



## White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Chronology of Major Events

- 1964** Fire Island National Seashore is established as a unit of the National Park Service.
- 1965** William Floyd Estate is donated to Fire Island National Seashore.
- 1966** The Sunken Forest Preserve is officially donated to Fire Island National Seashore. The preserve contains the Sunken Forest, a globally rare holly maritime forest.
- 1967** Deer are rarely seen on Fire Island at this time. Permanent vegetation plots established in the Sunken Forest to measure long-term changes. Vegetation data is subsequently collected in 1986, 2002, and 2011.
- 1971** Island-wide aerial survey documented 46 deer on Fire Island.
- 1978** Fire Island National Seashore's first General Management Plan is approved. Deer were not considered a management issue at this time. (Deer herd was estimated at 50 individuals in 1974.)
- 1980** Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness is established.
- 1983** Island-wide aerial surveys are conducted two times per year from 1983-1998.
- 1985** Study of deer home range, movements, physiological parameters and incidence of Lyme disease in ticks is initiated by Fire Island National Seashore.
- 1986** Permanent vegetation plots in the Sunken Forest are re-surveyed. Major browsing impacts to vegetation are observed, presumably from the increase in deer on western Fire Island.
- 1988** First deer management initiative, a limited public hunt, occurs on Fire Island. The hunt is supported by the National Park Service and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, but was met with local resistance and discontinued in 1989.
- 1989** Aerial survey estimates the deer population on Fire Island is at 500.
- 1993** The Humane Society of the United States initiates a long-term study to investigate whether an immunocontraceptive vaccine, porcine zona pellucida (PZP) could be useful at Fire Island as a deer management tool. Fire Island National Seashore and United States Geological Survey (USGS) become partners of the project during its second and third phases. (Phase I: 1993-1997, Phase II: 1998-2002, Phase III: 2003-2009)
- 1995** USGS scientists recommend distance sampling as a new ground-based method of estimating deer abundance. Initial distance sampling surveys within Fire Island communities estimated a density of 80 deer/km<sup>2</sup>. Other areas, both within communities and other areas of the park, were added to the annual survey effort by 1999 and continue today.

- 1996** Planning for a Fire Island National Seashore White-tailed Deer Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement begins. Several public scoping meetings are held throughout 1995 and 1996, however, it is decided that the park will not proceed with the plan/EIS due to limited data and consensus on alternatives.
- 1998** Fire Island National Seashore receives funding to develop an educational outreach campaign to eliminate the feeding of deer and encourage stewardship in Fire Island communities. The project is very successful and well received, but is discontinued in 2002 when the funding was exhausted.

- 2002** Mapping and classification of park vegetation communities throughout the park is completed.

Sunken Forest vegetation plots are re-surveyed and an exclosure study that investigated impacts of small versus large herbivores is completed. White-tailed deer are identified as the primary herbivore in the Sunken Forest.

- 2003** Deer population estimated to be 500-700.

- 2005** Cornell University, under a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, initiated a study to understand human dimensions of issues related to deer at Fire Island National Seashore. In-person interviews with Fire Island residents and stakeholders, as well as mail surveys, are used to describe and understand the views of local residents with respect to deer issues. The project provided recommendations for how National Park Service staff might utilize this information to enhance management practices, including stakeholder engagement activities.

- 2006** Planning for a new Fire Island National Seashore General Management Plan (GMP) begins, including evaluation of management goals related to natural resources. The GMP is expected to be finalized in 2013.

Revised Cultural Landscape Inventory is completed for the William Floyd Estate.

- 2008** Cornell University and New York State initiate a Deer 4-Poster Tickicide Study in the western Fire Island communities and in adjacent Robert Moses State Park. (The study ends in 2011.)

- 2009** The long-term study initiated by the Humane Society investigating PZP ends.

Deer population is estimated to be 300-500.

- 2011** Planning begins for a White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Deer-Veg Plan/EIS) to address issues associated with the abundance, distribution and behavior of deer within Fire Island National Seashore.

For more information on the status of the planning process, please visit:  
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/FireIslandDeerManagementPlan>

