# FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE
# 5TH BIENNIAL SCIENCE AND CULTURAL RESOURCE CONFERENCE

## ABSTRACTS FOR THE CULTURAL RESOURCE SESSION, TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2005, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Presenting authors are indicated by bold text

### THE HISTORY OF FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

**Lee Koppelman**
Center for Regional Policy Studies, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794

The history of the Fire Island National Seashore is one of high expectations, high environmental hope, and a high level of conflicts. Its genesis grew out of a legitimate sense of crisis as the result of previous catastrophic storm events and serious beach erosion due to misguided governmental programs. The resolution of some of the conflicts is still a work in progress.

Despite strong support for the creation of the Seashore, there was wide disparity between the competing objectives of its proponents. Property owners and squatters on the island wanted the preservation of their properties and the federal assumption of responsibility for erosion control. They also wanted the prohibition of the Moses road proposal. Most environmental organizations wanted the maximum natural preservation of the island. Governmental planners wanted the preservation of the island whether by federal or local governmental entities, coupled to the elimination of the houses on the island. Most county elected officials had mixed objectives, with their main concern being that of not having the County of Suffolk incur costs for either the acquisition of homes or the cost of erosion control. This presentation summarizes the four decade old debate.

### CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE NPS: REGIONAL PROGRAMS THAT GUIDE RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

**Bob Page**
National Park Service, Northeast Region, Brookline, MA 02445

This session will provide an overview of the National Park Service Park Cultural Resource Programs in the Northeast Region. These programs address history, archeological resources, ethnographic resources, cultural landscapes, historic structures, and museum collections in the national park system. The national parks in the Northest Region have the largest concentration of cultural resources in the country. To achieve the

mission of the National Park Service to preserve these resources for future generations, each of these programs undertakes a variety of reseach and inventory work to provide critical information that is used to guide decision making for park management. This session will briefly describe the role and function of these six programs, along with the variety of project work they undertake. In particular, this session will illustrate how the information gained through research and inventory assists in making sound resource management decisions. Recent efforts to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to assemble and analyze all cultural and natural resource park data will be presented. The cultural resource research and inventory work ongoing at Fire Island National Seashore will be discussed including how the information collected will inform the upcoming general management plan for the park and assist in ongoing historic preservation compliance activity.

## CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY FOR FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE - FIRE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

**Laurie Matthews**
National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, Brookline, MA 02445

Cultural landscapes have become an integral component of historic preservation in the United States during the past two decades. During that time a great deal of effort has been devoted to defining a framework for managing cultural landscapes within the context of the historic preservation movement. The greatest challenge faced in this effort has been defining how to address the dynamic qualities inherent in landscapes and understanding that landscape preservation requires managing, rather than halting, physical changes. Today, we have national guidelines and a variety of tools which guide the preservation and management of cultural landscapes that are part of our National Parks, such as the Light Station and the William Floyd Estate at the Fire Island National Seashore. One of those tools is the National Park Service's Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), which is a comprehensive inventory of all culturally and historically significant landscapes located within the National Park System. Using the Fire Island Light Station as an example, this presentation will highlight how historical landscape architects at the Olmsted Center of Landscape Preservation complete a CLI, discuss the challenges that are encountered when documenting and analyzing a cultural landscape, and talk about how all this information can be used in the future both by the park and its partners.

## TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY MONITORING IN HISTORIC STRUCTURES

**Steven A. Czarniecki**
Fire Island National Seashore, National Park Service, Patchogue, NY 11772

The preservation of historic structures and their contents from the adverse effects of temperature and humidity is one of the most complex issues faced by preservation specialists. Striking the balance between the structural needs of the building, the historic fabrics, and the protection and preservation of exhibited collections is a constant program of monitoring, data acquisition, data analysis, and actions to mitigate the effects of any changes.

The William Floyd Estate Main House is a 25 room historic house furnished with objects dating from the late 1600's to the mid 1970's. The first portion of the house was constructed in the 1720's with six subsequent additions from the 1750's through the 1930's. There are over 6,000 objects on exhibit in the Main House.

Since the early 1980's, an extensive (and intensive) monitoring program has been established and the results of the monitoring have resulted in a number of technical and philosophical debates related to the treatment of the environment. In the late 1900's, a hard-wired computer based monitoring system was developed and installed. The program was designed to monitor the effects of liquid moisture events and track the movement of moisture from below ground level into the structure and into objects. The analysis of the acquired data will be used to establish the best methods for mitigating the effects of the changes in temperature and humidity on the collections without adversely impacting the structural members of the structure and the historic fabric.

## FIRE ISLAND: A CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

**Dana Taplin**
Center for Human Environments, Graduate School, City University of New York, New York, NY 10016

Fire Island National Seashore was established to protect an unusual barrier island from excessive urban development. Although the Seashore's interpretive mission focuses on the fragile island habitat, the island's character is very much a product of human culture. This paper reports on a recently concluded Ethnographic Overview and Assessment of Fire Island and the William Floyd Estate. The E. O. & A. sought to identify historical and cultural connections of continuing importance between the material resources of the national seashore and groups and communities residing in the region, including the Native American Poosepatuck community, the Baymen, as well as all the major geographic communities on the island. Even though few residents of the Great South Bay region continue to live off the region's natural resources, the geography of bay and island remains critical to people's sense of who they are. Moreover, seasonal and year-round residents of Fire Island share a sense that they best understand and care for the island's natural systems; also that only they understand how Fire Island works as an ecosystem of integrated cultural and natural elements. This sense of local environmental knowledge is at odds with the expertise-based structure of island governance, in which the care of natural systems rests with agencies of the federal government.

## AN ARCHEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT FOR FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

**William A. Griswold**
National Park Service, Northeast Region Archeology Program, Lowell MA 01852

Beginning in the early 1990s, the National Park Service embarked upon a program to more effectively manage archeological resources under our stewardship. This program was called the Systemwide Archeological Inventory Program or SAIP for short. This program was designed to offset the bias introduced from archeological information collected from Section 106 projects in favor of more systematic data collection on sites within all portions of parks. One portion of the SAIP program included the production of an Archeological Overview and Assessment (AOA) for each park. This document briefly outlines the prehistory and history of lands contained within a park, critically evaluates previous archeological work done within the park, assembles information necessary to complete the Archeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS) records and sets the direction for archeological work within the park for the next decade based upon the needs expressed by the management. Gray and Pape, an archeological contractor out of Virginia, working for Vector Resources is currently preparing the AOA for Fire Island. This presentation will discuss SAIP, the AOA, and ASMIS as they relate to the archeology of Fire Island National Seashore.

## PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES AT FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

**Bradley McDonald**
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, Gray & Pape, Inc., Richmond, VA 23223

Gray & Pape, Inc. is currently under contract to conduct an Archaeological Overview and Assessment for the Fire Island National Seashore on behalf of Vector Resources, Inc. and the National Park Service. In addition to creating a historic context for the park and assessing previous archaeological investigations, the primary goal of the document is to complete the Archeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS) records for thirteen previously identified archaeological sites within the park and establish a plan for their future management. The previously identified resources within the park range from early twentieth century domestic and commercial sites to nineteenth century life saving stations to the 60-acre eighteenth century estate of William Floyd. This presentation will focus on each of these varied resources, discuss their condition, potential significance and make recommendations for future care and research.