To maintain the features of the existing landscape and current land-use practices, and to stabilize existing structures until use/occupancy agreements expire and future public uses are determined.

g. Exempted Communities

The following objective relates to the 17 exempted communities located within the boundary of the national seashore:

To establish direct federal involvement with local governmental jurisdictions in a cooperative effort to provide appropriate land uses within the exempted communities of the national seashore.

B. Land Classification

General management planning requires sound classification for lands in a National Park Service area. This is necessary to insure that public facility development is commensurate with the use capabilities of the basic resources and in accord with the legislative intent of Congress for the area. Thus, land classification provides a general framework for resource management, visitor use, and development. The lands of Fire Island will be classified into four major use zones as indicated below. (See figure 2.)

Class I--Natural Zone

I A--Environmental Protection/Primitive Zone (1,860 acres). Lands and waters possessing particular value as wildlife habitat and/or research areas with outstanding physical and biological characteristics.

Uses: Protection of valuable habitats, outstanding ecological features, and other environmental values.

Permitted Facilities: Sand trails, elevated pedestrian dune crossings (2 and 3 feet high), and boardwalks (limited to 5 feet in width) in certain locations where future visitor use would result in damage to natural features.

Recreational Activities: Hiking, surf-fishing, hunting (where permitted by law), and limited natural history interpretation.

I B--Outstanding Natural Feature Zone (130 acres). Geological and biological features possessing intrinsic value or uniqueness.

Uses: Interpretation of natural features, research, and environmental education.

Permitted Facilities: Boardwalks (limited to 5 feet in width), interpretive signs, and elevated pedestrian dune crossings.

Recreational Activities: Hiking on sand trails and boardwalks, natural history interpretive activities, environmental education, and hunting (where permitted by law).

I C--Natural Environmental Zone (660 acres). Lands that require protection of the natural environment but can accommodate environmentally compatible activities.

Uses: Limited public day-use recreation, natural history interpretation, and environmental education.

Permitted Facilities: Minimal facilities to provide for public safety and protection of the natural resource, such as boardwalks (limited to 5 feet in width), primitive type campsites, small-boat docks, open showers, sewage facilities, and interpretive signs.

Recreational Activities: Hiking, beachcombing, surf-fishing, ocean swimming, surfing, hunting (where permitted by law), natural history studies (both National Park Service directed and individual activities), recreational clamming, and picnicking.

Class II--Historic Zone (377 acres)
This category includes areas managed to preserve and interpret significant historic structures, as well as lands containing resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Authenticity and integrity of the historic scene should be maintained with compatible uses of all historic structures. First-order structures are normally restored and preserved. Historic structures of lesser importance can be used for a variety of compatible purposes.

Uses: Interpretive activities relating to the historic resource and the study of the cultural environment, with secondary activities such as environmental education.

Permitted Facilities: Restored historic structures, interpretive boardwalks and paths, interpretive exhibits, and other limited improvements necessary for visitor appreciation of the historical environment.

Recreational Activities: Historical interpretation, walking, environmental education activities, and limited picnicking.

Class III--General Outdoor Recreation Zone (420 acres).
This zone includes lands and waters where visitor use has altered or may moderately alter the natural environment. Facilities on lands within this zone serve the needs of park managers in providing medium-density recreational opportunities. Facilities and structures should not dominate the natural environment and should be architecturally compatible with the results.

Uses: Traditional and moderate-density beach recreation (see table 1 for visitation levels associated with moderate-density beach recreation), natural history interpretation, and environmental education.

Permitted Facilities: Minimum-scale bathhouses, supervised beaches, boardwalks, individual and group campgrounds, maintenance stations, concessioner facilities (snack bars and food-marina stores), seasonal and year-round housing for park staff, seasonal concessioner housing, picnic areas, ranger stations, visitor centers, existing marinas, ferry slips, utilities, and necessary support facilities such as wastewater treatment.

Recreational Activities: General day-use beach recreation, hiking, beachcombing, docking of boats in marinas and related social activity, camping, surf-fishing, picnicking, recreational clamming, and various natural history interpretive activities.

Class IV--Special-Use Zones

IV A--Community Development Zone (750 acres). This zone includes private lands within the 17 communities located within the boundary of the national seashore. Federal control within the communities is limited by existing legislation to certain zoning standards. Otherwise, the communities are exempted from direct federal control.

Uses: Private development (single-family residential and some commercial) that conforms with local jurisdictional zoning ordinances approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

Recreational Activities: Activities typical of seashore communities, ranging from surf-fishing and beachcombing to nightclub dining and dancing.

IV B--Major Park Development Zone (93 acres). Lands within this zone are limited to major large-scale facilities, public bathhouses, and parking lots located within Smith Point County Park, Suffolk County.

Uses: High-intensity beach recreation.

Existing Facilities: Large-capacity facilities, such as extensive parking lots, major bathhouses, drive-in campgrounds, boardwalks, trails, concessioner facilities, and related support facilities.

Recreational Activities: Swimming, picnicking, surf-fishing, playground activities, shellfishing, and other recreational activities permitted in zones I and III.

IV C--Dune District (163 acres). The dune system of Fire Island National Seashore, which is subject to frequent and severe storm damage, is vital to the protection and perpetuation of the resource. Certain segments of the dune system within the seashore have been severely damaged by man's activities. All dunes not included in the environmental protection/primitive zone will be protected from additional damage by inclusion in this district.

Uses: Public recreational use prohibited.

Permitted Facilities: A small number of vehicular and pedestrian dune crossings necessary for access to areas located behind the dunes.

Recreational Activities: All recreational activity prohibited within the dune district because of the exceptionally fragile nature of the dune system.

C. Resources Management

Fire Island National Seashore will be managed to preserve its nationally significant natural resources while providing environmentally compatible recreational opportunities. Attempts will be made to repair human disturbances of the natural geomorphic conditions at certain locations, with the idea of then allowing natural processes to maintain these conditions. The island's resources management strategies will be integrated into a larger management strategy for the south shore of Long Island, with the needs of Great South Bay communities and economic interests taken into consideration. Specific resources management proposals are discussed under the following sections.

1. Beaches, Dunes, and Inlets

Immediately install sand-bypass systems at Moriches and Shinnecock Inlets so that sand presently being trapped in these inlets will be returned to the littoral drift. (The sand bypass will entail a dredging operation within the inlets. Sand that is being trapped in the inlets will be removed and placed in a "feeder beach" downdrift from the inlets. The surf will ultimately distribute the sand along the downdrift beaches of Fire Island.)

Do not open new artificial inlets within the national seashore boundaries. (When new inlets open naturally, they will be evaluated for effects on the ecosystem, and they will be closed if adverse effects outweigh benefits.)

Evaluate recent proposals by the Corps of Engineers to initiate sand nourishment programs along the beaches of the national seashore. (If beach and dune nourishment appears economically and environmentally feasible, work will be limited to beach areas west of Watch Hill. Major federal tracts will not be included in the sand nourishment program. Sand nourishment projects within the national seashore boundary will not be undertaken until the sand-bypass systems are operational at the inlets. Corps of Engineers' sand nourishment programs will be under the close supervision of the National Park Service.)