

Fire Island National Seashore

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Electronic Newsletter

What's Happening in the Park

April 2007

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Superintendent
Mike Reynolds

[Fire Island National Seashore Videos](#)

are now available on-line:

- Orientation to Fire Island National Seashore (13 minutes)
- Fire Island Lighthouse (11 minutes)

[National Park Week](#) April 22-29, 2007

Join our scheduled activities!

Message from the Superintendent:

While Fire Island National Seashore's general management planning process is between phases, we wanted to let you know about the things that are happening in the park as we prepare for the coming summer season and the near future. Those plans have been modified a bit, however, as we contend with the forces of nature on a barrier island.

We are still surveying the effects of this past weekend's storm. The Nor'easter of '07 blew past Fire Island with a modest amount of wind damage, but with more serious impacts from wave action on the shoreline. As many of you have probably heard or seen, a number of oceanfront homes on Fire Island had their foundations undermined as more than 30 feet of sand was scoured from the beach. In some locations, sand was washed over the dunes.

The winter beach is normally narrower than the summer beach. Most of the sand that was moved from the beach should still be just offshore. Fire Island's sand also generally moves in a westerly direction. Gentler spring and summer waves normally redeposit sand from the bar back to the beach. We'll have to wait and see what this summer's beach will be like. We have been in communication with the Army Corps of Engineers and with state, county and local officials to determine the best actions in regard to protection of community properties within the boundaries of Fire Island National Seashore.

Most park facilities appear to be minimally affected by the storm, but the weather has certainly rearranged our workload and priorities. Clean-up of additional debris is anticipated this spring.

Most park facilities don't open until mid- to late-May, but several programs and special events are happening this month at the sites that are accessible. The Fire Island Lighthouse is open all year, weather permitting, and our partners and volunteers there are conducting tours and special programs every month. On Saturday, April 14, the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society hosted the opening reception for a 3-week photography exhibition at the Lighthouse. The Nature and Wildlife

**[Fire Island National Seashore](#)
National Park Week
Activities**

- **Fire Island Lighthouse Trek**

Saturday, April 21, 2007
at Fire Island Lighthouse
\$10, Reservations
Required
631-661-4876

- **National Junior Ranger Day Activities**

Orienteering: Finding Your Way Around the Park
Saturday & Sunday, April 28-29, 2007
Self-guiding activity at Fire Island Lighthouse and Wilderness Visitor Center
631-687-4765

Fire Island National Seashore's [6th Biennial Science Conference](#)

May 9 - 10, 2007
Stony Brook University

Make your reservations now!

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Schedule at a Glance

- 8:00 am
Registration/Coffee
- 9:00 am Welcome
- 9:20 am Fresnel Lens
- 9:40 am Coastal Dunes
- 10:00 am *Poster Session*
- 10:20 am Storm Damage Reduction Planning *panel discussion*
- 12:00 pm Status of ORV Regulations
- 12:30 pm *Lunch/Poster Sessions*
- 2:00 pm GIS-based Website of Coastal Erosion Monitoring Data
- 2:30 pm NPS Initiative of Ocean Stewardship *panel discussion*

Photographers of Long Island will display their images through May 7. A portion of the sale of prints goes back to the FILPS, where it will be used to help support the operation of the facility.

The Fire Island Lighthouse had expected to host another open house on Sunday, April 15, this one to allow park planners and managers to meet with the public and answer questions about an [environmental assessment and assessment of effect \(EA/AoE\)](#) that has been prepared for a proposal to construct a new building near the lighthouse. The new building is being considered to provide a proper and appropriate space to display the original light that was installed in the Fire Island Lighthouse in 1857. This first order Fresnel lens, a 16-foot-high bee-hive shaped glass and brass lamp, was the state of the art when it was imported from France.

The Fresnel lens meeting has been rescheduled for Saturday, April 21, from 10:00 a.m. until noon.

Also on Saturday, April 21, we're celebrating Earth Day with our partners at the Fire Island Lighthouse for their annual Fire Island Lighthouse Trek. This is also a [National Park Week](#) "March For Parks" event. This is a wonderful way to spend a couple hours and discover more about the history of the Fire Island Light Station grounds. Did you know that New York's first state park was established at this site on Fire Island in 1908?

National Park Week 2007 runs from April 22 through 29 this year. To celebrate the event, Fire Island National Seashore interpreters have created a new orienteering program for kids and their families.

Teachers: there may still be time to sign up for the [teachers workshop](#) that's scheduled for April 28 at Sailors Haven. Our interpretive staff and volunteers have been hard at work over the winter improving park educational programs for this spring, summer and fall.

Progress continues on our new facilities. The West Entrance sign, welcome shelter and restroom, and road work at the east end of Robert Moses Parkway are still on schedule.

The restaurant at Watch Hill, operated by the park's concessioner, [Fire Island Concessions, LLC](#), is showing signs of completion.

Under the direction of our new facility manager, Jim Dunphy, Fire Island National Seashore's hard-working maintenance staff has completed many improvements which you'll likely notice this summer.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the park's biennial science conference, which will be co-sponsored and held at Stony Brook University this year. This is a wonderful opportunity for the general public to meet the scientists and researchers, as well as the park's resource management staff, and see where we stand

Thursday, May 10, 2007*Schedule at a Glance*

- 8:00 am
Registration/Coffee
- 9:00 am Shallow
Groundwater Flow System
- 9:20 am Submarine
Groundwater Discharge
- 9:40 am Water Quality
Monitoring Program
- 10:00 am Natural
Resource Inventory and
Monitoring Program
- 10:20 am *Poster Session*
- 11:00 am Effects of
Bulkheads on the Bay
Shore
- 11:30 am Relationships of
Sea-Level Rise, Barrier
Island Processes, and Salt
Marshes
- 12:00 pm Assessing
Changes Associated with
Beach Scraping to the
Beach/Dune System
- 12:30 pm *Lunch/Poster
Sessions*
- 2:00 pm Distance
Sampling Population
Estimate Method for
Determining Deer
Frequency
- 2:20 pm Mosquito
Surveillance and
Transmission Patterns of
West Nile Virus
- 2:40 pm Mosquito
Surveillance and
Monitoring Program
- 3:00 pm *Break/Poster
Sessions*
- 3:20 pm Park Flight
program
- 3:40 pm Recent Plover
Trends
- 4:00 pm *Concluding
Remarks*

**Additional Information and
Registration**

www.nps.gov/fiis/scienceconference.htm

E-Mail:

FIIS_Science_Conference@nps.gov

Phone: 631-687-5030

on scientific studies in the park.

We appreciate your support and concern for the resources that Fire Island National Seashore is entrusted with protecting. Thank You!

Mike Reynolds

- **Fire Island Natural Resources**

Fire Island Piping Plovers

Fire Island National Seashore's first piping plovers were observed this spring by March 15, 2007.

FINS wildlife biologist Danny Barrera coordinated a symbolic fencing day on Friday, April 6. Symbolic fencing was erected by 15 park employees and volunteers, stretching 3 miles of string and flagging from Bellport Beach to the Wilderness Visitor Center. Most of that fencing was washed away in last Sunday's storm, however. The plover volunteers are recovering the materials that they can salvage, and will re-do the work at the end of April. Plovers usually start laying their eggs by the first of May.

Monitoring and protection measures will continue as birds establish their breeding sites. Protective exclosures are constructed after a full clutch of four eggs has been laid in each nest. Symbolic fencing and exclosures do not prevent people from walking down the beach, and breaks in the fencing allow for access to the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness behind the dunes. However, we do have restrictions on pets, kites, and beach driving at some areas during the plovers' breeding season.

We appreciate your understanding and respect as we try to help these shorebirds find their way off the [threatened and endangered species](#) list. The measures that are taken to help protect plovers also help protect the beach grass and other vegetation that stabilizes the primary dunes.

Migratory Birds

Piping plovers aren't the only birds to migrate along the south shore of Long Island. Numerous other avian species travel south in the fall to their wintering habitats. They return in the spring on their way back north.

The fall migration of hawks has been documented for the past 25 years by the [Fire Island Raptor Enumerators](#) (FIRE). This organization of volunteers makes observations from a deck at the easternmost end of Robert Moses State Park. From September 10 through November 10, they record the number of

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[General Management Planning](#)

[FINS Science Conference May 9-10, 2007](#)

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hawks, falcons, eagles and other birds of prey as they follow the migratory song birds heading south.

This summer, Fire Island National Seashore is participating in the Park Flight program, by hosting an international volunteer (VIP) who will be assisting in the park's T & E Species monitoring program and will present programs on migratory birds. Since 2003, Mauricio Hoyos Gracia has been involved in the *Monitoring Overwintering Survival* program in Costa Rica and Panama, and in Connecticut. He will give a brief overview of his work during the park's 6th [Biennial Science Conference](#) on May 9-10, 2007.

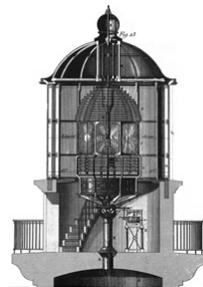
May 12 is [International Migratory Bird Day](#). Fire Island National Seashore is marking the event with a guided bird walk at the [William Floyd Estate](#). The program, "[Bird Watching in the Fields and Woods of the William Floyd Estate](#)," is conducted by a well-respected naturalist, MaryLaura Lamont, who will provide identification of birds migrating through the grounds of the Estate, which is a unit of Fire Island National Seashore on the mainland of Long Island.

[Visit FINS Nature & Science web pages](#)

- [Fire Island Cultural Resources](#)

Return of the Fresnel Lens

Fire Island National Seashore's public meeting to discuss plans for displaying the Fire Island Lighthouse's historic Fresnel lens has been rescheduled for Saturday, April 21, 2007, from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the [Fire Island Lighthouse](#).



This meeting will follow the Fire Island Lighthouse Trek which had already been scheduled for the 21st. Parking is available at Robert Moses State Park Field 5 (fee charged), with a ¾ mile walk to the Keepers Quarters at the base of the historic lighthouse. The meeting was postponed from Sunday, April 15 due to the weather. A 30-day period of public review period is still open through April 30, 2007.

The historic lens is now crated and in storage. The first order Fresnel lens had been removed from the Fire Island Lighthouse in 1933, then displayed at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia from 1939 - 2000. The public meeting has been scheduled to provide an opportunity to discuss any issues associated with the Environmental Assessment/Assessment of Effect (EA/AoE) that coincides with Fire Island National Seashore's plans to return this original first order Fresnel lens to the Fire Island Light Station. The project entails the construction of exhibit space to protect, display and interpret an original artifact associated with the Fire Island Lighthouse.

The document is available on Fire Island National

FINS Planning Team
fire_island_gmp@nps.gov
Fire Island National Seashore
<http://www.nps.gov/fiis/>

Seashore's website at:
www.nps.gov/fiis/parkmgmt/upload/EA_FresnelLensBuilding_3-2007.pdf (866 KB file)

Historic images of this Fresnel lens are used in the exhibits at the Fire Island Lighthouse. The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society also sells an educational DVD to help you learn more about lighthouse illumination. A link to the park's movie on the Fire Island Lighthouse is available at:
www.nps.gov/fiis/photosmultimedia/multimedia.htm.

The [Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society](#) will be the park's fundraising partner to implement this project.

By April 30, 2007, comments on the project should be addressed to Superintendent Reynolds at Fire Island National Seashore Headquarters, 120 Laurel Street, Patchogue, NY 11772. You may also post comments electronically at parkplanning.nps.gov. Search through [Plans/Documents Open for Comment for Fire Island National Seashore](#) projects.

[Learn More About Fire Island National Seashore Cultural Resources](#)