X	X	VIP Coordinator, FILPS and WFE VIP Supervisors
Create structured mentoring and training program for volunteers.			X			VIP Coordinator, FILPS and WFE VIP Supervisors
COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION						
11. Develop Relevant Programming						
Interdivisional team meets seasonally to identify relevant programming for upcoming season(s), adds to integrated park-wide schedule; develops support materials.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV convenes
VET members write program descriptions that link to national/current events and include information necessary for web calendar, online promotion, and program flyers.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV
Provide research and development time for interpreters to develop/expand/modify programs in accordance with audience needs.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, WFE Site Mngr., FILPS Exec. Dir., Supv. PR

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Upload to web calendars and post to social media; make and distribute flyers; issue press releases	X	X	X	X	X	Interp. Spec., IEV staff, PAS
Provide training and mentorship to help staff determine relevant topics and build multiple presentation skills, such as interpreting controversial issues.	X	X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, WFE Site Mngr., PAS, Asst. Sup oversee; VET members contribute to mentorship and training.
Coordinate with trainer to facilitate specific training sessions.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, FILPS Exec. Dir., Asst. Supt.
12. Integrate Social Media into Interpretive Services						
Develop a demonstration package.		X				PAS
Carry out training.		X				PAS
Incorporate social media into live programs			X	X	X	Chief IEV, PAS, WFE Site Mngr.
Integrate social media responsibilities into staff performance standards.		X	X	X	X	Chief IEV, Interp. Supv., WFE Site Mngr.
13. Integrate Natural and Cultural Resources in Interpretation						
Develop and install Tiernan exhibit at Fire Island Lighthouse.	X					FILPS Exec. Dir.
Develop and install Wilderness Exhibit at Patchogue Watch Hill Ferry Terminal highlighting photos of Long Cove and Xiomaro's commission.		X				Interp. Spec., Chief IEV, IEV staff, Chief NR, Park Planner, PAS, Asst. Supt.
Secure digital files/ panels of Barbesh park history exhibit.		X				Chief IEV, Interp. Spec.
Revise and replace whale wayside			X			Interp. Spec.
Develop programs/media highlighting ongoing park management initiatives similar to http://keepbearswild.org				X		IEV, WFE and RM staff

Actions	Year					Responsible (Lead)
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
14. Promote All Seashore Sites at All Seashore Sites						
Install park map/wayside at Fire Island Lighthouse	X					Facility Mngr., Interp. Spec.
Install park entrance sign at Robert Moses State Park		X				Facility Mngr.
Prominently display and distribute park-wide program print publications at all Seashore sites.	X	X	X	X	X	Interp. Spec., FILPS Exec. Dir., WFE Site Mngr.
Regularly update bulletin boards with park-wide information.	X	X	X	X	X	Interp. Spec.
Establish central accessible information network for park and partners.		X				IT Specialist
Migrate information to new accessible network.		X				IT Spec., Interp. Spec.
Finalize and print Volunteer Handbook.		X				VIP Coordinator and VIP supervisors, Interp. Spec., Chief IEV
Staff/VIPs/interns participate in park site orientation tours.		X	X	X	X	Site leads and supervisors.
Provide brief park-wide orientation on all programs and promote upcoming park-wide events.	X	X	X	X	X	Interpretive tour guides/educators at WFE, LH, SH, WVC, WH
Expand and manage VIP Contact Lists.		X	X	X	X	VIP Coordinator, VIP site supervisors
VET conducts workshop to develop/share talking point messages to include on all programs/media and integrate into interpretive training.		X				Chief IEV
Update/revise park website Plan Your Visit pages.		X				PAS and assigned staff
Participate in self-directed, in-house/mentored, or offsite graphics/publication training.			X			Any responsible for creating NPS publications
NPS graphic identity standards and messaging system are used for all park-produced publications.			X	X	X	Any responsible for creating NPS publications

How the Visitor Experience Team Operates

Any planning process requires two principal ingredients for implementation: a plan and people to implement the plan. Given the complexity, cross-divisional and even cross-community actions required to implement this plan, it needs active commitment of people from across the park and community. By engaging staff and partners in the development of this plan, the planning process has laid the foundations for development of an implementation team.

As the plan is implemented and updated over time, the VET will continue to work and learn together to figure out how to adaptively manage the plan, review it, evaluate it, and periodically update it to address new developments and opportunities.

Objectives of the Visitor Experience Team

As the overall objective of the VET is to adaptively manage and continuously implement the VEP, the team will have an active hand in most aspects of interpretation, education and volunteer program efforts, and will work across divisions and sites to ensure that these efforts meet Seashore and National Park Service goals.

More specifically the VET will:

- Keep the plan updated and periodically release new versions
- Determine personal and non-personal programming across all sites, including social media themes and topics, and an annual schedule to facilitate continuity across divisions and partners
- Invest in improving communications to strengthen understanding and trust among staff and partners

VET Operations

The VET is chaired by the Chief of Interpretation and its membership includes permanent staff with roles in interpretation, education, and volunteer program planning and implementation. It includes committed members from most park divisions and sites as well as at least two representatives of FILPS including the Executive Director. The VET can invite stakeholders from the community as occasional or permanent members, and for certain discussions seasonal staff, volunteers, and interns.

The VET will meet quarterly with the following calendar which will be updated periodically along with the plan itself taking it through its consecutive versions into the future.

VET Meeting Cycle

Season	Tasks	Products
Winter, Spring and Summer	Review and update activities each quarter for the next three months. Take note of changes in context that should be reflected in VEP	Update Action Plan for next season List of potential changes to VEP Proceedings of meeting
Fall End of Year Workshop	Integrate all needed changes to VEP Evaluate the success of the VEP implementation this year, choose strategies to strengthen VET and VEP and integrate into next version of VEP and Action Plan. Add another year to the Implementation Plan and archive the results of current year Invite any reviews necessary for approval	Emit next full version of VEP 2.0 Update executive summary in InDesign for public diffusion Evaluation of the VEP/VET for past year

How to Update the VEP

The VET/Chief of Interpretation will manage the official live version of the VEP as a *Microsoft Word* file. The team will make changes directly to this file. At the end of each year, the team will share this file internally and with partners. They will also update the executive summary *InDesign* file in order to share with the general public including potential new partners.



A park ranger facilitates exploration and discovery during a children's birding program.

PHOTO: NPS

APPENDIX A: Interpretive Theme Matrix

Nature's Rhythms of Change and Renewal	
<p>Fire Island is constantly changing and always on the move. The very existence of this barrier island and the plant and animal communities that it supports—as well as human engagement in the landscape—is dependent upon nature's rhythms of change and renewal.</p> <p>About this theme: This theme is about the dynamic nature of a barrier island, and environmental threats such as climate change and sea level rise.</p>	
Concepts	Topics and Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic Nature of a Barrier Island: Describe and demonstrate how Fire Island's coastline is constantly being shaped and re-shaped by wind and water. • Role and Value of a Barrier Island: Illustrate how a healthy barrier island then serves as the defense from Atlantic Ocean waves that could otherwise pummel the south shore of Long Island during storm events. Show how this important environment protects the mainland from storm events and wave action, while providing a vital ecosystem for many species. • Natural Forces of a Barrier Island: Illustrate how littoral drift, off-shore currents, wind, inlet formation, tidal delta growth, and occasional overwash are all essential to maintain the dynamic equilibrium that sustains the barrier island. • Sea Level Rise and Climate Change: Provide examples and opportunities to discuss how Sea level rise, increases in the frequency and intensity of storms, and other factors associated with climate change could influence the rate and scope of change on the barrier island. • Habitats: Compare and contrast habitats on and adjacent to Fire Island. • Inlets: Illustrate and explain the long history of inlets opening and closing and elongation of the island unit to the west. Show how the island progressed through periods of sediment accumulation and sediment loss and how the shoreline has shifted seaward as well as landward. Discuss how opening and closing inlets have caused interruptions in the alongshore transport of sediment for extensive periods before some sort of equilibrium returned and many of these effects are recorded in the landforms on Fire Island. • Human Occupation and Influences: Explore how human occupation exposes it to damage and risks. List and discuss the natural and human-induced factors that continue to affect and often impede the dynamic quality of the barrier island. (Includes: periodic storms and floods; damage to facilities from storms or ice; climate change and sea level rise; the impact of septic systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic character of a barrier island (shoreline dynamics) • Role of a barrier island • Value of a barrier island • Natural forces of a barrier island • Climate change • Sea level rise • Habitats • Inlets • Human occupation and influence • Estuarine Habitat • Management of a barrier island • Development • Sediment accumulation • Threatened and endangered species • Barrier island as a defense against the Atlantic Ocean • Human factors and issues of development on a barrier island • Recent intensity of storms • Critical habitat for estuarine resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuarine Habitat: Explain how the barrier island defines the southern boundary of the estuary that separates Fire Island from Long Island, thereby providing critical habitat for estuarine resources. • Management of a Barrier Island: Share how management decisions about natural and cultural resource issues are based on scholarly and scientific information and in consideration of the broader context of the resources and the Seashore. Demonstrate how the integrity of Fire Island as part of the larger barrier island system is maintained (to the degree feasible). Explain the principles and illustrate how dynamic natural processes are managed to reduce human intervention, and where feasible, natural processes are re-established or emulated. • Development: Explore development on Fire Island; how it is planned and done in ways that reinforce integrity of the barrier island system. Show where mitigation measures have been undertaken. • Sediment Accumulation: Illustrate and explain how the FI barrier island is the product of sediment accumulation of several thousand years. Show how geomorphological evolution progressed through periods of sea level rise and changing sediment supply to maintain the island. Describe how that there is insufficient sediment coming to Fire Island now to maintain the system. Show the evidence of erosion on Fire Island. Contrast this with artificially-created Democrat Point. Show how acceleration in sea-level rise coupled with the general negative sediment budget results in beach erosion and dune displacement (shown in the eastern portion of the island). • Threatened and Endangered Species: Explain Fire Island's federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species, such as red knot, piping plover, roseate tern, least tern, common tern, seabeach amaranth, and seabeach knotweed, and how the barrier beach provides feeding and resting habitats for many rare species of migrating birds, turtles and marine mammals. Explore why particular species are endangered; describe park protection and monitoring efforts, and how individuals can help ensure species survival. • Wilderness: Describe how the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness is the only federally designated wilderness in New York state and located in the single largest metropolitan area in the US. At 1,380 acres, it is one of the smallest wilderness areas managed by the NPS. Demonstrate how its size, proximity to urban populations, and cultural history offer scientific, scenic, historic, and educational value. Describe how wilderness is a different way to experience the outdoors—no designated trails, no facilities or signage, leave no trace ethic, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier island management issues and choices • Mitigation measures in managing a barrier island • Natural forces at work in opening and closing inlets • Superstorm Sandy-its effects and how they are managed • Dunes (layers; how they tell a story) • Habitats on FI • Evolution of habitats on FI over time • Scientific evidence • Scientific processes • Scientific mitigations and solutions • Tides and lunar cycles • Seasonal change • Day and night (cycles) • Seasonal migration of birds and animals • Seasonal migration of people • Sediment accumulation • Sustainability • Wilderness • Leave no trace
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Island Resources from Ocean to Bay

From the pounding surf of the ocean, to the swift flow of inlets, to the relative calm of the bay, Fire Island encompasses a myriad of marine and upland environments that support a diverse assemblage of species and provides opportunities for maritime recreation and livelihood.

About this theme: This theme is about the diversity of habitats, plants and wildlife found on the barrier island and in adjacent waters.

Concepts	Topics and Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of Habitat Diversity: Help people to recognize the importance of habitat diversity on the barrier island and the importance of protection of marine resources. Show how Fire Island is composed of a variety of terrestrial and marine habitats that possess particular distinctive qualities and characteristics. This includes: a segment of the Atlantic Ocean, open beach, near-shore environment, primary dunes, mid-island swale, the secondary dune (only in a few locations on Fire Island), fresh water bogs, salt marshes, and submerged aquatic vegetation in the bay, and a segment of the Great South Bay. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe how beaches and dunes are highly dynamic shoreline features with naturally occurring cycles of erosion and accretion. Show how natural growth and migration of the beaches and dunes are inhibited by shoreline development and threatened and Endangered species (e.g. plovers, seabeach amaranth) are less abundant adjacent to developed areas. Show how groins in the West End present the conundrum that they inhibit the transport of sand along the beach and yet protect the integrity of the Ocean Beach's public well. - Show how mid-island swale extends from dunes to marsh or bay shore and includes grasslands, shrub thickets, maritime forests, and freshwater wetlands. This provides habitat for native and introduced flora and fauna. Discuss issues including mosquito control, septic discharge, manipulation of the vegetation/landscaping, fencing (channeling wildlife), non-native invasives, and trampling (e.g. social trails). - Discuss how salt marshes may be vulnerable to sea level rise. Illustrate sediment delivery to marshes through overwash and breach processes and the flood tidal delta formations that are critical to long term marsh maintenance. Discuss issues including: beach stabilization efforts. - Describe the bay shore (bay beaches, marsh edges, developed shorelines, bulkheads) that extend into the bay environment of the bay water column, submerged aquatic vegetation, and sand and mud bottoms. Explore the economic and social implications of degraded fishery for both fin and shell fish. (Seagrass beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat diversity (within the Great South Bay) • Protection of marine resources • Larger natural systems • Beaches and dunes • Mid-island swale • Salt marshes • Bay shore • Submerged resources • Ocean and estuarine-dwelling flora and fauna • Microclimates • Fish habitats • Research • Biodiversity: How local habitat diversity supports global biodiversity and is important to the health and future of our planet • How diverse maritime habitats have and continue be significant sources of food and livings.

off the Fire Island Wilderness shore and the east end of the Fire Island remain as remnant habitat.) Illustrate how Great South Bay waters are known for high concentrations of wintering waterfowl such as Brant, Canada geese, American black duck, Bufflehead. Illustrate threats to water quality (how it is affected by nutrient loading resulting in harmful algal blooms); the bay bottom is affected by channel dredging; bulk heading and shore-line development contribute to altered shoreline processes.

- **Natural Systems:** Describe how the marine resources within the Seashore's boundary are functionally part of a much larger estuarine and oceanic system and contribute in different ways to those larger systems.
- **Submerged Resources:** Describe how the Seashore's boundary extends up to 4000 feet into the Great South Bay (or more, depending on bay island locations within the boundary) and 1000 feet into the Atlantic and discuss submerged resources within the Seashore's boundary.
- **Marine Flora and Fauna:** Illustrate that the marine environment is host to ocean and estuarine-dwelling flora (algae, sea grass) and fauna (crustaceans, mollusks, and other invertebrates; birds, fish, turtles, seals, whales), and is a prime nursery and feeding location for finfish, crabs, horseshoe crabs, and migrating birds and horseshoe crabs, to name a few species that rely specifically on this dynamic coastline.
- **Adaptation to Micro-Climates:** Describe and illustrate how flora and fauna on Fire Island can be specific to habitats or micro-environments. (For example, the Sunken Forest, a maritime forest comprised mainly of American holly, sassafras, and shadbush, is a globally rare forest habitat. The valuable sea grass beds, lying submerged in the shallow bays off the back salt marshes, are critical habitats for a variety of shellfish, fish and crabs.) Describe how their environments protect the mainland from storm events and wave action, while providing a vital ecosystem for many species.
- **Fish Habitat:** Illustrate how the waters of the Great South Bay and the Atlantic Ocean within the Seashore's boundary strand provide excellent bay and barrier beach fish habitat. These waters host diverse fish populations that show pronounced seasonal changes.
- **Research Needs:** Describe how the state of the Atlantic near-shore ecological environment is generally unknown and requires additional study particularly regarding the fish and benthic communities. Share issues and concerns that include potential septic and groundwater leachate carrying nutrients and pathogens, overfishing, and mining sand from off shore sources.

- Harvesting techniques
- Local recipes (for beach plums, blueberries, fluke and flounder, clams, waterfowl, salt hay, etc.)
- Habitat and Adaptation (How different habitats support various plants and animals with adaptations that ensure their survival in that habitat.)
- Horseshoe Crabs (unusual, primitive marine invertebrates; their role in the marine ecosystem and value for medical science.)
- Near-shore ecological environment

Fire Island: A Story of People and Place

For centuries, people have been and will continue to be intertwined with Fire Island's delicate environment; actions today will shape Fire Island and its surroundings into the future, challenging all to become stewards of Fire Island's natural and cultural legacy.

About this theme: This theme is about people influencing nature, and nature influencing people; recreation, resort, and maritime heritage.

Concepts	Topics and Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Development: Illustrate how, prior to use as a resort beginning in the 1880s, Fire Island had been put to agricultural and industrial use for generations. Trace the historic use and development of Fire Island over time. Connect development of Fire Island to regional and national responses of shifting social, economic, cultural, and political circumstances (over time). • Man Influences Nature, Nature Influences Man: Describe how Fire Island has been shaped by human intervention and the forces of nature. Explore the ramifications (historic and future) in policy and management strategies if interrelationships between humans and nature are not recognized and understood. <p>RECREATION AND RESORT COMMUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resort Communities: Explore the founding and use over time of the (17) private resort communities established before the Seashore's authorization. • Character and Community: Help people to experience the character of the island communities. Show how without paved roads and with limited traffic, the communities have retained much of their original character. Offer ways to experience the sense of communion with both nature and community (represented by groups gathering to view sunset); a sense of arrival (passengers disembarking the ferry), a sense of self-reliance (collection of hand carts at the ferry dock), and a vehicle-free existence (pedestrians on a boardwalk). Point out factors associated with the built environment that make Fire Island special such as building scale, materials, color, fencing, pathways, and landscape features. • Carrington House and Cottage: Explain the history of the Carrington House from its beginning as a 1909 bungalow and modified through the years. Explain its origin as part of a life-saving station; the changes to be joined to the main house in 1947 for use as a guest house; and ownership under Broadway producer Frank Carrington as a place for artists and where stage, screen, and literary celebrities stayed during his period of residence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Plant network • Fire Island Light Station • Resort Communities • Carrington House & Cottage • Archeological resources • Ethnographic resources • Collections • Landscape features • Historic structures • Lighthouse • Fresnel Lens • Effect of littoral on location of the light house from the edge of the island when it was built to nearly five miles east of the western border at Democrat Point today. • Maritime heritage • Commercial shipping lanes • Western Union Telegraph Company; signal tower and telegraph station • US Naval Radio Compass Station (1906)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Divergent Interests and Expectations: Explore how stakeholder interests vary regarding natural systems and the direction to take in their wake. (For example: while stakeholders may agree that the coastal environment is highly changeable, there are different opinions about the responsible responses to those changes. NPS policy directs parks to allow natural processes to unfold unimpeded by human intervention, while some stakeholders see threats to their properties and quality of their park experiences. Explore these inherent conflicts and potential solutions and compromises.) • Recreation: Describe the opportunities for passive and active recreation in and around Fire Island. Compare and contrast how these activities have changed over time. Compare and contrast how subsistence fishing and hunting (for American Indians and early settlers) became recreational pursuits. Describe where people can safely recreate or drive to ensure safety of natural resources. Provide hands-on recreation opportunities and experiences (for example: kayaking, seining, clamming, fishing, etc.) <p>MARITIME HERITAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighthouses: Describe that to aid navigation, a lighthouse has stood on a strategic location on Fire Island since 1826. (Present lighthouse dates from 1857). Trace advancing lighthouse technologies (lenses, etc.) and their use and value in maritime commerce. Describe lighthouse lens technology and illustrate the technology's influence on maritime industry over time. Evaluate the role and effect of lighthouses and lighthouse technology had on US and world maritime history over time. Describe the lives and stories of the lighthouse keepers and their families. • US Life Saving Service: Describe the US Life Saving Service roots on Fire Island in the mid-19th century. Describe the growth and effect that the US Life Saving Service had over time on the economy, and on industries such as the maritime industry and the resort and recreation industries. • Strategic Communications Location: Describe why the Seashore was a desired location for communication infrastructure. (For example: 1868 Western Union Telegraph Company signal tower and telegraph station; US Naval Radio Compass Station in 1906; Western Union Fire Island Marine Station abandoned in 1920 and destroyed by a hurricane in 1938). • Shipping Lanes: Describe and illustrate how Fire Island's proximity to shipping lanes serving New York harbor have made its location critical to maritime navigation and communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Union Fire Island Marine Station (abandoned in 1920, destroyed by hurricane 1938) • Private resort communities • Establishment of the park • Historic patterns of land use (from agricultural use to resort and recreation) • Managing stakeholder interests • NPS/NPCA Community Character Analysis (2009) found that the four most important elements defining community character were based on how Fire Island is experienced • Issues of coexisting with wildlife • Community stewards • Endangered species • Fresnel lens and lighthouse technology • Lighthouse keepers and their families • Maritime commerce and lighthouses
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Three Centuries of Change at the Floyd Estate

The Floyd family's personal stories and 250-year residency at the Floyd Estate in Mastic Beach provide a lens through which to understand the dynamic social, economic, and political changes that took place over that time on Long Island and throughout the nation.

About this theme: This theme is about the arc of time, political and social context, and one influential family's experiences over time.

Concepts	Topics and Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing the New Republic: Compare and contrast the changes in society, politics, and the economy that Floyd witnessed during his lifetime (1734–1821). Describe the changes William Floyd was responsible for. Three Centuries of Change: Compare and contrast the changes in the Floyd family and its use of the estate over time with the larger changes and movements in society, politics, land use, and the economy on Long Island and throughout the nation over a 250-year period. Compare, contrast and describe if and why the Floyd family's experiences and actions were typical—or atypical—of people in the area, and/or people of the family's own social class. Compare and Contrast the Floyd estate with other centuries-old Long Island homes of European settlers such as Sylvester Manor, home to eleven generations of its original European settler family starting in 1652. Compare experiences: Compare and contrast experiences and (professional and recreational) pursuits of the Floyd family with people of the local community including the and nearby Poospatuck Indian Reservation that supplied young workers for the plantation. "Lens": Illustrate within the built environment and use Floyd family personal stories to relate ways that the William Floyd estate can be used as a "lens" through which to understand larger social, economic, and political changes that took place on Long Island and throughout the nation over a 250-year period. Architecture: Illustrate the evolution and changes in the architecture of the house to reflect burgeoning family wealth and to accommodate a growing high social standing. Generations of Floyds: Describe the professional and community life of Floyd family members. Explain how family members were typical (or not) of their day and class. Explore how Floyd family emigration in 1654 contributed to the family being firmly and prominently established and wealthy by the time of the American Revolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architecture Changing nature of land use (agrarian to recreational) Eight generations of Floyds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nicoll (1703-1755) and - Tabitha Floyd (1705-1755) - William Floyd (1734-1821) - Nicoll Floyd II (1762-1852) - John G. Floyd, Sr. (1806-1881) - John G. Floyd, Jr. (1841-1903) - Cornelia Floyd Nichols (1882-1977) - William Floyd Nichols and daughter and son-in-law, - John Nichols, American naturalist Changes to the estate over time Establishment of the estate as a NPS area—1965 donation of 27 structures, historical artifacts, and landscape features. Poospatuck Indian Reservation Birds Decoys Botany

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influential Scientist: Explore the career scientist and world class naturalist John Nichols and his pioneering work [for example, Ichthyology; Copeia journal]. Describe his association and impact on the American Museum of Natural History. Describe how he was a noteworthy figure in science and conservation. Explore Nichols’ relationships with other scientists and his life and times on the estate. Describe how NPS uses his box turtle tagging research today. Connect Nichols’ work with other conservationists of his era. • Adaptive Use of the Land: Show evidence of past use of the land as how the Floyd family adapted the land for uses from plantation, working farm, to summer estate and hunting preserve. Explain the shift to recreation and conservation uses of their property. • Changes: Describe how each successive generation of the Floyd family used inherited wealth to transform the estate to suit his/her own needs and desires and how these changes and uses exemplified their period of time. • Shipbuilding: Describe the role of shipbuilding and other industries on the Floyd family and the local area. • Industry, Fashion and Conservation: Explore the relationships between fashion trends and the fashion industry, (hunting birds for millinery use) and subsequent conservation movements. Describe the association with Audubon Society. Describe how and why conservation efforts were begun for animal populations in danger. • Landscape and Preservation: Illustrate how today, the William Floyd Estate encompasses 613 acres of the original 4400 of the “plantation”. • Workforce: Trace the labor pools used for work on the estate from enslaved people, indentured servants and Poospatuck Indian Reservation residents, to Irish and other waves of immigrants. Compare the workforce of the Floyd Estate to the workforce of neighboring estates. • Floyds and the Arts: Describe the role the arts played in the lives of the Floyds—especially women—and how their artistic interests (writing, painting, landscapes, etc.) mirrored their times in term of fashion, class, and gender roles. • Responsibilities of Position: Explore the responsibilities of community leadership that came with family wealth and how that may have changed over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Atlantic Flyway • Hunting birds for use in fashion • Economic connections between the estate and NYC • Whaling Industry • Participation in the arts • Box turtle research and tagging • Market gunning/gun clubs • NYC street food • Egrets
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The Life and Times of a Patriot

As a signer of the Declaration of Independence, William Floyd, prominent New York political leader and wealthy plantation owner, provides a personal perspective on the risks to life, property, and reputation associated with being a patriot in New York during the War for Independence

About this theme: This theme is about William Floyd's political choices, his career, and its context.

Concepts	Topics and Stories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of Independence: Evaluate the influence of William Floyd and his political work on the decision to become independent from Great Britain. Weigh the potential and actual risks Floyd faced for his convictions. Discuss the effect of occupation of Floyd's property on him, his family, and larger Long Island and New York (city and state) communities. • Context for Patriotism: Describe the political, social, economic context in which Floyd became allied with the patriot cause. Explain politics in NY at the time and how it was one of only two colonies (GA being the other) that lacked a government that supported the patriot causes. • British Occupation of Long Island: Describe short and long-term consequences of British occupation of Long Island (1776) on Floyd's family and the larger community. Describe the stress of the occupation on Floyd's family and community. Trace the effects that political alignment had on personal relationships of people on both sides of independence. • Consequences: Describe consequences Floyd paid in property and reputation for backing independence. Describe the Floyd estate under British occupation. • Refuge: Describe what Floyd's motives may have been to move from Long Island to land purchased in Central New York in 1784. • Sacrifice for the Cause: Explain how Hannah Floyd, like many women, stepped in to run day-to-day affairs of the family business (the estate) during her husband's absences on state and federal government business. • Perspectives: Describe Floyd's personal, professional, political, social and economic perspectives regarding the issue of independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Floyd Family members including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hannah Jones (wife #1) - Nicholl - Mary - Catherine - Joanna Strong (wife #2) - Anna - Eliza • The Declaration of Independence • Floyd's militia and military service • First Continental Congress • Floyd and NY politics • Floyd's role in national politics (elector in 2 national elections) • British occupation of Long Island • Servants and workers on the estate • Poospatuck Indian Reservation • 18th century life • Loyalty, risks/stakes for siding for independence • NY state politics around the decision for independence.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Context: Explore the context (political, social, economic) in which Floyd and others in New York and other colonies before, during and after the decision and signing of the Declaration of Independence. Explore the short and long-term personal ramifications for Floyd and other NY legislators for backing (or not backing) independence. • Military Career: Describe how Floyd was a member of the Suffolk County Militia early in the conflict with Britain and became a major general. • National Career: Describe how William Floyd's national career may or may not have been typical of the other 55 signers of the Declaration of Independence. • Floyd Children: Discuss the lives of William Floyd's children, [son], and daughters Mary and Kitty, and their relationships including Kitty's relationship with Madison. • Slavery: Describe slavery on the estate; enslaved peoples' lives after emancipation. • Labor, Goods, and Services: Describe the living conditions and family relationships of servants from the Poospatuck Tribe (as young as five years; parents paid money; some go home on weekends; etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floyd's career in politics • Floyd family background and emigration • Floyd's service to NY and the US; his career in politics • Suffolk County Militia; major general • NY State senator • Floyd as a "farmer" in retirement in Westernville, NY; retirement on land on the banks of the Mohawk. • Slavery • Abolition of slavery in NY • James Madison
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* The concepts, topics and stories listed here are a representative, partial list. They represent some examples that represent types of stories that could illustrate the themes. This is not all-inclusive (in fact it could never be) nor is this intended to exclude any topic. A park interpretive theme is successful only if other topics and stories could be included within it.

Concepts: "Concepts" are written as objectives to provide managers and interpreters with guidance and consistency to align personal services, exhibits or media with park significance. The concepts and ideas are designed to be added to or changed as new information comes to light. Park interpretive themes should be relatively timeless so the list of concepts/ideas and topics/stories can be added or changed without having to change the theme. Because the objectives can be used for programs, exhibits, and media they can also save effort and eliminate the stress that comes with the pressure to develop brand-new, original themes for every interpretive program or product.

APPENDIX B: Interpretive Staffing

The following chart documents staffing devoted to interpretation and education functions in FY16. How these positions and full time equivalents (FTEs) will be distributed in the park to meet future needs is to be determined.

FY16 Interpretive Staffing					
Position	Title	Series & Grade	Status	#	Comments
Permanent Positions					
Supervisory Park Ranger	Chief of Interpretation	GS-0025/12	Perm-FT	1	1 FTE
Supervisory Park Ranger	Supervisor	GS-0025/11	Perm-FT	1	1 FTE
Park Ranger	Interpreter	GS-0025/09	Perm-FT	1	1 FTE
Park Ranger	Interpreter WFE	GS-0025/09	Perm-STF	1	0.93 FTE (WFE)
Museum Technician	Museum Technician WFE	GS-1016-07	Perm-STF-PT	1	0.25FTE (WFE)
Temporary Positions (Seasonals)					
Park Ranger	Interpreter	GS-0025/05	Temp-PT	2	.67 FTE
Park Ranger	Interpreter	GS-0025/05	Temp	6	2.13 FTE
Park Guide	Interpreter	GS-0090/04	Temp	1	0.15 FTE (WFE)
Park Guide	Interpreter	GS-0090/03	Temp	1	0.29 FTE (WFE)
SCA Intern	Education/Interpretation	N/A	Temp	2	.59 FTE

FT = Full Time

STF = Subject-to-Furlough

Perm = Permanent

Temp = Temporary (Seasonal)

APPENDIX C: Volunteers

The Volunteer-in-Parks (VIP) program supports a broad range of park sites and programs and is managed and administered by the Division of Interpretation, with site supervision by William Floyd Estate staff, the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, and field staff from various park divisions.

- A large majority of park volunteers assist the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society with lighthouse operations, programs, and media, including providing education programming for approximately 6,000 students annually.
- Interpretation volunteers mainly assist with visitor services and public contact functions including visitor contact station functions, community outreach, interpretive and education programming, and media.
- Natural resource management volunteers assist with wildlife and vegetation monitoring, shoreline studies, and data management.
- Maintenance volunteers are generally project-based (beach cleanups, gardening, etc.).
- The park hosted a Centennial Volunteer Ambassador intern in 2016 and 2017 to strengthen VIP recruitment, tracking, recognition, and project coordination.

Volunteer Hours

In FY2016, 649 volunteers contributed 30,369 hours of service to Fire Island.

FY16 Volunteers-in-Parks				
Division	# of Volunteers	% of Total Park Volunteers	# of Hours Contributed	% of Total Park Hours Contributed
Administration	--	--	0	0%
Campground Hosts			1,440	5%
Cultural Resources	--	--	0	0%
Interpretation			26,136	86%
Maintenance			2,464	8%
Natural Resources			329	1%
TOTAL	649	--	30,369	--
Note: Starting in 2016, the NPS no longer counts as volunteer hours the time contributed by stipend interns (Student Conservation Association, Environment for the Americas, etc.).				
Source: Fire Island National Seashore 2016 Volunteers-in-Parks Report				

Volunteer Funding

	2014	2015	2016	Comments
Volunteer Funding	\$6,700	\$7,938	\$7,563	FY15 funding includes one-year centennial volunteer monies for coordination of volunteers.
Source: NPS NER				

APPENDIX D: Audiences and Visitor Contact Data

This section includes data about audiences and visitor contacts useful to inform decision-making.

The Reach of Park Personal Services Programming

What Do Visitors Do at Fire Island?			
Type of Personal Service	# of Contacts	% of Personal Services	% of Total Park Visitation
Visitor Centers / Contact Stations	193,630	63%	50%
Informal Interpretation	38,975	13%	10%
Formal Interpretation	45,021	15%	12%
Demonstrations & Performing Arts	2,164	.7%	.6%
Junior Ranger Programs	677	.2%	.2%
Special Events	3,743	1.2%	1%
Education Programs	21,918	7%	6%
TOTAL	306,128	--	--
FIIS Total Visitation in FY 2016 = 389,075			
Source: NPS Servicewide Interpretive Report (2016; internal access only) and NPS Statistics: https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/			

Recreation Visits

Visitation statistics inform operations decisions such as: determining seasons, daily opening, etc. that in turn inform staffing decisions.

- Recreation Visits by Month 1979–present: [https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Recreation%20Visitors%20By%20Month%20\(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year\)?Park=FIIS](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Recreation%20Visitors%20By%20Month%20(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=FIIS)
- Park Visitation Graph 1967–present: [https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20Graph%20\(1904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year\)?Park=FIIS](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20Graph%20(1904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=FIIS)

Source: NPS Public Use Statistics: <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/> ; FIIS: <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/Reports/Park>

Demographic Information

To learn about communities and to compare park visitor demographics to community demographics:

- US Census (2010) – Suffolk County and New York State: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36103.html>
- NPS Surveys – park visitor and resident (2008) - Visitor Services Project: <http://psu.sesrc.wsu.edu/reports/>

Comparison of Community and State with FIIS Residents and Visitors

	US Census (2010)				NPS Visitor Survey 2008			
	Suffolk County		New York		FIIS Residents		FIIS Visitors	
DEMOGRAPHICS								
Hispanic/Latino	18%	26%	18%	36%	1%	1%	5	6%
African American	8%		18%		0%		1%	
Asian	4%		8%		1%		2%	
White	86%		71%		99%		97%	
AGE AND GENDER								
Under age 18 Census/15 years NPS Survey	23%		22%		15%		18%	
Over age 65 Census/age 61 NPS survey	15%		14%		26%		7%	
Female	51%		52%		-		-	
SPECIAL NEEDS								
Language other than English spoken at home	21%		30%		96% English		95% English for speaking 96% English for reading	
Language Preference	-		-		-		21% Russian / 7% each: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish (17% of each of these language speakers were bilingual)	
Disabilities	-		-		-		-	
Disability - Encountered Access Problems	-		-		6%		6%	
INCOME								
Medium Household Income	\$87,763		\$58,003		Did not ask			
\$50,000-74,000	-		-		-		-	
\$ 75,000-99,000	-		-		-		-	
\$100,000-149,000	-		-		-		-	
Below poverty level	6%		15%		-		-	
EDUCATION								
HS Graduation Rate	90%		89%		Did not ask			
Bachelor's Degree	33%		33%		-	-	-	-
Graduate Degree	-		-		-		-	

VISITOR STUDY

Visitor Services Project Fire Island National Seashore

Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at park facilities within Fire Island National Seashore (NS) during July 19-27, 2008. A total of 1,135 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 636 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 56% response rate.
- This report profiles a systematic random sample of visitors at park facilities within Fire Island NS. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of visitor comments are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Visitor Comments Appendix.
- Thirty-three (33%) percent of visitor groups were in groups of two (2) and 30% were in groups of five (5) or more. Forty-six (46%) percent of visitor groups were in family groups.
- United States visitors comprised 97% of total visitors, from New York (84%) and 37 other states and Puerto Rico. International visitors represented 3% of total visitation, with 34% from Canada, 11% from Australia, and 12 other countries.
- Fifty-four (54%) percent of visitors were ages 36-65 years, 7% were 66 years or older, and 18% were ages 15 years or younger. Six (6%) percent of visitor groups reported physical conditions that made it difficult to access or participate in park services or activities.
- Forty-three (43%) percent of visitors had visited the park once in the past 12 months, while 34% had visited five (5) or more times.
- Prior to this visit, 80% of visitor groups were aware that Fire Island NS is a unit of the National Park System and 67% were aware of the difference between Fire Island NS and other public beaches.
- Prior to this visit, most visitor groups obtained information about Fire Island NS through previous visits (72%) and friends/relatives/word of mouth (48%). Most visitor groups (91%) obtained the information they needed. Nine (9%) percent of visitor groups did not obtain any information about the park prior to their visit.
- Most visitor groups (88%) were residents of the local area (within 45 miles of any park entry point). Visiting Fire Island NS was the primary reason that brought 59% of the non-resident visitor groups to the park area, while 19% came to visit friends and relatives in the area.
- Of visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours visiting the park, 42% spent five (5) or more hours. For those who visited for more than 24 hours, 38% spent four (4) or more days. The average length of stay, including those who spent less than 24 hours and those who spent more, was 27 hours (1.1 days).
- Of the sites operated by the National Park Service, 60% of visitor groups visited the beaches, and 41% visited the Fire Island Lighthouse. Among sites not operated by the National Park Service, Robert Moses State Park was the most common destination, receiving 50% of visitor groups.

- Of the activities in which visitors engaged on past trips to Fire Island NS, beach activities was the most common (90%), followed by spending time with family and friends (80%). The most common activities on this trip were also beach activities (76%) and spending time with family and friends (68%).
- Most visitor groups (89%) rated the overall quality of facilities services, and recreational opportunities at Fire Island NS as "very good" or "good." One (1%) percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality as "very poor" or "poor."

Source: 2008 Visitor and Resident Studies: <http://psu.sesrc.wsu.edu/reports/>

RESIDENT STUDY (2008)

Visitor Services Project
Fire Island National Seashore

Report Summary

This report describes the results of a study of Fire Island National Seashore (NS) residents and homeowners, mailed on May 16, 2008, with a pre-notification sent on May 9, 2008. A total of 672 questionnaires were sent to a random sample of people who own or live in homes that lie within the boundaries of Fire Island National Seashore. Addresses were taken from the Town of Brookhaven and Town of Islip tax rolls for owners of homes on Fire Island, or who were identified as year-round residents on Fire Island. Additional addresses came from a list of the homeowners with full-time or part time driving permits. Of those 672 addresses, 13 were not deliverable, reducing the usable sample size to 659. A total of 258 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 39.2% response rate.

This report profiles a systematic random sample of homeowners within the boundaries of Fire Island National Seashore. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of comments are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Comments Appendix.

- Thirty-one percent (31%) of respondents were in groups of five or more and 27% were in groups of two. Thirty-nine percent (39%) were in groups of family and friends.
- United States residents comprised nearly 100% of the respondents, from New York (84%) and 13 other states and Washington, D.C. International respondents represented less than 1% of the total sample population, but this data should be viewed with caution, due to a low number of respondents that answered this question.
- Forty percent (40%) of respondents were ages 41-60 years, 26% were 61 years or older, and 15% were ages 15 years or younger. Six percent (6%) of groups reported physical conditions that made it difficult to access or participate in park services or activities.
- One percent (1%) of the respondents were Hispanic or Latino and 99% were White.
- Thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents were seasonal residents of Fire Island, staying 3-6 months a year, while 17% live on Fire Island all year round.

- Most respondents (67%) used the Fire Island properties and/or facilities during the last 12 months. Fifty-six percent (56%) of groups occasionally used the park properties/facilities. The months during which respondents most commonly used the park properties/facilities were August 2007 (76%) and July 2007 (74%).
- Most respondents obtained or updated their information about Fire Island NS through friends/relatives/word of mouth (64%) and newspapers/magazine articles (61%). Thirty percent (30%) of respondents did not stay updated on information about the park activities/rules and regulations.
- Of the sites operated by the National Park Service, beaches were used by 76% of respondents, and 51% visited the Fire Island Lighthouse.
- Of the activities in which respondents engaged on previous trips to Fire Island NS, beach activities was the most common (75%), followed by spending time with family and friends (65%). The most common activities on this trip were also beach activities (79%) and spending time with family and friends (65%).
- Most respondents (67%) rated the overall quality of services, facilities, and recreational opportunities at Fire Island NS as "very good" or "good." fewer than one percent of rated the overall quality as "very poor" or "poor."

Current Audiences

This table describes the types of visitors who presently visit Fire Island and helps to plan for future audiences.

Fire Island National Seashore – Current Audiences		
Fire Island residents	Year-rounders	Benefit sought is lifestyle quality all year round; strong sense of community; property value. Includes business owners, contractors, and workers who live year-round on the Island.
	Renters	Often stay for the summer or far less time; usually their interest is largely recreational.
	Seasonal Workers	Seasonal contractors and workers who may live on Island seasonally or periodically but may not see anything of the national park, or understand what it means to be in a national park.
Youth, organized	Led by outside organizations	May or may not request park ranger; may or may not be standards-based lessons. Teachers equally important as students as audiences or perhaps more so, in terms of their role as capacity builders.
	Park-led	Park ranger-led; may or may not be standards-based.
	Scouts	Significant scout group visitation over the years. Visit park for service projects, to earn special badges, and for camping.
Sun and surf		May not realize they are in a national park; often repeat visitors to their favorite park community or beach.
Hunters and fishers		Largely utilize shorelines adjacent to wilderness area when in season. Does not include fishers outside of park boundaries; does not include commercial fishermen.

International visitors		Often associated with airport layovers or attraction seekers outside of NYC. Majority of such visitors visit the Lighthouse as a destination location.
Gateway communities	Largely white, middle class	Have means to visit and knowledge of the island and park. May visit any park sites although many are repeat visitors to particular park sites.
	Lower socio-economic, minority	Latino groups, Afro-Americans, and others. Often do not know about the park, the NPS, or perceive barriers to entrance.
Other Long Island underserved communities		Indigenous and African American, especially.
Civic/Historical groups		Principally visiting WFE for organized events, connection to US history.
College students and faculty		Carry out research or place-based assignment to meet educational objectives; visit park for student events (i.e. SUNY international students, St. Joe's Day).
Boaters		May or may not also be FI residents.
Volunteers		Many are retirees with long connections to the park, but also students, educators, social service employees, and others currently employed in professional career fields. Some park interpretive, RM, and VR&P staff began their careers as park volunteers.
Nature enthusiasts		Variety of interests including birds (especially), botany, butterflies, general and casual, but none dominate.
Campers		Require permits. Many from New York metropolitan area.
Virtual		People who follow the Seashore – some may be regular visitors, some may never visit.
Partners and Cooperating Associations		Have formal and informal arrangements in partnering with the park.
Artists		Artists-in-residents, park/partner art exhibits and contest participants, commissioned artists, visitors of all ages, FI residents. Photographers, painters, writers, composers, etc.
Rest of Long Island		Beyond gateway communities but same sub-audiences.

APPENDIX E: 2016 Servicewide Interpretive Report (SIR)

Park Org. Code	Unit Name	Fiscal Year
FIS	Fire Island National Seashore	2016

Funding Sources

Fiscal Year Interpretive Expenditures

Park Interpretive Funds Spent (ONPS Base only)	\$615,457	
Servicewide Fee Funds Spent	\$0	
Reimbursable Fee Funds Spent (16USC 1a-2g)	\$0	

Interpretive Staffing for Fiscal Year

Permanent FTE	4.20	No. of Perm Positions	5.0
Temporary FTE	3.90	No. of Temp Positions	12.0
Total FTE	8.10	Total Positions	17.0

Personal Services

	Number of Times Service Provided	Number of Different Facilities	Number of Different Services	Total Work Years	Total Number of Visitor Contacts	Number Distributed	Total ONPS Salary & Benefits Only	Total All Other Funding Costs
Visitor Centers/ Contact Stations		6		12.60	193,630		\$216,799	\$11,931
Informal Interpretation				0.90	38,975		\$45,896	\$3,431
Formal Interpretation	12,186			2.50	45,021		\$62,841	\$7,744
Demonstrations & Performing Arts	101			0.40	2,164		\$20,181	\$3,365
Junior Ranger Programs				0.30	677		\$26,459	\$3,333
Special Events	21			0.80	3,743		\$47,074	\$3,386
Education Programs	473			0.80	21,918		\$46,692	\$6,537
Subtotal Personal Services	12,781	6		18.30	306,128		\$465,942	\$39,727

Non-Personal Services								
	Number of Times Service Provided	Number of Different Facilities	Number of Different Services	Total Work Years	Total Number of Visitor Contacts	Number Distributed	Total ONPS Salary & Benefits Only	Total All Other Funding Costs
Park-Produced Publications			15	0.30		9,299	\$32,882	\$3,333
Audio-Visual/ Electronic Media			18	0.10	52,517		\$7,586	\$3,333
Subtotal Non-Personal Services			33	0.40	52,517	9,299	\$40,468	\$6,666

Outreach Services								
	Number of Times Service Provided	Number of Different Facilities	Number of Different Services	Total Work Years	Total Number of Visitor Contacts	Number Distributed	Total ONPS Salary & Benefits Only	Total All Other Funding Costs
Community Programs	19			0.50	3,008		\$25,889	\$3,447
Loan Materials	0			0.00	0		\$0	\$3,333
Park Web Site				0.20		628,518	\$18,786	\$3,333
Subtotal Outreach Services	19			0.70	3,008	628,518	\$44,675	\$10,113

Column Totals	12,800	6	33	19.40	361,653	637,817	\$551,085	\$56,506
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Program Highlights

Centennial Celebrations: The National Park Service Centennial was celebrated through digital media, special exhibits, events, and challenges. 1. Social media campaigns such as #100FireIsland Photos and #FindYourPark helped raise awareness of and appreciation for the milestone, and helped expand the reach of the Seashore's social media platforms. 2. William Floyd descendent and naturalist John T. Nicolls was featured on the Facebook Live Virtual Park Circuit as an innovator of his day for his box turtle tracking studies. 3. Special presentations such as "National Parks: America's Best Idea," highlighted the history of the NPS and America's special places. 4. The Seashore's

10th biennial science conference was a day of presentations for the general public about current park research and monitoring; the key note presentation by the Seashore's Chief of Natural Resources reflected on the history of science and natural resource management in the NPS. 5. Visitors were challenged to find "100 Natural Things" on a nature walk at the William Floyd Estate, hike 20.16 miles on Fire Island, and rid 2016 pounds of marine debris from Fire Island's beaches. 6. During the annual Junior Ranger Day event, over 325 youth found their park and took part in activities such as National Park Jeopardy, a centennial art mosaic project, mapping and timeline games, and a "Get Outdoors" hike. 7. "Recollections, Collections and 100

Selections,” a new curated exhibit at the William Floyd Estate’s Old Mastic House, featured 100 selections of cataloged objects never before on display – many dating to 1916. 8. And park partners –the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society (FILPS) –developed and displayed two new exhibits at the Fire Island Lighthouse: “1916 Life on the Beach” and “The Life of a Lighthouse Keeper in 1916” which looked back on life on Fire Island a hundred years ago. 9. The NPS Centennial Find Your Park Juried Art Exhibition featured over 50 original pieces by more than 25 artists at the Seashore’s Watch Hill Ferry Terminal. Paintings, drawings photographs, and mixed-media highlighted national parks like Yellowstone, Zion, Acadia, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, and of course, Fire Island National Seashore. Simultaneously on display were the winners of the Children’s Centennial Art Contest. The well-received exhibit reception held on Founder’s Day was a perfect way to round out the centennial celebrations.

Every Kid in a Park: 10. At the Fire Island Lighthouse, FILPS conducted standards-based education programs for over 5000 4th graders in FY’16. This park partner also honored the 4th grade pass allowing free lighthouse tower climbs for 4th grade visitors and their care givers. 11. The entire 4th grade student population from three underserved schools participated in National Park Foundation funded field trips to the Seashore in 2016. The 4th graders from William Floyd Elementary School, a title one school located in a gateway community to the park, visited three Seashore sites during three field trips where they participated in partner- and ranger-led programming. The students climbed the iconic Fire Island Lighthouse while learning about the region’s

rich maritime history; explored the nature of the globally rare Sunken Forest at Sailors Haven; and, discovered eight generations of family life and American history at the ancestral home of William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. 12. In collaboration with Weir Farm National Historic Site, the 4th graders from Castle Bridge Elementary School, Washington Heights, NYC participated in art-focused programming at two very different national parks located equidistant from their urban school. After a fall visit to WEFA with artist consultant Dmitri Wright, the students and the artist then visited the Seashore’s Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness in springtime where they pondered and painted the dynamic barrier island landscape. 13. A citizen science birding program developed and coordinated by Gateway National Recreation Area’s education staff was piloted by the 4th graders of Bay Avenue Elementary – also a title one gateway school to the Seashore. The students traveled by bus and then ferry to the Sailors Haven where they collected data on bird behavior and shared results via live chat with other students conducting the program simultaneously at GATE’s Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; once back in the classroom the students uploaded their observations to eBird - an online database used by scientists to track changes in bird populations and migration patterns. Park Website, Total Number of Visitor Contacts: 256,605

Report prepared by: Kristin M. Santos
Date: 11/14/16
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APPENDIX F: Existing Conditions of Fire Island National Seashore (2017)

Visitor Facilities

- **Fire Island Lighthouse:** Public facilities at this highly visited park site are open all year and administered by the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society. They include the iconic 192-step Lighthouse tower; Keeper's Quarters with restrooms, gift shop and exhibits; Fresnel Lens Building, and historic Boat House. A boardwalk nature trail leading to the Lighthouse District begins at the Robert Moses State Park Field #5. A non-slip portable roll-up ADA pathway system leads across the Atlantic Ocean beach south of the Lighthouse.
- **Patchogue Watch Hill Ferry Terminal:** This relatively new (2010) sustainably-designed facility located on the Patchogue River is a transportation hub for visitors traveling by ferry to and from Watch Hill. The climate controlled, handicap-accessible facility includes multiple-stall public restrooms, ferry concessionaire ticket sale space, visitor information desk, and 75-person capacity multi-purpose room. A large outdoor deck on the west side of the building provides river views and outdoor gathering space. Native plant/pollinator gardens flank the north and south sides of the facility.
- **Sailors Haven:** Facilities at this seasonal park destination include a small visitor center with cooperating association sales; public restrooms and showers; 1.5-mile boardwalk nature trail through the Sunken Forest and back dune swale; lifeguarded beach; and concessions operated 44-slip marina, gift shop, and snack bar.
- **Talisman:** There is no regular ferry service to this mid-island location; access is by private boats which moor offshore, or by walking from Fire Island Pines or Davis Park. Facilities include a boat landing, seasonal restrooms, showers, and lifeguarded beach.
- **Watch Hill:** This site includes a seasonally operated visitor center with cooperating association sales; public restrooms and showers; the 30-person capacity Dune Station; cross-island boardwalk nature trail; lifeguarded beach; and concession operated marina (181 slips), restaurant, snack bar, and camp store.
- **William Floyd Estate:** The 25-room, three-story Old Mastic House dating to 1720 with 18th, 19th, and 20th Century additions, is the primary visitor facility at the William Floyd Estate. The classified historic structure was home to William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and at least eight generations of the Floyd family members. Additionally, the 613-acre Estate grounds contain 12 historic outbuildings, a family cemetery, visitor parking, carriage roads and walking trails. There are approximately nine miles of unpaved roads throughout the forests and fields south of the Old Mastic House.
- **Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness:** The 1800-square-foot year-round Fire Island Wilderness Visitor Center provides single unit restrooms, cooperating association sales, seasonal recreational driving and hunting permits, and a 2nd story unheated 30-person capacity public gathering space with views of the Fire Island Wilderness. A 1,050-foot handicap accessible boardwalk leads from the visitor center into the Wilderness.



GMP Map illustrating existing visitor conditions.

Exhibits

- Fire Island Lighthouse Keeper's Quarters:** The Keeper's Quarters exhibits (2001, Harpers Ferry Center) feature graphic panels and audiovisual and mechanical interactives highlighting the maritime heritage of Fire Island. The exhibits include a working miniature of the beach apparatus drill; and interpret storms, shipwrecks, lifesaving, geological history, light keepers and their families, and preservation.
- Fire Island Lighthouse Fresnel Lens Building:** Since the Fresnel Lens Building opened (2011), staff and volunteers of the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society have developed exhibits and installed a gallery system, and have worked with artists and designers to outfit the space with graphic panels and three-dimensional reproductions interpreting the Fresnel lens and lens technology. Temporary exhibits are occasionally installed on portable grids.

- Boathouse:** This small outbuilding in the vicinity of the Fire Island Lighthouse displays artifacts such as rescue boats, a surf cart, and equipment used by the historic United States Life Saving Service.
- William Floyd Estate:** The 25-room Old Mastic House showcases architecture, furnishings, and artifacts spanning at least eight generations of Floyd-Nichols family occupation of the house. NPS staff curate temporary exhibits for display every two years.
- Watch Hill Visitor Center:** 1980s exhibits (Harpers Ferry Center) highlight beach to bay habitats with graphic panels, three-dimensional models and a touch table. The exhibit is dated, worn, and faded beyond repair and content is outdated. Several saltwater aquaria draw visitors and provide opportunities for informal interpretation.

- **Wilderness and Sailors Haven Visitor Centers:** The facilities feature saltwater aquaria, touch tables, and in-house developed displays featuring seashore plant and animal life. Occasionally, temporary exhibits are displayed at the Wilderness Visitor Center such as visitor artwork and NPS traveling exhibits.
- **Patchogue Watch Hill Ferry Terminal:** A gallery in the foyer and multipurpose room provide space for changing displays and exhibits in this relatively new climate-controlled facility.

Waysides, Publications, AV, Signage

- **Waysides:** There are eight wayside panels at seven sites and park headquarters. They include orientation panels and subject matter panels. Some are used at a single location and others like the park-wide and NPS orientation panels are installed at multiple sites. There are several panels in the communities of Fire Island Pines and waysides at Bayshore, Sayville, and Patchogue Watch Hill ferry terminals. Two additional subject matter panels, one of which interprets the dynamic nature of the barrier island; the other, the impacts of change, will be installed by 2018.
- **Publications:** There are approximately 36 publications, including the Fire Island National Seashore unigrid and the NPS climate change brochure, six the Seashore-produced and four NPS-produced Jr. Ranger booklets, as well as partner publications. Additionally, sixteen park-produced publications are available at the Seashore contact stations. A summer program guide and tide table brochure are produced annually. An exhibit guide for the William Floyd Estate is produced in-house every two years. Only a few publications are available to download. The Fire Island National Seashore unigrid is available in braille. Brochure topics include: park-specific Storm Stories - impacts of Hurricane Sandy; Land, Sea and Sky, the artwork of Old Mastic; Bernie the Boater, a Junior Ranger booklet about boating safety; Protect the Piping Plover Rack Card; and the Fire Island National Seashore Educator's Resource Guide.
- **Foreign Language Materials:** The Seashore has one in-house produced Spanish brochure that describes logistical information and what to do and see at the park sites.
- **Audiovisual Media:** There are approximately 18 different audiovisual programs including a park orientation film, a Fire Island Trivia PowerPoint loop, The Fire Island Wilderness Poetry Slam, and several presentations relating to the Fire Island Lighthouse. Five AV presentations have park-wide content. The off-road driving video, required viewing to obtain a recreational driving permit, is over 25 years old. Only a few AV programs have any level of accessibility (two have captions).
- **Signs:** A sign plan was completed in 2009 with Harpers Ferry Center. It includes identification, wayfinding, informational, and safety signs. Signs continue to be installed and older, outdated, and worn signs removed as feasible. Signs comply with NPS graphic design and sign standards and should meet accessibility requirements. Highway signs have been placed by the New York Department of Transportation along several major routes including the Long Island Expressway and Sunrise Highway. The state and county parks at either end of Fire Island installed small directional signs to the park. The three ferry companies providing service to Fire Island have placed directional signs to the ferry terminals in the towns with the terminals. There are directional signs to the William Floyd Estate along William Floyd Parkway and the neighborhood route to the park entrance; these signs are small, partially hidden, and inadequate.

Website and Social Media

- **Website:** The Seashore's website (www.nps.gov/fiis) provides information on trip planning, programs and events, and content on park resources and stories. In 2015/2016, nps.gov migrated to a new content management system (CMS) which required the retooling of many outdated "Plan Your Visit" pages. Images and information were updated, but text needs to be edited for today's web audiences. "Plan Your Visit" is the most-visited section of the website. The rest of the website also has had some revisions to text and images but is not up-to-date in terms of using web features available with the new CMS. The website needs updating in content for promotion features, shared content (aka, "stories" and "articles"), and 508-compliant (accessible) multimedia.
- **Social Media:** The Seashore manages four social media accounts as "@FireIslandNPS" including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Links to these platforms are available on www.nps.gov/fiis and are printed on many park publications. Informational and interpretive content is posted by the Public Affairs Specialist on average to: Facebook (2–3 times per week) – 7,109 followers mostly ages 35–65 (Facebook Insights); Twitter (3–5 times per week) – 4,477 followers; Instagram (once daily) – 22,000 followers. Demographic info, can be found here: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>. A social media team is needed to exploit the potential of web and social media. The success of the team will hinge on the availability of time to develop posts, proper equipment, skill development opportunities in technical aspects, media norms and protocols, writing, and mentoring.

Formal Interpretive Programs, Education, Youth, Special Events

Formal Interpretive Programs

- Formal Interpretive Programs are offered year-round at the Fire Island Lighthouse, William Floyd Estate, Wilderness Visitor Center, and offsite in communities on Long Island. Tours are offered at the William Floyd Estate, Old Mastic House Fridays-Sundays from Memorial Day through Veterans Day; outdoor natural history programs are conducted fall through spring. During summer, ranger programs (various topics) are occasionally offered in the Fire Island communities. Sailors Haven Sunken Forest Tours are offered weekends in spring and fall, and Wednesdays through Sundays from July through Labor Day. Weekend summer canoe programs and weekly evening programs are conducted at Watch Hill. Weekly guided junior ranger programs (various topics) and marine seining demonstrations, and monthly surf rescue demonstrations are offered at Watch Hill and Sailors Haven. Special programs include breach hikes, clamming and fishing clinics, photography and art programs, park to community day hikes, the overnight "The Fire Island Trek" extended hike, decoy carving demonstrations, curatorial storage tours, WFE Independence Day programming, star gazing, and maritime music programs. The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society conducts tower tours and programs and guest presentations.

Education

- **Students:** In 2016, approximately 6,000 K–12 students participated in fee-based 4th grade history programs at the Fire Island Lighthouse which is administered by the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society. The majority of the 16,000 other students visited Sailors Haven, with smaller numbers of classes participating in programs at Wilderness, Watch Hill, and the William Floyd Estate. Approximately 1/2 of the Sailors Haven classes had

transportation and programs arranged through BOCES (a Long Island education service provider). Classes visiting Sailors Haven usually coordinate travel with the ferry concessioner and frequently arrive in large numbers (sometimes 300 at a time).

- **Education Programs:** The Seashore offers CORE-aligned lesson plans, and guided and self-guided site programs on the topics of shoreline dynamics (HS), adaptation (grades 3–6), climate change (HS) and maritime succession (HS). Shoreline dynamics and climate change programs are posted to the online NPS education portal. Requests for other education programs are accommodated as feasible. All classes visiting Seashore beach sites receive, at a minimum, a ranger orientation and safety talk.
- **Educator Resources:** Annual or biannual educator workshops are formatted as content specific, or as open houses providing general site, resource, and lesson plan orientations. An Educator's Resource Guide with site and resource information, visit logistics and lesson plan overviews is available in hard copy and online. The Seashore has worked with Teacher-Ranger-Teachers and plans to develop a corps of educators to help evaluate programs, and plan and develop resources for educators. Informal partnerships and consultation with gateway schools (Longwood Middle School, Bay Avenue, William Floyd Elementary, and the Fire Island School) have helped shape education programming to meet learner needs and raise awareness of the park to local residents. The Seashore has collaborated with GATE and WEFA on education programming. For several years, the National Park Foundation has provided transportation funds to underserved schools for park visits. The Seashore is increasingly working with schools on a variety of citizen science programming, including the Bar Code Long Island Project, Cornell Water Quality Stewards Program, and the Day in the Life of Fire Island.

Youth Programming

- **Junior Ranger:** Six self-guided Junior Ranger booklets are available at park visitor contact stations. Junior Ranger guided programs are generally offered monthly at the Wilderness Visitor Center, twice a year at the William Floyd Estate, and weekly during the summer at Watch Hill and Sailors Haven. NPS Junior Ranger Night Explorer program is an evening program, facilitated by a guest astronomer.
- **Scouts:** Guided programs are offered to satisfy the NPS scouting stewardship program requirements, and badge requirements for Girl Scouts (Outdoor Art, Trees, Bugs, Animal Habitats, Night Owl and Photography); and for Boy Scouts (Forestry, Nature, and Outdoor Ethics). The publication, Guide to Scouting at Fire Island National Seashore, is available to scout and youth groups.
- **The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society:** Family Seaside Adventures and Seaside Story Time are offered as a series of weekly summer programs for children and their caregivers.

Special Events

- Major annual park events include: Junior Ranger Day (April); Snapper Derby (August), Sand Creation Contest (September), International Coastal Cleanup (September), and the Patchogue River Boat Parade (November). Other events such as exhibit and art show openings are occasionally scheduled. The William Floyd Estate participates in the community-wide Tri-Hamlet Day with house tours and revolutionary war reenactments.
- The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society sponsors: Hooray for Horseshoe Crabs (June), Legends of Fire Island (October), Arbor Day Festival (April), and Flying Santa (December).

Artist-in-Residence Program

The Seashore has hosted Artists-in-Residence (AIR) since 2013. Up to four two-week residencies are offered each year at Watch Hill, two in spring and two in fall. Artists reside in park housing. Participating artists contribute to public outreach by exhibiting their works, and offering presentations or workshops. The program is currently coordinated by St. Joseph's College Art Department Chair, Dawn Lee.

Partnerships-Formal

Cooperating Associations

- **The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society (FILPS):** Through education, sales outlet, and capital improvements, FILPS preserves the nautical heritage of Fire Island and ensures that the lighthouse, associated buildings and landscape remain an integral part of Long Island maritime history. FILPS conducts fee-based tower tours and programs as well as free programs and exhibits exploring the cultural and natural resources of the seashore and their preservation.
- **Eastern National:** This cooperating association operates sales outlets at four locations in the park: Sailors Haven VC, Watch Hill VC, Wilderness VC, and William Floyd Estate. Eastern National operates under a national Cooperating Association Agreement with NPS and provides interpretive and educational materials to enhance visitor understanding of and appreciation for NPS sites and resources.

Concessions

- **Fire Island Concessions, LLC.:** Since 2005 Fire Island Concessions has managed the Seashore's two marinas, snack bars, campground, camp store, and restaurant.
- **Sayville Ferry Service:** This concessioner operates the ferry service from Sayville to Sailors Haven/Sunken Forest, and by special charter to Talisman/Barrett Beach.

- **Davis Park Ferry Company:** This concessioner operates the ferry service from Patchogue to Watch Hill, and by special charter to Talisman/Barrett Beach.

Friends Group Agreements

- **Friends of Fire Island National Seashore:** This nonprofit organization's mission is to encourage proper stewardship of park resources; foster cooperative and mutual communication between the National Park Service, communities and user groups; and to promote environmentally sound access to all of the various aspects of Fire Island National Seashore.
- **Friends of Watch Hill:** This non-profit organization's mission is to promote and support the recreational use of Watch Hill while preserving its natural resources and beauty.

Cooperative Agreements

- **Youth Serving Organizations:** Student Conservation Association (SCA); Environment for the Americas (EFTA); Conservation Legacy Stewards Program (2017)
- **Universities' Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units Networks (CESUs):** North Atlantic Coast Network, CESUs are accessed either directly or through the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Network (Northeast Coastal Barrier Island Network). Information: <http://www.cesu.psu.edu/default.htm> and http://www.cesu.psu.edu/unit_portals/NOAT_portal.htm. The Seashore also has cooperative agreements with Virginia Tech and SUNY-ESF for wildlife studies.

Partnerships – Informal

The park participates in informal partnerships with government agencies, municipalities, organizations, academic and cultural institutions.

- **Towns** of Brookhaven, Islip, incorporated Villages of Saltaire and Ocean Beach on land use planning, emergency operations, zoning, visitor and resource protection and management.
- **The Fire Island Association (FIA)** a coalition of 17 communities within Fire Island National Seashore, established in 1955 to protect the Island and to promote the best interests of homeowners, business owners, and visitors. Their mission is to preserve the beauty of Fire Island and its presence as a barrier island that protects mainland Long Island.
- **New York State** collaborates with the Seashore on several public engagement initiatives such as “I Love My Park” day of service, Path through History, Department of Environmental Conservation fishing clinics, and environmental education training.
- **NPS:** Gateway National Recreation Area and Sagamore Hill National Historic Site on collaborative programming and training.
- **Cultural Institutions:** Suffolk County Historical Society, Greater Patchogue Historical Society, Patchogue Medford Library, Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation, and Cornell Cooperative Extension on collaborative exhibits and programs.
- **Education:** St. Joseph’s College and SUNY Stony Brook are working with the park to develop and promote citizen science programs, internships, and education and stewardship projects. K–12 education partners include coordinators for Long Island History Day and A Day in the Life of Fire Island, the Fire Island Woodhull School, Point O’ Woods Day Camp, Suffolk County schools such as Bay Avenue and William Floyd Elementary Schools.
- **Groundworks USA** is a youth serving organization that provides employment and training in conservation and preservation through community based partnerships.

Cultural Assets

The museum collection has more than 107,000 archeological, historic, archival, and ethnographic objects. Artifacts date from 1700s to 1976 and primarily focus on the Fire Island Lighthouse and the William Floyd Estate. Other items of note:

- The original Fire Island Lighthouse tower base is an archaeological site viewable to the public.
- More than 150 shipwrecks have been recorded in the Fire Island area from 1652 to present. The *Bessie White*, visible on the beach east of Watch Hill, is exposed most of the year.
- The park has two cultural landscapes; the Fire Island Lighthouse Historic District and the William Floyd Estate. There are 43 historic structures of which all are listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Access and Transportation

- There are no public roads on Fire Island, and vehicular use is limited, particularly during summer months, and restricted to permits issued to Fire Island residents, essential service providers, contractors, emergency services and official-municipal agencies.
- Most visitors use passenger ferries which provide access from Long Island to Fire Island communities and NPS sites. Some residents and visitors access Fire Island by private boat.
- People traveling to Fire Island by car park (for a fee) at Robert Moses State Park or Smith Point County Park and enter the Seashore by foot. Public bus service is available to these two neighbor parks during the summer.
- Access to the William Floyd Estate is via private automobile or by walking or bicycling from adjacent neighborhoods.

- Free parking is available at Seashore headquarters and the Patchogue/Watch Hill Ferry Terminal, located in Patchogue within short walking distance from the Long Island Railroad.

Neighbor Parks

- **Robert Moses State Park (NY State):**

On the western end of Fire Island at the southern end of Robert Moses Causeway, this park shares its eastern border with the Seashore. Accessible by car (fee for parking) this park offers nearly five miles of ocean coastline, four lifeguarded beaches, concessions, beach shops, first aid offices, comfort stations, outdoor showers, picnic areas, a Pitch & Putt Golf Course, volleyball courts, a playground, a day-use boat basin, fishing piers and 4 x 4 drive on access. Permits are sold at the park office for fishing, surfing and star gazing. Fire Island National Seashore visitors may park in Robert Moses State Park's Field #5 and walk the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile boardwalk to the Fire Island Lighthouse and Lighthouse Beach.

- **Smith Point County Park (Suffolk County):** On the eastern section of the Seashore and at the southern end of William Floyd Parkway. Accessible by car (fee for parking), this park offers approximately six miles of ocean coastline, a lifeguarded beach, camping, off-road vehicles access, concessions, public restrooms and showers, a playground, and provides special events throughout the summer. The Seashore visitors may park in the county parking lot and walk to access the Wilderness Visitor Center and the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness.

- **Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS):** On Long Island in Shirley, NY, the refuge has an interactive exhibit hall featuring Long Island's ecosystems, a nature store, almost six miles of trails, occasional interpretive programs, education programs, hunting and fishing (permits required) and free parking.

Accessibility

Parks are required by law to be as physically and programmatically accessible as possible. Visitors who have physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities have legally established civil rights to receive the same information in the same context provided to others.

The main areas at the Seashore have some level of accessibility:

- All public restrooms and boardwalks are accessible.
- A Moby mat system has been installed on the Fire Island Lighthouse beach allowing wheelchair access to the beach.
- Public buildings are accessible with the following limitations:
 - Accessibility is limited in the Fire Island lighthouse tower to the lower level. A computer at the desk shows 360 degree views of the interior of the tower and from the top of the lighthouse.
 - Accessibility at the William Floyd Estate is limited to certain rooms on the 1st floor. A binder book with photographs of the 2nd floor is available.
 - While there is no wheelchair access to the beaches at Sailor's Haven, Watch hill, Talisman/Barrett or the Wilderness center, beach wheel chairs are available.

Resources

- NPS accessibility guidelines can be found here: <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/>
- Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media: <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/accessibilityGuideVersion2.1.pdf>

APPENDIX G: Recommendation Background and Detail

This detailed background and notes on the development of each recommendation fall into the following categories: Partnership Development; Develop Internal Capacity; and Collaboration and Program Integration.

Recommendations for Partnership Development

1. Collaborate with Neighboring Parks

Summary: Fire Island National Seashore shares its borders with neighboring parks, as well as ecological zones, visitors, stories, issues, and other elements. Exploration of the Seashore's themes requires the larger context around the Great South Bay and beyond. This recommendation is grounded in the premise that partnership opportunities exist between the Seashore and at least three significant neighboring parks.

Description: There are numerous protected areas in proximity to the Seashore around Great South Bay, and three stand out as Fire Island neighboring parks: Smith Point County Park (Suffolk County; within the Seashore's boundaries), Robert Moses State Park (NY), and Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS). These parks are adjacent and share borders with the Seashore. (Wertheim shares the water of Bellport Bay). They also share common natural and cultural stories and visitors. Partnering effectively with these parks has potential benefits to the Seashore and to our neighbors.

Actions

- **Expertise:** Staff expertise could potentially be leveraged to attract audiences and new visitors to one another. For example, Smith Point County Park shares beach whaling history with the Seashore, and, all of the natural history stories of a barrier island beach site. Collaboratively planned and well-publicized programs can reach audiences that either the Seashore or the County does not presently engage. The Seashore and its neighboring parks could also coordinate and collaborate on staff training; for example, in communications, interpretive skills, first aid/CPR and other professional development opportunities which could create efficiencies for both agencies.
- **Facilities:** Wertheim Wildlife Refuge has a beautiful, spacious visitor center with exhibits and a well-designed and stocked hands-on environmental education and laboratory space. The refuge has fewer interpretive personnel than the Seashore, especially during the summer seasons. The Seashore could partner to use the space to receive school groups or offer public programs that meet both organizations' goals. For large events/trainings, the multi-purpose room at Wertheim accommodates more people than the Seashore's Patchogue/Watch Hill Ferry Terminal.
- **Thematic Connections:** A variety of stories and themes cross administrative boundaries such as the Burma Road, whaling, lifesaving, shipwrecks, immigrants, etc. Some combined interpretive programming and media can benefit both partners. Other ideas include a canoe expedition that links Wertheim and the Wilderness Visitor Center, or a program about energy efficient and sustainable building design. The Great Backyard Bird Count and International Coastal Cleanup can involve multiple sites.
- **Access to New Audiences and their Networks:** By working together to share facilities, personnel, marketing, and programming, the partners leverage their reaches and have exposure to new audiences and their networks.
- **Collaboration, Marketing and Cross-Promotion:** Explore possibilities for collaboration and cross-promotion at partner facilities such as with publications and other promotional materials. Consider that many visitors pass through neighbor parks to access the Seashore. In 2019, the Seashore will conduct a mini-workshop with representatives from all four partners to discuss mutual goals and possible collaborations. The Seashore team will include representatives from WFE and FILPS.

2. Collaborate with Youth Corps for Preservation and Maintenance

Summary: Engaging youth in active park stewardship improves chances for the continuity of public support. This recommendation aims to expand youth involvement, especially with underrepresented groups, in park maintenance and historic preservation projects.

Description: Over the last 10 years, youth engagement opportunities on public lands have increased — especially for programs that emphasize ages 15–25. Youth-focused organizations such as the Corps Network, the Greening Youth Foundation, Groundwork, Inc., and Student Conservation Association (SCA) collaborate with NPS sites.

The Seashore has a long tradition of working with SCA to provide internships that give interns valuable work experience and assist the park in research and stewardship. More recently, the Seashore has hosted interns through the Centennial Volunteer Ambassador and Latino Heritage Internship Programs, Pro Ranger, and Youth Leaders in Climate Change.

One growth area is to assist with park maintenance and historic preservation with crews through the Mather High School in NYC and H.O.P.E. Crew program. In 2014, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Corps Network launched an initiative to train more young people in preservation crafts while helping to protect historic cultural sites on public lands.

In order to benefit the park and youth, the Seashore will identify projects through a review of cyclic maintenance and repair and rehabilitation projects. Working with youth accomplishes important park work, and for youth it builds a resource stewardship ethic, develops participatory citizenship values, and develops leadership skills. The park will consult with NERO (Youth Program Manager and Facility Management) to connect coordinators with youth crews. The park will identify funding, agreements, and partners.

Actions

Potential Youth Crew Projects

- William Floyd Estate (Mather High School)
 - a. 2018 - Inventory and clean items in outbuildings.
 - b. 2019 - Repair the cemetery fence, boathouse flooring, and headstone covering.
 - c. 2020 - Replace the old wooden boardwalk (built in 1982) from the parking lot to the front area of the Old Mastic House.
- Fire Island Lighthouse (Groundworks)
 - a. 2019 - Build a deck on the north side of the boathouse to improve the visitor experience.
 - b. 2020 - Paint three Lighthouse District buildings north of the Annex.
- Carrington Property Cottage (H.O.P.E. Crew)

2018 - Critical preservation work has already been done to stabilize the roof, windows, and exterior. Given that this property is now listed on the National Register the park will invite the H.O.P.E. crew to complete the interior finishing work and repair the boardwalk around the property. This will ensure a safer area and allow the park to utilize the property for programming or leasing.

3. Conduct Annual Analysis of Community Partnerships and Programming

Summary: The GMP includes goals to enhance cooperative stewardship by building collaborative relationships with local communities and organizations. To do this, the park seeks to learn about its neighbors in order to work with them, make better decisions about serving them, and ask how the park may be relevant to them. The park will conduct an annual analysis to identify gaps in coverage in order to make strategic investments in programming.

Description: Surrounded by a diverse population with many organizations, there are many opportunities for partnership and to meet the NPS's goal for serving the American public. Partners can reinvigorate programming with relevance to their constituencies and can offer community resources to strengthen programming. The Seashore must be strategic in developing and nurturing partnerships and in creating mechanisms for community engagement. The park currently has relationships with FILPS, FFINS, Fire Island School District, FIA, Fire Island Year Rounders, Bay Avenue Elementary School, Patchogue-Medford Library, the Riverhead Foundation, Sons of the American Revolution, Fundación Lucero de América, and local colleges such as SUNY Stony Brook and St. Joseph's College. There are also a plethora of other potential partners including Cornell Cooperative Extension, local Audubon chapters, neighboring national parks, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Suffolk County Library, Suffolk County Historical Society, Cablevision, News 12, etc.

Actions

To strategically invest limited resources in new partnerships the park will conduct an annual stakeholder analysis to identify gaps and opportunities for partnership programming. The park will recruit a university sociology department and/or interns to help to design this methodology. Analysis will be based on census data, survey information, internet research, interviews, and contacts with key community leaders (teachers, municipal authorities, churches, etc.).

Once audience/program gaps have been analyzed, the VET will propose programming and partnerships to engage those audiences. The VET will initiate dialogue or contact leaders and/or organizations that represent community interests to assist with co-creation of ideas. The VET will use other engagement strategies such as participating in offsite events and in existing partner activities, and working through partner organizations and their networks such as advertising through Suffolk Library intra-mail system, among others.

The team will consider the following criteria for engaging new partners in programming:

- Where contacts currently exist
- Audience segments currently unengaged or minimally so, or a partner that offers a service or skill area complementary to an existing or planned initiative
- Partners which offer the opportunity to significantly extend reach
- Partners willing to work toward results compatible with the park's strategic planning
- Partners willing to fundraise with the park to reach these audiences with new programs

4. Connect to Underserved Neighbors and Families

Summary: The park seeks to connect to more of its neighbors, specifically with underserved families who live in gateway communities. The goal is for them to feel welcomed and valued as members of the Seashore community. This way, they can experience and enjoy what the park has to offer and decide if they want to participate in its stewardship. The park will start by working with local Latino populations and later, with other underserved groups. In all cases, the park will make an earnest attempt to identify, understand, and resolve barriers that stand in the way of greater public engagement with the park.

Description: A recent study by Susan Bonfield (The Environment for the Americas) and other research in parks indicates barriers to Latino participation in national parks which include:

- Transportation
- Appropriateness for intergenerational family involvement
- Relevance to children's future
- Language
- Cost
- Feeling of welcome/other cultural inhibitions
- Day of the week/time of day
- Program relevance/theme
- Awareness of programming
- Presence of Hispanic staff as role models
- Legal status of potential participants
- Availability of picnic/family spaces

Bonfield (p. 103 of dissertation): "Based on our research, we recommend the following to sites seeking to achieve Latino participation:

- Learn about nearby Latino communities to better understand their composition, longevity in your city, and languages spoken.
- Participate in programs and activities hosted by Latinos and for Latinos, such as Cinco de Mayo events.
- Modify outreach materials to incorporate the following:
 - information in both English and Spanish
 - images of Latino youth and adults
 - clear information about any fees
 - directions to your site by both car and public transportation (if available)
- Adapt programs to include:
 - activities for multigenerational families
 - Spanish-led and/or bilingual components"

Actions

As a result of this research, the Seashore will carry out the following strategies (many of which will apply to other underserved groups as well):

- **Generate Spanish-language materials** starting with a bilingual flyer for immediate and limited local distribution. The flyer text was developed by one of the park's Latino Heritage interns. The document contains a park map, directions and general information about park sites and what to do and see. The park's Unigrid brochure will be next for translation and design through the Government Printing Office (GPO) by the end of FY18. For the first printing, to reduce turnaround time for production and printing, it will be a close translation of the current brochure with the current design. Later revisions (2019 or later) of the Unigrid brochure may adapt text and design to incorporate recommendations cited by Bonfield. Park programs and events will be marketed in Spanish when possible, at target locations such as the libraries, Latino businesses, churches and other cultural institutions located in community gateways to the park.
- **Recruit interpretive staff, interns and volunteers that are fluent in Spanish** to assist with developing and reviewing bilingual media and offer programs in Spanish to local community residents. Summer 2017 – the NPS and Environment for the America's will host a Latino Heritage Intern who will assist with Spanish language media and programming.
- Once Spanish-speaking interpreters are on staff or within the volunteer corps, the Seashore will **offer and advertise at least one bilingual program** per quarter at one of the park's auto-accessible gateway sites (WFE, LH, WVC, PFT). For example, at WFE, there could be a citizen swearing-in event which coupled with the American colonial background has particular symbolic value. A Spanish-language tour of the house could be available. At the Patchogue/Watch Hill Ferry Terminal, there could be an ESL adult education program and/or children's reading hour highlighting what there is to do and see at Fire Island, offered in conjunction with the Patchogue Medford Library or a local school's ESL program. Also at the Patchogue Ferry Terminal, there will be an activity in 2018 and potentially annually thereafter with thematic/cultural ties to the Latino community such as Cinco de Mayo or the annual (August) Long Island Ecuadorian Festival, depending on what the community in conjunction with the park deem appropriate. The park will also arrange to staff a booth at the community festival street fair. These efforts will be coordinated with local Latino-serving cultural institutions such as the Patchogue Medford Library Latino Outreach Program and the Fundación Lucero de América.
- **Create/nurture partnerships with schools with large minority populations** (such as Bay Avenue Elementary, William Floyd and Longwood Schools). The relationship with Bay Avenue was forged with the 2016 Every Kid in a Park Program, and since nurtured during the VEP planning process and spring 2017 programming. With this and other schools, park interpreters will conduct in school and family-oriented programming, and encourage follow up class visits to the park. The Seashore will collaborate with partners (such as FFINS, FILPS, NPF, etc.) to seek funding opportunities for underserved students and their families that cannot cover the cost of transportation to/from the park.

5. Enhance Citizen Science and Research with Schools and Universities

Summary: At Fire Island, citizen science opportunities geared for the general public, especially local youth and families, can begin to build meaningful engagement with the park. Working with partners, the Seashore will expand efforts to involve K–12 and college students in citizen science programs, and integrate those activities into interpretive and education programming.

Description: “Citizen science” is a partnership between the public and professional scientists. It is a tool to increase data about the natural and cultural world to improve conservation, stewardship, and science literacy. It engages volunteers with little or no scientific training to collect, categorize, transcribe, or analyze scientific data. A growing body of research shows that citizen science can increase public knowledge, and improve attitude and behavior toward science. Citizen science can provide baseline data about key resources. This recommendation: 1) aims to increase opportunities for engaging local youth and university students in citizen science activities; and 2) integrate that data into interpretive and education programming.

The Seashore will work with partners to expand efforts to involve K–12 students in citizen science programs at the park including working with coordinators for: A Day in the Life of Fire Island, Day in the Life of a Feathered Friend, Barcode Long Island, and Cornell Water Quality Stewards.

The Seashore participates in research projects with local colleges and universities, and accommodates student research within a scope of scientific interest in the park. Some of these (e.g., those funded by the park above a certain dollar amount) include a communication component; however, are not necessarily interpreted.

Actions

- **Enhance interpretation opportunities stemming from research:** The Seashore engages in research projects with local colleges, universities, and scholars. Researchers obtain a research permit from NRM division. Some of these projects – those using federal funds over a certain amount – require a science communication component; however, these do not necessarily employ up-to-date interpretation methods. Opportunities to connect interpreters to researchers and resource management staff should be expanded. The park would benefit by forging relationships with researchers seeking to pursue historical research at the Seashore.
- **Permits:** In order to connect park interpretive programming with up-to-date science and to use current knowledge about effective interpretation, the Seashore will change requirements in research permits to provide guidance to researchers about how science communication products can support good interpretation. This will help to institutionalize methods and disseminate simplified findings of research for interpretive staff and to the public.
- **Change the science communication requirements associated with research permits** for federally funded projects. Researchers are required to dedicate four hours to assist the park in developing a science communication product as well as write a research findings summary of 500 words accessible to non-scientist audiences. At the park’s discretion, the researcher may substitute this requirement with the Investigator Annual Report required by RPRS. At the discretion of the Seashore, researchers may be asked to write a larger summary document, prepare an interpretive presentation, or give an oral briefing depending on park needs, the research content, and the researcher’s communication skills. They may also be paired with park interpreters to develop an interpretive program based on the researcher’s work. Alternatively, this requirement can be waived depending on the nature of the research.

- **Develop simple guidelines** which may include a template or demonstration video for researchers on how to communicate science to park communicators in a way that allows park communicators to share science outcomes with park audiences. Develop a set of models, guidelines, or best practices that can be shared via email and follow up with researchers whenever possible to share communication outcomes, especially if print or digital products are developed. This will strengthen the relationship of park communicators with visiting researchers and likely lead to additional learning (and communication!) opportunities.
- When appropriate and feasible, **link researchers with interpretive staff** for guidance about potential interpretive media matched to highlight the research.
- **Create an information sheet** based on annual meeting of interpretive and resource management staff that discusses the research in that year. Summaries or annual investigation reports written by researchers will update staff, partners, and volunteers on research findings and share ideas about how to integrate the information into programming.
- **Consult with NER Chief Historian and Chief of Cultural Resources** to identify appropriate projects for citizen science cultural resource projects, and then CSEU research partners to build capacity for accomplishing them. One potential project to be explored is a public archeology project at the William Floyd Estate.
- **Develop youth-based citizen-science programming:** Citizen Science meets two critical goals: it develops useful data and information and builds public engagement and commitment to science. When targeting youth and university students, the challenge is to find appropriate projects able to achieve both objectives. The focus of this recommendation is to identify the right opportunities; and with follow-up, to implement these.
- **Develop ability to use national citizen science databases:** Seashore staff, partners and volunteers will offer tutorials to interpretive staff and the public on the most popular citizen science databases such as [eBird](#), the Great Backyard Bird Count, [iNaturalist](#), [eButterfly](#), [eOceans](#), [eShark](#), [Christmas Bird Count](#), and [Bumblebee Watch](#) such that these tools can be used effectively in education and citizen science programming, and contribute to data collection.

To identify appropriate opportunities for youth and university student science programs, the park will:

- Explore school district science goals.
- Work with NER RM and CRM professionals and park partners.
- Work with the Seashore NRM division to find overlaps between community interests and the Seashore citizen science opportunities and needs, including existing national databases such as eBird or iNaturalist.
- Identify one or more pilot projects to begin.

6. Evaluate, Promote, and Create Education Resources with Educators

Summary: The Seashore will work with educators to evaluate and create resources that they can utilize with their students. Educators bring current education philosophy, methods, and techniques that work with modern students. By working through educators (rather than direct delivery to students), information about the park reaches more students, more effectively than the park could do alone.

Description: Increasing coordination and collaboration with ferry concessionaires, BOCES (and other education providers), educators, and education administrators will be accomplished through applying data about visiting schools, greater promotion of existing resources, and piloting and evaluating new programs.

Actions

- **Increase Data Collection and Analysis:** Asses the Seashore's current education landscape through detailed data and assessment about schools, classes, educators, and education providers that visit the park for ranger-guided, teacher-guided, and provider-guided (i.e. BOCES) programs. Evaluate current programs and materials against established education standards. Data collection and analysis will begin in Spring 2017 with slight modifications to the statistical collection forms. The park will seek a business intern in 2018 to assemble and synthesize information to provide accurate assessments of school group visitation and suggest additional refinements to data collection. Seashore Administration and Partnership Divisions will communicate with ferry companies to obtain information to construct more detailed profiles of school groups that visit Fire Island.
- **Program Promotion:** The park will improve promotion of newly developed educator resources through phone and website inquiries, social media, email mailing lists, partners, concessionaires, and distributed print publications. Promotion can be enhanced with no additional effort in 2017 by simply offering newly developed standard-based programs as the default for all ranger-guided and self-guided program requests. The public Sunken Forest Walk and Beach Scavenger Hunt activities would be scheduled only with justification (for example if there is no interest in the standards-based programs or they are logistically not practical).
- **Program Evaluation:** New standards-based programs will be piloted as ranger-guided with assessment provided by field staff and participating educators, and by program observations conducted by supervisors. The CORE aligned Adaptation Program will be piloted with Every Kid in a Park (EKIP) classes visiting Sailors Haven in Spring 2017.
- **Education Partnerships:** Collaborate with partners to co-create and offer programs. Evaluate the programs together and solicit feedback about effectiveness of programs, promotion, and content alignment with K–12 standards. The park will nurture new relationships with National History Day organizers, William Floyd Elementary, Longwood HS/MS, Bay Avenue Elementary, FI School, Day in the Life of Fire Island Coordinators (e.g. ES BOCES, Cornell, Pine Barrens Commission, etc. see www.portaltodiscovery.org/carmans/docs/Predictions.pdf), GATE (Day in the Life of a Feathered Friend) and other education providers.
- **Educator Workshop:** Offer fall 2017 (or spring 2018) Educator Workshop at Sailors Haven. Plan the workshop to demonstrate and test hands-on activities from the Adaptation, Maritime Succession/Wildlife Issues and Beach Dynamics lesson plans. The workshop will also offer opportunities for educator feedback. The park will explore the use of Facebook Live and YouTube to record participant testimonials and to share the workshop content to the virtual education community.

- **Project Funding Proposals /Winter 2018:** Submit PMIS proposal for 2020 SCC Park for Every Classroom (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jtnoGgXbs028zeAQmVf5dZQz5Nu25yXkGR8xkS67e7M/edit?usp=sharing>). The proposal will request salary funding for a Term/Detail Education Specialist position, educator stipends, travel, and workshop materials, to establish and nurture an Educator Corps. The Educator Corps would be charged with advising the park on education matters, assisting with program/resource evaluations, co-creation (w/the Seashore and FILPS) of any new educator resources, and staff training. In Winter/Spring 2018 develop and submit proposal for Teacher Ranger Teacher for summer of 2018 (www.nps.gov/safr/learn/news/teacher-ranger-teacher-2016.htm).

7. Increase Partnerships and Programming with Fire Island Communities and the Fire Island School

Summary: Resident and community perspectives and the value they place on Fire Island are assets to the park. Local communities, organizations, and businesses provide complementary experiences and services. The 17 Fire Island communities attract large numbers of visitors who may not visit NPS facilities. Community residents can be allies for resource protection and management.

Description: Working collaboratively with the Fire Island communities builds capacity and commitment for stewardship of Fire Island. Interpretive staff, volunteers and partners can co-create programs with community members. The following implementation steps build on existing initiatives. Working with partners, there is potential for increased capacity, additional awareness of resource conditions, greater relevance, and opportunities to integrate different sites within the park, among other benefits.

Actions

- **Trek with the Communities:** The Fire Island Trek is a popular, space-limited ranger-guided hike from the Fire Island Pines to the Fire Island Lighthouse with an overnight at the AMC Lodge in Atlantique. This program can be adjusted from a standard format of an entirely ranger-led activity to a Trek incorporating input from Fire Island community leaders and residents. Including the input of community residents will add variety and multiple perspectives for Trek participants, and can highlight the cultural richness found in the communities. The 2017 program will begin this effort by adjusting the timing and logistics of the standard Trek to allow for input by community residents from 1–3 of the communities.
- **Spring/summer 2017:** Fire Island Association (FIA) Meeting - seek input from FIA regarding potential topics and community contacts for the 2017 Trek.
- **Spring through summer 2017:** Plan Trek with community leaders, the Seashore Asst. Supt., Supv. PR, Chief IEV, Program Leader (Field Park Ranger), and PAO (media support).
- **Spring 2017:** Update park website and trek sign-up materials to reflect changes to program and better promote opportunity for visitors.
- **September 2017:** Conduct Trek. If possible include AMC evening presentation by Fire Island community leader; Since space on the Trek is limited, consider utilizing social media during the event so that virtual viewers can participate and get a sense of the cultural and natural treasures of the barrier island

Related programs:

- **Cherry Grove to Sailors Haven:** Continue this guided plant walk program that begins in Cherry Grove and ends at Sailors Haven and is co-led by a park ranger and a community resident. For 2017, consider modifying the program to add more culture/history aspects to the Cherry Grove portion of the program. Seek appropriate community contact for Cherry Grove.
- **Enchanted Evening:** Continue to offer this ranger-guided Sailors Haven to Cherry Grove hike. Seek input of Cherry Grove resident at the conclusion of the program, or potentially to lead Cherry Grove portion of the program.
- **Pines to Carrington:** Nurture relationships with Pines/Cherry Grove community leaders to continue offering and more widely promote the program that was piloted in 2016.
- **Hikes by Moonlight:** Previously offered Running Ranger program could be converted into moonlit hikes into the communities.

- **Promote Park Programs in the Communities:** Share park program information regularly to FIA, community contacts (such as at ferry terminals, on ferries, through social media with ferry companies or on ferry company websites; community centers or libraries, post offices, home owners, associations, and the Year-Rounders Association, etc.), and via print media (FI Tide, etc.).
- **Point O' Woods Day Camp:** Each year, the Seashore provides ranger-guided programs for the day camp. In 2017, the park will plan with the Point O' Woods Day Camp Director to offer compelling children's programming that interprets park wildlife issues consistent with the themes and goals of the park (potential title: "Keep Wildlife Wild").
- **FI School Oral History Project:**
 - Meet with Fire Island School Technology Educator to consider feasibility of conducting an oral history with a former Long Cove resident. Long Cove, once a summer community, was disbanded to become part of the Fire Island Wilderness. Two seasonal park employees have a family history there and could potentially be the interviewees.
 - Develop Fire Island Legends and Stories program at the Fire Island Lighthouse in the Fall 2017 utilizing Fire Island oral history participants. Formulate video display at the Fire Island Lighthouse utilizing oral history of family member of former Lighthouse Keeper.
 - Work with FI School to develop a program and/or media to highlight oral history participants in a manner that is within policies and guidelines for accessibility to the public from these recordings.

Schedule

- **Late spring 2017:** IEV Division will collaborate with the Fire Island School and the Seashore Resource Management Division to plan and participate at the school's Health/Nature Fair. NRM will provide messages and information for the Seashore's participation.
- **Spring through September 2017:** Day in the Life of Fire Island. Collaborate with FILPS, FI School, and Day in the Life program coordinators to plan and implement this program. (See Education Recommendation).
- **Spring 2018:** Conduct ranger programming at Fire Island School. Gauge interest from school in having park interpreters conduct one classroom program per year. The programs will link to school curriculum, be thematic, and address park issues. Potential topics to highlight include keeping wildlife wild or the importance of native plants and pollinators (tie to Journey North program). Work with Fire Island school to develop program to meet their learning needs, space, and time limitations.
- **2018:** Fire Island Communities Sustainable Gardens and Buildings Tours. The Seashore's Planning Division will lead the planning and implementation of this program in collaboration with IEV and NRM. 2017 could start the planning for a program to occur in 2018.

8. Develop a Strategy for Visitor Contact Stations and Exhibits

Summary: The Seashore will develop a strategy to update and improve aging visitor contact facilities. The goal is to improve environmental sustainability, interactivity, and update exhibit content with current scholarship on topics such as climate change, sea level rise, marine resource management, coastal land use history, shoreline management planning, and cooperative stewardship.

Description: To inform the strategy, the park will work with Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) and other outside facilitators in 2019 to conduct workshops with an interdivisional park team to assess current exhibits and use of visitor contact stations. This assessment will identify gaps in interpretation, how visitor contact stations and exhibits can address those gaps (considering audience, technologies, and IEV/GMP goals), and what needs to be done to bridge the gaps.

The strategy will consider the sustainability of infrastructure on a dynamic barrier island and ensure that fabrication materials and exhibit designs are resilient to coastal conditions including storms and sea level rise.

Internally, the park will ensure that all interpretation exhibits and waysides are documented in FMSS, and the park will reevaluate current PMIS project funding requests and identify other funding sources with partners. In the short term, temporary exhibits, gallery systems, and popup programs at visitor contact stations could highlight current park initiatives and compelling stories, and evaluate visitor interests and relevance.

Actions

- **For 2017/2018** - FILPS will develop and fund exhibits and exhibit upgrades for the Fresnel Lens Building.
- During the closure of Watch Hill for the 2017 summer season, the Seashore will consider the feasibility of implementing short-term improvements to the site's current exhibits and visitor spaces.
- The Seashore will continue discussions with the Sons of the American Revolution regarding a visitor center at the William Floyd Estate and explore the feasibility of entering into a fundraising agreement.

9. Increase Interpretive Skills for Staff, Volunteers, and Partners

Summary: A firm grounding in current interpretive methods and skills is necessary to engage the public through personal services and interpretive media. Professional development will also include opportunities to enhance skills in supervision, customer/visitor service and the coaching and mentoring needed to achieve high performance, confidence, and productivity.

Description: Beginning in 2017, the Seashore will devote time, effort, and resources to make available formal and informal, virtual and in-person, local and distance-learning opportunities for interpreters to develop, enhance, practice and hone their audience-centered skills. This includes encouraging external awareness and increased and regular exposure to best practices in the field of interpretation.

Professional development needs will be documented on the employee's Individual Development Plan (IDP). Expectations for performance should be reflected in performance standards (EPAPs). NER has standard, sample EPAPs that address Service-wide standards. The new park ranger GS-025 5/7/9 (interpretation) standard position description which includes expansion of standards related to research, writing, and digital media skills will be used when approved. Mentoring, guidance and supervision including conducting regular observations/evaluations, formal and informal feedback and assessments are important to success at every level.

Actions

- Share information about and encourage interpretive staff and partners to join electronic list serves such as: [Know Your Own Bone](#), Naturally Speaking Newsletter, [Museum Hack](#), and peer-to-peer networks (NPS Common Learning Portal, etc.).
- Encourage external awareness. Offer staff and partners local field trips to observe model interpretive programs (i.e., East Side Tenement Museum) at least once per year.
- Share information (articles, books, video links, webinars, etc.) and facilitate opportunities for staff, partners, and supervisors to increase awareness of best practices (such as those explored during NER webinars and Office Hours calls) and participate in interpretive skills development and training. Formal courses to be considered include Mather Training Center Audience Centered Interpretation, interpreting with social media, Park for Every Classroom education principles, climate change interpretation; and other topics such as questioning techniques, issue-based interpretation, etc.
- Provide voluntary periodic enrichment sessions on key interpretive skills, using the materials (listed above) for informal sharing and learning together during a brown-bag lunch or other low-pressure engagement.
- Encourage a culture of great customer service and hospitality for all visitors and stakeholders in contact with Fire Island staff, volunteers and partners.

2017 Actions:

- Share professional development resources with interpretive staff, volunteers, and partners.
- Incorporate elements of audience centered techniques into seasonal interpretive training. Session(s) will be facilitated by staff that have participated in audience centered training and/or by a guest trainer from another NPS site or NER.
- Share this Visitor Experience Plan—especially the goals, challenges, and recommendations with seasonal interpretive staff, partners, and volunteers.
- Continue to work collaboratively with the Park Planning, Cultural and Natural Resources Divisions to plan training sessions for staff and interns on social media, park resources/issues, and other topics.

- Incorporate NNOCCI climate change communication techniques into programs such as the Sunken Forest Tour and Canoe Tour. Offer additional opportunities for park staff to become more literate in climate change issues and science.
- Work with the Seashore training committee to host audience centered and other training at the Seashore. This could be co-hosted by other nearby USFWS and NPS sites.
- Work with FILPS on training needs and positions required at the Fire Island Lighthouse for both volunteers and FILPS staff

10. Prioritize Recruitment of Volunteers and Interns

Summary: Volunteers strengthen community relationships and increase a park's ability to steward its resources. The park is fortunate to have strong partnerships and a dedicated volunteer corps and interns that assist with all program areas. Chief among them is the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, Friends of Fire Island National Seashore, and Student Conservation Association. Recruitment goals will be identified and efforts prioritized to engage public citizens in volunteer activities. The park seeks people with technical skills, vision, and creativity and who can help address needs in program planning, development and evaluation; as well as non-personal media. A flexible approach will allow the park to adjust the volunteer program to adapt to changing needs and audiences.

Description: This recommendation redirects current volunteer recruitment efforts to more strategic recruitment to secure volunteers that can help address specific, behind-the-scenes, and long-term needs at the park. The park seeks to direct volunteer recruitment efforts to:

- Increase the diversity of park volunteers to reflect the demographics of gateway communities as a means to engage local populations.
- Increase the proportion of park volunteers with skills in technology/media, business, scholarship and research, program planning and evaluation. These volunteers are sought to address communications, outreach, education, and interpretation needs.
- Work as master gardeners to work independently to maintain and plan the park's native plant pollinator garden, and to eventually liaison with service and education groups to transform the garden into a year-round play/learn/serve venue.

The park will structure volunteer opportunities that match generational preferences. For example, millennials enjoy volunteering with friends, seek to contribute to worthy causes, and share their experiences online. Some seek career paths that can arise from volunteering. Background: <http://www.themillennialimpact.com/research/>.

Note: There is an ample pool of youth organizations, corporations, and individuals with community service requirements who are ready to help with beach cleanups, and daylong service projects. The park's need for these types of volunteers is stable. Additionally, while there will always be a need and place for volunteers to assist with conducting programs and visitor contact stations, it has not been difficult to recruit and retain volunteers for these functions.

Actions

- **Spring/Summer/Fall 2017:** Recruit for skilled gardeners via newly established garden group contact list to assist with maintaining and planning the park's native plant/pollinator garden; host monthly pollinator garden days May - October.
- **Winter/Spring 2018:** Meet with park program managers once per year in winter (starting in winter 2018) to review current VIP position descriptions; revise/delete/add new as VIP needs evolve. Update volunteer positions in volunteer.gov on an annual basis starting in spring 2018.
- **Fall 2018:** Develop list of recruitment pools, create contact list (list of universities, etc.); begin targeted recruitment.
- **Fall 2018:** Develop volunteer calendar and an organized and clear process for onboarding.
- **Winter/Spring 2019:** Create structured mentoring and training program for volunteers.
- **Ongoing:** Invest in VIP retention - continue offering volunteer recognition events and behind-the-scenes opportunities; expand on recognition via media, training opportunities, and on providing incentives for retention.

11. Develop Relevant Programming

Summary: In a world of increasing competition for people's attention and as generations change and technologies evolve, sustaining public support for the park is not a given and grows increasingly challenging. This recommendation will seek training and tools to research, develop, test, and promote programming with greater relevance using audience-centered approaches.

Description: In social media, relevance depends on timeliness (responding quickly to emerging news), controversial issues that provoke emotional reactions, cyclical events including holidays (Christmas) and non-holidays (National High Five Day), and targeting the right audience with the right information at the right moment.

The Seashore must tie its subject matter to topics that people experience on a daily basis, topics that affect their lives, and take advantage of timely events to give people opportunities for bragging rights, selfies, posts, and snapchats, in accordance with how people curate their own self-defining social media feeds, especially critical for younger audiences such as millennials.

The Seashore needs to be proactive about interpreting controversial issues, utilize appropriate means to facilitate dialogue, and empower staff, volunteers and partners to address controversy in their interactions with visitors.

Actions

- **Park-wide Program Calendar:** Park sites and partners will coordinate program development and promotion through calendars and other media. The group will develop this calendar so at least some programming is tied to current resource issues or "hot topics" and annual events that link to the Seashore's interpretive messages. Consider for example how wildlife management topics could be incorporated in programming across the park, and how William Floyd Estate could take more advantage of the 4th of July or Christmas, or the Lighthouse take advantage of the National Lighthouse Day. Once determined and scheduled, these programs should be linked to both park and WASO press, social media, and websites.
- **Connect to Broader Initiatives:** Existing media promotion through fliers, online publicity venues, and park website should be bolstered by a seasonal (quarterly) meeting of the VET to identify timely events and controversial topics that can be integrated into seasonal programming. This ensures that park offers programs connected to broader initiatives (such as Earth Day, Arbor Day, I Love My Park Day, National Park Week, etc.) and seasonal phenomena (such as horseshoe crab mating season and the spring bird migration), as well as new programming highlighting current and emerging topics.
- **Controversial and Current Issues and News:** The VET will coordinate the development of materials, programs, and print/digital products that address controversial issues along with talking points to promote consistent messaging across all divisions and throughout the park, for example, for deer and breach management, and climate change. Current park issues that could be highlighted with programs or campaigns include: Southern Pine Beetle, Watch Hill Marina construction, wilderness breach, FIMI/FIMP, FILH tower and terrace repairs.
- **Training in Sensitive and Controversial Topics:** Interpreting multiple perspectives makes a topic more relevant (by allowing different stakeholders to identify with the issue). It also removes the park as a target by allowing voice and acknowledging opposing views. Strategic framing, facilitated questioning, and other techniques enable interpreters to confidently discuss sensitive or controversial issues with the public as well as convey park messages. Interpreters will need training, and even more practice and on-going coaching, mentoring, and supervision to help frame and deal with controversial topics. A process for building this capacity and to incorporate messaging around a controversial issue across multiple mediums will be developed for the deer management plan and may be used as a framework for interpreting other controversial issues.

12. Integrate Social Media into Interpretive Services

Summary: Today's population, especially younger generations, use social media often in their interactions with their surroundings—including interactions in the outdoors. By integrating social media into interpretation and education, there are opportunities to reach wider numbers of visitors of all ages. This includes incorporating technology into live programs to allow virtual visitors to participate.

Description: The Seashore understands that technology is evolving quickly which can change the visitor experience, especially for younger generations and how they engage with the world. More and more, people of all ages relate to and share experiences via social media, and park appeal for many, especially those not immediately adjacent to its physical boundaries, may be enhanced through social media interactivity. Remote involvement can also extend the park's reach into communities heretofore underserved and help younger audiences reconnect to nature.

Currently social media responsibility lies principally with the Public Affairs Specialist (PAS). With more staff contributing to the park's social media program, all park sites, stories, and resources can be better represented; and all divisions can better utilize this communication tool. The PAS will guide and mentor interpreters to enhance their digital media skills in content development, editing and posting of interpretive content; and will help facilitate the development of a strategy and system for managing interpretive content.

The two-year goal (2019) is to incorporate live social media into two programs per month during high season to engage virtual visitors. Questions that the VET team will regularly answer include:

- Which programs should integrate social media (connectivity must be considered)
- Which technologies to use (e.g., photo, video, live feed, etc.)
- How to schedule these programs (eventually reaching two a month during the summer season)
- What is the strategy that considers specific media, goals, programs schedule

Actions

- **Demonstration Package/Internal Interpretation of Social Media:** A first step is to develop a demonstration package or presentation where the presenter establishes the importance of utilizing social media in communication, interpretation, education and volunteer program efforts. The package will be geared for permanent park interpreters and their supervisors, visitor and resource protection staff, volunteer supervisors, and other staff with communication roles. Supervisors will work with permanent staff to prioritize work in order to allot time to training, content development and management, and the mentorship of seasonal employees. The presentation could include actual demonstrative uses of the principals of social media. This presentation could demonstrate how social media can be used to engage virtual visitors in conversations about critical issues, like Yellowstone's discussion of bison removal from its herd.
- **Training on Both Sides of the Camera:** After the demonstration, the PAS will develop and conduct an informational training for social media contributors (individuals with skills and interest in near-term, interpreters and/or web team members in long-term) on how posts are planned, written, edited, stored, and posted across the social media platforms currently in use. The following modules may be included:
 - Introduction to the use of the most common kinds of social media
 - Use of social media in the field, training web team members both how to manage the technology ("behind the camera") and how to shine in front of the camera
 - Dialogue about the strategy of social media use and creation of the schedule and targets for the upcoming season

13. Integrate Natural and Cultural Resources in Interpretation

Summary: Natural and cultural resource interpretation will be more fully and holistically integrated throughout Fire Island sites and at the William Floyd Estate. This will be achieved through building strong interpretive media and personal services programming.

Description: Integrating stories of natural and cultural resources provides context that contributes to more holistic and relevant park experiences.

Actions

- **Digital Media/Programs:** Staff (PAS, Chief IEV, and Cultural Resource Manager, representatives from IEV, WFE, and, potentially, FILPS) will develop integrated content for digital media (social, web) beginning in fall 2017 and expand in future years. Division of IEV, WFE, and FILPS will continue with current programming that integrates natural and cultural resource topics, and revise or develop programs to highlight the integration of natural and cultural themes. Current programs that integrate natural and cultural topics include the FILPS mock Beach Apparatus Drill, "Watch Hill to Long Cove Ramble," "The Way to the Bay," "Cultural Landscape Walking Tour," "In Honor of Trees," "Clams and Clamming in the Great South Bay," "Leave No Trace Workshop," "Fire Island Harvest" and others. Webpages and social media could highlight the history of J.T. Nicolls as a naturalist at the WFE, or the history of the recently discovered USLSS Lyle gun carriage. Programs and media topic examples include: beach dynamics and maritime history at the Fire Island Lighthouse and "Fire Island Lighthouse Keepers: Living Off the Land and Sea," the environmental history of salt marshes, "Citizens and Scientists Speak out for the Preservation of the Sunken Forest," and a program similar to Yosemite's <http://keepbearswild.org>, etc. Park and partner historians and naturalists will collaborate, co-create and cross-train to develop and lead integrated programs parkwide.
- **Interpret New Stories:** Interpret the relatively untold stories of African Americans and Native Americans at Fire Island NS. The Seashore and FILPS will build upon the emerging relationship with the director of the Long Island Indigenous Peoples Museum (Sandi Brewster-Walker), and local tribes to provide interpretive programming relating the history of African Americans and Native Americans on Fire Island. Ms. Brewster-Walker (and/or other presenters) will be requested to work with park and partner staff to develop and conduct programs about Native Americans and African Americans on Fire Island. FILPS and the Seashore will collaborate on a program or event at the Fire Island Lighthouse (potentially in 2018) about the history of and current Native Americans and their connection to Fire Island. WFE staff could consider expanding interpretive programming and media highlighting the history of African Americans and Native Americans at the WFE.
- **Temporary Exhibits and Art Installations**
 - In 2017: Exhibit at the Fire Island Lighthouse, Audrey Tiernan's photographs of the Fire Island Lighthouse complex - including the Fresnel Lens Building/Tower and natural surroundings.
 - 2018: Highlight Xiomaro's Fire Island Wilderness photographs and in-house developed photos/text panels of the Long Cove community and establishment of Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness. Park staff with personal histories at Long Cove will contribute to and help plan the exhibit.
 - 2018: Work to secure digital files/panels of the Barbesh the Seashore history exhibit for use as a temporary/rotating exhibit throughout the park.
 - In 2019: Revise damaged/removed wayside panel interpreting whale bone outside of Wilderness Visitor Center to highlight the brief history of whaling off FI and the natural history of whales.

14. Promote All Seashore Sites at All Seashore Sites

Summary: This recommendation suggests multiple approaches to provide more holistic experiences for visitors and staff through comprehensive, parkwide promotions and information. The Seashore's diversity of resources and sites are geographically spread out, so it can be a challenge to understand the park in an integrated way. Cross-training of staff, partners, and volunteers and promotion of parkwide programs and information across sites can build greater familiarity with more of the park and a better understanding of all that the park has to offer.

Description: Many visitors visit only one site, and park staff and partners often work at primarily one site and/or have deeper knowledge of particular sites. It is a challenge to help visitors achieve an integrated and holistic view of the park. This recommendation suggests internal (staff, partners, volunteers) and external (public) actions to provide park-wide experiences and builds cross-park awareness of staff and partners. Park and FILPS staff, and volunteers will become more familiar with parkwide resources and programs and possess a sufficient level of competency to interpret them.

Collaborating on new products and programming ("workshopping") is a 21st century skill and starts with communication and awareness. Regular de-briefing and after-action discussions and analysis are critical components to information sharing. The goal is to learn from each other and give people with public contact duties the skills and confidence to talk about the entire park rather than just their primary duty station. This greater awareness can encourage visitors to explore connections between sites and could increase customer satisfaction. The following actions strengthen the people who speak on behalf of Fire Island National Seashore.

Actions

- **"Workshopping," Centralizing, and Simplifying Information for Access by All:** A 21st century interpretation skill is "workshopping" – collaborating on interpretive products (rather than developing individual programs). Workshopping provides information-sharing for staff, helps preserve institutional knowledge and creates "turn-key ready" resources to share while onboarding new park staff and volunteers. This process begins by more widely sharing information such as interpretive and education program outlines, AV presentations, etc. Currently, each program area and division has its own processes for sharing (emails, p-drive file folders, hard copy distribution, etc.). The VET is charged with regularly sharing information with each other and the rest of the interpretive staff. While the Seashore has a network p-drive for sharing across divisions and program areas, this network is not available to park partners. An IT specialist will be enlisted to determine the best mechanism for storing, filing, and sharing program outlines and other useful digital resources (for example site specific plant keys, etc.) with park partners. The standard photo filing protocol already in place at the park should be utilized by all to more consistently label and file photos on the shared network drive.
- **Orientation:** Provide park-wide site orientations to all (seasonal and permanent) interpretive partners, staff, volunteers, and interns (and their supervisors) within four weeks of entrance on duty. This happens presently to some extent but could benefit by being a more coordinated effort among park sites, divisions, and partners. Site orientations are most efficiently scheduled as group tours during seasonal training and for volunteer group tours scheduled at each park site. For individuals that are not able to participate on these tours, arrangements will be made to ensure that each interpreter receives adequate orientation and an in-person visit to each of the park's five main sites. In addition to site visits, presentations can be developed and conducted at formal training sessions, meetings, and more informally as brown bag opportunities. Upon entrance on duty, new employees and volunteers will be provided with park-wide digital, print, and other media resources (such as park and partner websites, etc.) for self-study. In addition to the All Employee Handbook, which contains park-wide information and is updated and distributed annually to permanent and seasonal park staff, the Fire Island National Seashore Volunteer-in-Park Handbook (now in draft) will be completed available electronically and in print for distribution to all park volunteers.

- **Provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to work at multiple sites:** Park interpreters should have opportunities to spend time at a range of park sites (beach sites, WFE, and LH) at least once per year. This allows opportunities to interact with colleagues and partners across the park, and increases knowledge of park operations, resources, and visitors.
- **Increase information sharing about park events, programs, and information with park volunteers and partners:** Excel spreadsheets and Constant Contact lists of park volunteers currently exist but are far from complete — and once so, they need regular updating. This is an appropriate task for the Volunteer Coordinator or designee, but depends on site volunteer supervisors to gather and provide the information. Once contact lists are relatively complete, the sharing of information can occur on an as needed basis. At a later time, volunteer newsletters can be developed.
- **Interpretive Media:** Non-personal information about all sites will be more readily available at each site.
 - Maintenance staff will install the park-wide map wayside at the entrance to the Burma Road boardwalk leading up to the Fire Island Lighthouse.
 - Park-wide program print publications will be prominently displayed and available for distribution at every park site.
 - Bulletin boards park-wide will continue to post information about what there is to do and see throughout the park.
- **Messaging:** The Seashore will develop and maintain a list of standard messages (“talking points”) and guidelines that can be included in programming, personal and non-personal media. These messages will convey critical parkwide information. Some information is safety-related, some is logistical (ferry schedules), some contextual (Fire Island National Seashore is a site within the National Park System), provide thematic connections, and some promotional (the different sites, upcoming events, etc.). The goal is to ensure that all visitors are appropriately informed about park-wide opportunities and resources.
- **Updated CMS:** The Content Management System “Plan Your Visit” pages will be updated to accurately convey park-wide logistical information.
- **Standard NPS Design:** NPS’s graphic identity standards will be used for all Seashore publications. The graphic identity program was developed to provide a unified, visual identity within a diverse system.

APPENDIX H: [About this Planning Process](#)

The planning process for the Fire Island National Seashore Visitor Experience Plan drew from extensive engagement with park leadership, staff, and partners, and was facilitated by the Consensus Building Institute and the PUP Global Heritage Consortium, where PUP refers to “Public Use Planning.”

The Consensus Building Institute team (CBI/PUP) began with a phone meeting where the principles of implementation and participation and how they could be applied to this case were discussed. Later CBI/PUP as well as Seashore staff followed up with a four-day scoping trip in September 2016. The team visited all major sites and attractions within the Seashore, and held meetings and interviews with stakeholders via conference call, and conducted phone interviews with additional stakeholders in the following weeks. A Scoping Trip Report provided an initial audience analysis, detailed synthesis and list of participants’ interpretive and visitor experience ideas, and preliminary prioritization criteria.

CBI/PUP, park staff, and key partners met for a two-day workshop in Patchogue in November 2016. The workshop confirmed foundational aspects of the park’s interpretive program, park significance, interpretive themes, management and visitor experience goals; prioritized special emphasis audiences; refined prioritization criteria for recommendations and themes; identified an initial set of recommendations for personal services, interpretive media, facilities, education services, operational structures, and partnerships. The workshops were designed to strengthen existing partnerships and generate ideas for new external partnerships, as well as to build internal

(staff) and external (partners and public) enthusiasm and ownership of the plan and its recommendations through collaborative co-creation between park community, partners, guests, and consultants.

Over the next months, planning participants met as groups and in small teams to refine planning goals and challenges, review and prioritize initial recommendations, and begin to flesh out implementation steps and details. This included park staff-led workshops in December 2016 and January 2017, and small group work throughout January and February.

In February 2017, there was a final one-day workshop to refine recommendations and implementation plans, including identifying timelines for short-, medium-, long-term, and to set the stage for collaborative implementation of the plan’s recommendations. Participants continued to refine the actions after the workshop and provided feedback and input on the suite of recommendations thorough March 2017.

From March through May, successive rounds of editing and designing occurred in preparation of version 1.0 of the Fire Island National Seashore VEP.

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The Fire Island National Seashore Experienced from Above

Jon Kohl

VEP Facilitation Team,

PUP Global Heritage Consortium/Consensus Building Institute

Only in flight can one take in the entire park with a single view.

PHOTO: NPS



To experience Fire Island National Seashore requires that a visitor make repeated excursions. The Seashore does not reveal itself quickly thanks to the difficulty of traversing its entirety and understanding the interplay of its natural and cultural resources. Alternatively, it might reveal its essence if a visitor were to overfly it. A twenty-minute flight in helicopter would be too noisy and disruptive, but on the wings of a gull one would sense Fire Island in proper perspective.

Taking advantage of a light easterly breeze, our greater black-backed gull jumps aloft from the beach oceanside at Robert Moses State Park. As the gull rises, she sees the thicket of phragmites through which the boardwalk slithers like a black racer snake. The gull circles the black-and-white striped Lighthouse which guided ships, immigrants, and cargo for 150 years into New York harbor. A quick glimpse backward, the steel and cement cityscape of one of the greatest cities on Earth peaks

above Robert Moses Causeway. Tourists atop the lighthouse wave as the gull heads eastward along 26 miles of national seashore on the barrier island, an Olympic distance that takes far longer for a hiker to cross than it did for Pheidippides to run after the Battle of Marathon 2,500 years ago.

The number of cars drops off rapidly passing the lighthouse and then the Burma Road vehicle gate. Once inside the national park reaching the community of Kismet, only a smattering of vehicles can be observed, whether driving on the beach or along the interior route of a relatively motor vehicle-free community.

When on the ground, a stretch of beach or a forest stand slows a walker's advance. From up above, these multiple and changing landscape features — dunes, houses, boardwalks — pass in continuous change like blips on a sonar screen landscape. Fire

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Island enjoys no extensive forests, mountain chains, or enduring wild rivers. This is not like many other national parks. Perhaps its single indomitable feature, difficult to perceive from the ground, is its long thin barrier island land bridge, holding at bay the Great South Bay to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Along this sand bar, the gull sees a bright, reflective beach undulating all the way to the horizon to her right and darker colored saltmarsh, green vegetation, and wooden docks along the left.

Now overflying Ocean Beach from 2,000 feet up, human communities intersperse with green space almost all the way down the island. These are not occasional interruptions to a natural viewscape like a camping shelter or wilderness lodge that you might find in a larger park, these communities integrate into the overall attraction of the park itself. Rip them out and the cultural fabric of the island becomes undone like violently ripping out the zipper from a fisherman's vest.

Arriving at the first large forest patch, the gull notes that the Sunken Forest at Sailor's Haven offers tribute to the power of a naturally developed dune system able to protect this 200–300-year old, unique forest habitat from storms that brew at sea. The trail that meanders through it now and then makes itself visible to the sky, but visitors walk its length admiring this forest-on-a-beach, occasionally defending themselves against the hunger of resident mosquitoes.

Various communities lay ahead. For example, Cherry Grove and the Fire Island Pines stretch from bay to ocean, giving refuge to a large gay community. Many weekend New Yorkers inflate their summer population for sun, surf, and festivity. The culture of the Fire Island communities distinguishes Fire Island from other natural protected areas.

Beyond Cherry Grove, Fire Island Pines, and Talisman, beachgoers mingle with beachcombers. Looking down, the gull detects whitecaps indicating the direction of the longshore current. Its waters generally

carry sand and shells westward replenishing beaches and beachcomber fodder, covering and recovering beach flotsam that may include even shipwrecks such as that of the *Bessie White*. The winds that nudge the gull eastward mostly yield to stronger westward winds. These westward winds flow, unimpeded by any land masses and depending on the time of year, push air and water along the island.

The gull glides on thermals over Davis Park toward Watch Hill and recalls during winter time how thousands of waterfowl rest and feed on the bay especially in saltmarshes such as those at Watch Hill. Canada geese, brant, black ducks, bufflehead, and others come and go on an annual cycle. During the summertime, the visitor center enjoys quite a bustle as many boaters, the Watch Hill ferry, and campground-goers move in and out of a 188-slip marina.

Beyond Watch Hill, the gull notices three deer grazing beach grass along the dune. Her gaze quickly moves away as deer are such common sight on Fire Island. The park, in fact, has written a deer management plan to manage their numbers in order to bring balance back to the barrier island ecosystem.

Aside from deer, visitors sometimes spot seals sunning on the beach, but to find true megafauna requires heading outward to the water. Here, off the coast, visitors might observe whales, dolphins, and all five species of sea turtle, though none nest on Fire Island.

Now the gull drops down into the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness Area, 1,400 acres of one of the smaller wildernesses in the United States and the only one in New York, not to mention so enticingly close to a grand metropolis. As the gull touches down on the beach, out of sight of the Burma Road, it peers out over the ocean. Here a wilderness camper or beachcomber cannot get lost physically, with the four cardinal directions so clearly identifiable on this small island. He or she does not feel insecure or disoriented as one might in a major

wilderness such as the Gates of the Arctic Wilderness Area. Rather shielded by dunes from the view and sounds of civilization, the respite provides an illusion of distance and isolation, conditions that provoke a sense of solitude and tranquility, even if for only a fleeting moment until a plane or boat passes by. At night, a constellated dark sky gapes above the wilderness-goer erasing conscious remembrance that the never-sleeping Big Apple hums some 60 miles to the west.

The gull jumps and quickly the developed shoreline of the Village of Bellport comes into view on the left and freighters on route to New York to the right. In fact, Bellport actually bisects the wilderness area at Bellport Beach which connects the Ho-Hum Beach Marina on the bay with the ocean along a short, transversal trail. But by far the biggest and most consequential bisector of the wilderness is the breach, created by Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Like so many storms before, her whipping winds ripped a hole, a break, or a breach through the barrier island, a natural occurrence in a landscape that shifts and shimmers with the rhythms of nature.

The gull glides over the tidal flats that fan out like soft coral from the breach into the bay. These shallow mud flats, if they remain, may feed the growth of new saltmarshes, providing new habitat for birds, shellfish, salt grasses, and other organisms. In fact, repeated breaks across this and other barrier islands, as well as overwashes of sand moving northward across the island, actually contribute to Fire Island's lazy migration toward Long Island. When storms move sand oceanside through inlets to the bay, the island retraces its ancient track when millennia ago southward-growing glaciers once bulldozed material into a barrier island.

Now the breach doesn't allow just the passage of sand and sea creatures between bay and sea, but fresh ocean water too, which has been flushing a stagnant bay, improving water quality, and fishing unlike

anything Long Islanders have seen in many years. Some consider the breach a threat, others just a natural phenomenon. Some are concerned with increased flooding and a severed transportation line that once allowed emergency vehicle entry; others enjoy being able to finally see the bay's shallow bottom. The park itself has created a breach management plan to determine if and how to manage this coastal feature. Whichever perspective one takes, the breach provides enormous opportunity not only for beachcombers, nature photographers, and wilderness fishermen, but interpretation about a wide range of natural and human environmental policy issues, including the need to build and sewer sustainably.

The gull, nonetheless, cares not for such issues and flies onward over thousands of tiny runnels and troughs that dot the beach along the breach. They join together into ripples that in turn drain into the channel. The breach may fill in naturally with sand deposited by longshore currents as it did to the Old Inlet which had formed in 1938 at this very same spot.

The gull flies above the Wilderness Visitor Center. As she passes, a dense spiral of hundreds maybe thousands of migrating swallows ascends from bayside trees just north of the visitor center. On their migratory route, they take a brief siesta on the island with so many other species including the famed Monarch butterfly on its multi-generational trek to and from Michoacán, Mexico.

While the visitor center and parking lot demarcate the boundary of the federal track, Fire Island National Seashore includes Smith Point County Park and continues all the way to Moriches Inlet as well as the water underneath the William Floyd Parkway which connects Fire Island to Long Island.

As the gull passes by Mastic Beach and Narrow Bay, it banks north toward the William Floyd Estate. This quick turn symbolizes in

many ways how the mainland has connected to the barrier island for generations harkening back to when Native Americans and later colonists hunted whales from the beach, when early Americans tilled the soil, and when ships once hid from oncoming storms.

Indeed, mainland humans have used Fire Island for as long as anyone can remember, but perhaps no human in this area has left a deeper historical mark than General William Floyd who co-signed the American Declaration of Independence. Here he inherited his family's farm and his descendants

lived on it for another two churning centuries of American life and culture until the estate finally became property of the National Park Service and the American people. The gull for all her lofty view can see but bits of this history in the Floyd house, cemetery, and other buildings that dot the estate. She cannot see the enduring American legacy captured by the myriad buildings and artifacts or the hidden secrets that hide beneath the soil awaiting discovery. Even she cannot see or experience the entirety of Fire Island National Seashore in just one visit. ◆

What It's Like to Live in Fire Island National Seashore

Dawn Lippert

President,
Fire Island Year-Round Residents Association

Set within the boundaries of Fire Island National Seashore are 17 communities that host a summer as well as year-round population. Two are incorporated villages and the rest are communities of the Towns of Islip or

lifestyle, just a few bridges away from the busy Long Island mainland. The year-round population averages 250–300 people along a 32-mile barrier island. The term “year-rounder” translates to a hardy and resourceful group of individuals who revel in the ability to live within reach of the Great South Bay, ocean, beach, and quietness that nature affords. The winter community is made up of families and individuals who are contractors, municipal employees, retirees, or just people who want to live in an environment that allows a lifestyle of fishing, surfing, walking along the beach, or just free from mainland hustle and bustle.

Also, situated within the park's boundary is our own Fire Island public school district. Woodhull Elementary is attended by the off-season residents' children. The sense of community is strengthened by activities and events that the school provides. Its ability to engage students in the natural environment that Fire Island National Seashore protects fortifies their education.

Whether a person is a summer resident or year-rounder, there is pride and obligation in being stewards of the land shared with the National Seashore. Support of the Seashore is evident in the mission statements of both the Fire Island Year-Round Residents Association as well as the Fire Island Association. Both organizations are dedicated to preserving the island's natural appeal as well as its culture. A commitment to preserve the elements of this fragile barrier beach as well as recognizing the cultural component of the area is shared by everyone who lives in these communities. In addition, the Fire Island Lighthouse is a cherished landmark and has become a symbol of a lifestyle that we all have chosen to join. The various park areas that intersperse with the communities and our ability to care for them, experience the natural beauty they provide, and have the pleasure of calling Fire Island our home, is what makes life here exceptional and enjoyable. ♦



Fire Island community life is part of what's special about Fire Island National Seashore.

PHOTO:
DENISE DEMONG

Brookhaven. These various communities differ in character; however, they are all drawn together like a ribbon to create the unique personality of a beach community. The summer season becomes a carefree, vehicle-free, accessible-only-by-boat vacation destination, bustling with day-trip beach visitors, renters, as well as summer season residents. Each community swells with bikes, wagons, parties, and sun worshipers. The summer population within the Park's boundaries could reach approximately 30,000 on any given day.

In contrast, during the offseason the Park allows year-round residents to drive to and from the mainland. The joy of living within the boundary of a National Seashore year-round is the solitude and splendor of its natural environment. The experience's uniqueness offsets the necessary inconvenience. It's a rural

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The *Elizabeth* Sank for Better Life Saving Services

Angela Reich

Volunteer,

Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society

The ship *Elizabeth* came to grief on the shore near what is now Point-O-Woods in the wee hours of the morning of July 19, 1850. She was caught in a tropical storm that ravaged the coast from Baltimore to Maine.

The *Elizabeth* carried the noted writer, intellectual, and social activist Margaret Fuller. Fuller was known for spreading educational opportunities for women through her seminars for women called Conversations held in Boston; her editorship of the literary publication *The Dial* created by Ralph Waldo Emerson; her position as literary critic for the *New York Daily Times* under Horace Greeley; and last, her coverage of the Italian Revolution of 1848, from whence she was returning on this voyage, accompanied by her husband, and their two-year-old son. All three perished in the wreck.

Because of Margaret's fame, this wreck received a great deal of press coverage nationally, bringing attention to the woeful state of our nation's shore-based volunteer-led rescue system, then called the U.S. Life Saving Service. Clamor was made for Congress to provide it with enough funding for full-time professional crews and proper lifesaving equipment to equip them.



These changes came about slowly, but were recognized as necessary to safeguard transportation and shipping, since trade and commerce were key for America's fast-growing economy.

The tragic losses incurred by the *Elizabeth* cast light on our nation's maritime safety and the development of proper protection of our shorelines through the expansion of both the Lighthouse and Life Saving Services. ♦

The loss of the Elizabeth prompted the expansion of the the U.S. Life Saving Service.

PHOTO: NPS

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A Cultural Preservation: The Old Mastic House

MaryLaura Lamont

Interpretive Park Ranger

The historic William Floyd Estate today encompasses a very old house, several outbuildings, and cemetery where generations of family members repose, and also 613 acres of land which borders Moriches Bay. The land alone was and is priceless, in so beautiful a setting. The family lived in the home, which



Old Mastic House preserves the history laid down by the Floyd and Nichols families.

PHOTO: NPS

they called The Old Mastic House, for at least eight generations. The land was purchased in 1718 by Richard Floyd, the namesake and son of the first Richard Floyd to settle upon Long Island's shores. They settled early in Setauket and eventually, by adding more lands to their holdings, they came to the Mastic peninsula.

Nicoll Floyd, the second son of Richard, eventually became the owner of Mastic Farm and he raised wheat, corn, rye, oats, and flax along with cattle, pigs, and sheep. The vast forests were harvested for cordwood and building materials. He married Tabitha Smith of Smithtown and they had nine children. The oldest son and inheritor of the Mastic Farm was William. He would become one of Suffolk

County's leading revolutionaries and Signer of the Declaration of Independence in

1776, one of four signers from New York. He was also one of the first senators of the new state. During these early times the farm was managed as a northern plantation and the work force were enslaved Africans, indentured and paid Native Americans, and other workers.

The land was managed as a farm until about 1890. By then, business interests had shifted to New York City so the property shifted as well to hunting. The family stayed in residence all summer and weekends spring through fall. They hunted the property in the fall and winter seasons for quail, pheasant, and wildfowl. Thanksgiving was always celebrated in Old Mastic Home up to the 1970s.

The house was continuously passed down to sons until the modern era when direct descendant Cornelia Floyd Nichols inherited the house. She, along with two of her four children, William Floyd Nichols, Molly Nichols Weld and son-in-law David Weld, gave the home and acreage to Fire Island National Seashore in 1976 to coincide with the Bicentennial. Cornelia wanted her beloved home and the land's history protected and preserved. It just happened to mirror America's history too!

The most unique thing about the house is its striking cultural preservation. The long history of change covers its tenure for three centuries. It is all reflected in the architecture and furnishings, even in the land left behind. The family left the house fully furnished with thousands of objects in their original locations. Visitors can observe objects from 1760 right next to a chair from 1930. It is a time capsule spanning centuries and 25 furnished rooms. It tells the history of one family through the centuries and showcases a fantastic microcosm of American history all in one place! ♦

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The Lighthouse Welcomed Immigrants to America

Peter Paquette

*Volunteer,
Fire Island Lighthouse
Preservation Society*

The Fire Island Lighthouse played a major part in immigration as far back as the 1800s. Its comforting light of safety was one of the first sights of America that many immigrants saw. They traveled in ships past the Lighthouse to New York Harbor. It was a difficult journey for immigrants but the Lighthouse welcomed them as they neared their destination.

The Lighthouse oriented boat captains as they arrived. Because of shallow waters, many ships wrecked along the coast of Fire Island and by the mid-1870s, the U.S. Life Saving Service had built seven life-saving stations on the Island, one only several hundred yards west of the Lighthouse.

During the 1800s and early 1900s many people from the European and African continents immigrated to this country due to political unrest, Depression of 1890, wars, religious freedom, racial discrimination, and famine. The US government imposed quotas starting in 1921.

For many immigrants that passed by the Lighthouse, their destination was New York City. They came to find work and safety. Hungarians, Poles, Slovaks, Bohemians, and Italians flocked to the coal mines and steel mills. Greeks preferred textile mills; Russian and Polish Jews worked the needle and traded with pushcarts in New York City. Railroad companies offered free or cheap farmland to agricultural workers so they would work western farmlands.



The completion of the Erie Canal in 1826 made it much easier and safer to reach rich farmlands of western New York, where people of the same nationality set up communities. The canal connected to other waterways that enabled people to move farther West all the way to the Mississippi River and beyond. ◆

*The Fire Island
Lighthouse still
greets visitors from
around the world.*

PHOTO: MIKE CARNI

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Reaching Latino Audiences at Fire Island

Susan Bonfield

Director, Environment for the Americas

The town of Patchogue, New York was once a sleepy place with just 75 residents in 1812. By 2000, this Long Island community was home to 11,919 people, a number which remained approximately the same in the 2010 census. From 1990 to 2000, changes in Patchogue's population were notable because of the rapid increase in the Latino population, which grew over 22% and resulted in the designation as a "hypergrowth" city. Today, Latinos represent



A Spanish-speaking park intern brings the Seashore to the community.

PHOTO: NPS

almost 30% of the town's population. While there had long been a Latino presence in Patchogue, this group now represents a significant and influential part of the community.

Despite the community's proximity, Fire Island, like other national parks and natural areas, has been challenged to engage diverse audiences in its programming and visitation. Diversifying visitation to America's natural areas has been a challenge for more than a decade, despite the rapid growth in some minority populations, such as Latinos. In 2009, Environment for the Americas confronted this issue through a multi-year study funded by the National Science Foundation that examined Latino participation in informal science education programs at natural areas across the country.

Our research included face-to-face surveys with Latino adults at six study sites, including

Patchogue, to explore factors that affected their visitation to natural areas, in this case, Fire Island National Seashore. In the first year of the study, we also documented participation in the park's annual Jr. Ranger program and used the results to determine if participation could be increased in subsequent years. To accomplish the research, we collaborated with the National Park Service's Park Flight Migratory Bird Program to recruit college-aged biologists and educators from Latin America who conducted surveys and adapted events to engage Latino families until the project's completion in 2012.

Key Factors

Surveys with Latino adults near Fire Island and other research sites showed the key factors that impacted decisions to participate in activities. Preferences included:

- programs or components of programs led by another Latino
- programming in Spanish
- programs designed for the entire family, and
- programs that introduced their children to opportunities that would benefit them in the future

One of the most striking results of the surveys was the low awareness of Fire Island National Seashore. Just 6% of over 120 Latino respondents knew about the park, lower than any other site in the study, though the highest awareness was just over 18%. Equipped with the key factors, we adapted Fire Island's Jr. Ranger program by developing bilingual outreach, by sharing information about the park and its programs through Latino interns, by incorporating bilingual presentations in the event, and by adapting outreach to better reach the Latino community.

Through just these simple solutions, Latino participation in the annual Jr. Ranger event grew from 15.5% in the first year, with no changes, to over 27% in the second year, when the four factors were addressed. These results were mirrored at other sites, confirming that while the methods are simple, they can be very effective. ◆

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Artists-in-Residence Create New Ways to See Fire Island

Dawn Lee

Fire Island National Seashore

Artist-in-Residence, 2013

Artist-in-Residence Coordinator

Fire Island National Seashore started an Artist-in-Residence program in 2013. It was my honor to be the first artist invited to spend two weeks of uninterrupted time immersed in this beautiful and complex environment. The drawings and painting that I created explored the interdependent relationship between the wetlands, dunes, and seashore, and expressed their interconnectedness through poetic forms and rhythms.

I was so moved by my experience that I wanted to work with the National Seashore

to develop the Artist-in-Residence program and make it available to more artists. We are pleased to be in our fifth year and, over that time, a total of 16 artists have participated in this deeply engaging experience. As well as an opportunity to develop their own work, many artists have given public presentations, workshops, and exhibitions with the intent of enhancing the park visitor experience and offering new perspectives of Fire Island.

The success of this program is the culmination of respecting the history of art in national parks, implementing innovative concepts, and leveraging the inspiration and appreciation of artists. This is a great example of how the power of collaboration can help ideas become reality. ♦



"Crossing" by Dawn Lee, the Seashore's first Artist-in-Residence and current program coordinator. Artists-in-residence are an important and specialized group of volunteer interpreters.

PHOTO: DAWN LEE

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Beauty in the Breach

Elizabeth Rogers

Public Affairs Specialist

"I don't know about all the sand stuff you were talking about," she said, "but this is beautiful." The woman, who had joined a ranger-led hike to the breach, was spellbound by the view. We had walked for over an hour to get to the breach. We took our time along the way, stopping to explore signs of beach change from the tiny ripples in the sand that come and go each day to the expansive overwashes of the upper beach where storm waves pushed through the dune line. Upon arriving at the breach, the group spread out to watch the sun sink below the horizon. Some meandered along the sinuous shoreline while others grabbed a seat in the sand and watched the waves gently glide across the open channel toward the Great South Bay. The woman stood still, almost misty-eyed,

uncertain whether she would return to live in Long Beach and was not sure where she would move next. I was humbled by her candor and surprised that despite what must have been devastating loss, she could find beauty in the breach — a reminder of the powerful storm that changed the Fire Island landscape, and her life.

Indeed the breach strikes a chord with most people. Coastal scientists, artists, fishermen, environmental activists, and politicians alike have come to see the "new inlet at Old Inlet," and each person views it differently. Some call for the breach to be closed, arguing that the breach poses a flood risk for properties across Long Island's South Shore. Others contend the breach helps improve water quality in the Great South Bay and should be allowed to close on its own, as breaches eventually do. The storm not only opened a channel, allowing for the exchange of water between ocean and bay; it also opened up a conversation, challenging us to take a closer look at the issues we face in protecting the communities and ecosystems that rely on the Great South Bay.

Therein lies the beauty in the breach. This impressive natural feature has sparked critical conversations. We should be talking about shoreline change, sea level rise, water quality, and how barrier islands function. We should have strong opinions that we are compelled to communicate. And we should want to more fully understand

this new feature and its impact on the Great South Bay. Though at times difficult, these discussions are essential to moving forward, and to working toward a healthy ecosystem that we can all enjoy today and into the future. ♦

The breach presents an opportunity to discuss interacting cultural and natural processes. Fishing remains a popular activity near the breach.

PHOTO: NPS



interested only in absorbing every last drop of that view.

As we talked, I learned that this woman, formerly a resident of Long Beach, had lost everything in Hurricane Sandy. She was

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Wilderness on the Edge of a Great Metropolis

Mike Bilecki

Chief,
Natural Resources Management

Just miles from New York City skyscrapers, herons stalk through grassy wetlands and startled white-tailed deer leap over thickets of catbrier and ubiquitous poison ivy. Their home is the barrier island known as Fire Island. The island, which shields Long Islanders from the raging Atlantic Ocean, attracts springtime rafts of migratory waterfowl bobbing on mainland-side waters and summer swimmers basking on the white beaches bordering the Atlantic.

Fire Island traces a thin line along the coast. Orientated east-west, this barrier island stretches 32 miles long and ranges from 200 yards to one-half mile wide. A seven-mile stretch on the eastern half has been designated wilderness. The Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness Act, Public Law 96-585, December 23, 1980, designated approximately 1,363 acres as wilderness in Fire Island National Seashore. The wilderness extends from the Wilderness Visitor Center, west, to Watch Hill.

In the wilderness, a visitor can freely explore, discover a natural barrier island ecosystem, and savor the solitude. The Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness offers a barrier island experience like no other. It includes everything from the toe of the primary dune with its patches of seaside plants, and extends across areas of pine forest with hidden groves to the sheltered marshes along Great South Bay. The wilderness area does not include ocean front beaches but provides for a remote and pristine experience. The area provides excellent backcountry camping and hiking along the trace of the old Burma Road, which ran the full length of what is now wilderness. Anglers cast for bluefish, striped bass, winter flounder, among other saltwater species, and scenic views and abundant wildlife attract bird watchers, wildlife viewers, and nature lovers, alike. Hunting is also allowed by permit only.



One needs to be prepared for any wilderness experience or adventure. For the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness, know that there are no venomous snakes on Fire Island, but one may very likely encounter dense thickets of catbrier and poison ivy, and in warmer weather, vast numbers of salt marsh mosquitoes and ticks. Wearing light-colored clothing and a wide-brimmed hat helps detect ticks and provides protection from the sun. Always be aware of changing weather conditions, tide and ocean conditions and rip currents, and your response to the heat or cold.

The Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness is the smallest wilderness area within the National Park Service (but not the smallest within the National Wilderness Preservation system). Remember wilderness is land that is rare. They are wild places where one can retreat from civilization, reconnect with the Earth, and find healing, meaning and significance, no matter the size of the place. ◆

A wilderness area so close to New York City is one of the Seashore's outstanding features.

PHOTO: NPS

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Managing Deer Includes Managing Messages About Deer

Lindsay Ries
Wildlife Biologist

Deer management—and wildlife management in general—can be a controversial issue to discuss with the general public. It’s even more difficult to have these conversations when



Deer management is one issue that relates to all sites across the Seashore.

PHOTO:
HENRY ESTERLY

“direct reduction” of a wildlife population is proposed at a site. Having meaningful conversations about the need for deer management through education and outreach has been a struggle at Fire Island National Seashore for decades. For this reason, the park made such conversation a primary objective in its 2016 White-tailed Deer Management Plan.

It strives to communicate messages to the public in different ways, depending on the

audience. One message is to focus on actual impacts deer have on important natural and cultural resources, rather than on deer themselves. That’s the primary reason why the Seashore is engaged in deer management: because of the negative impacts deer have on other resources the Seashore must protect. This includes the regeneration of maritime forests on Fire Island and the William Floyd Estate (WFE), and what continued browsing from an overpopulated deer herd means for the future of these forests and other wildlife that depend upon them. We can show through vegetation monitoring over several decades that the eruption of deer on Fire Island (and at the WFE) has decimated the forest understory, not allowing new growth to eventually replace the forest’s canopy trees once they die and also preventing the growth of herbaceous plants. This means the forests cannot naturally sustain themselves, and that has consequences for not only deer, but other wildlife dependent on these forests for food and shelter.

Communicating this ecological relationship—with not only vegetation and deer, but also the complex relationship between deer, other mammalian hosts, and ticks—is something the Seashore hopes to achieve in the next several years. This cannot be done, however, without the expertise, vision, and ultimate implementation of the park’s interpretive corps. It’s essential for wildlife managers and interpreters to work together to achieve educational objectives, such as those in the Deer Management Plan. ♦

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KELSEY SUCENA

National Park Service
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