

# Fire Island National Seashore

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



*Electronic Newsletter*

## What's Happening in the Park

## Fall 2007

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Superintendent  
Mike Reynolds

Coming Soon:

Fire Island National Seashore's  
**GMP Foundation Workshops:**

- **Interpretive Themes**
- **Transportation and Visitor Experience**
- **Infrastructure and Sustainability**
- **William Floyd Estate**
- **Resource Management**

### Message from the Superintendent:

Since the Fire Island National Seashore general management planning team held a stakeholders meeting in late June, a couple of reports have gone public. The draft [Summary Report from the Stakeholders' Foundation Workshop: June 25-26, 2007](#) was released during September, 2007. This report captures the input provided by a small, but broad, focus group of participants representing Fire Island communities, environmental organizations, government officials, and other special interest groups. Participants shared their perspectives of the park's values and significance, shared roles and responsibilities, and reviewed draft statements of a Park Purpose and Significance Statement created this past winter by NPS staff. Park interpretive themes and "Visions for the Future" were shared toward the end of the workshop.

Another report just unveiled is the proceedings from a civic engagement workshop conducted in July 2006 with Fire Island community representatives. The [Lauren Kristy Excursion: Fire Island Communities Civic Engagement Roundtable](#) summarizes the issues discussed to foster a positive park-community relationship. Both documents are available on-line at the park's web site ([www.nps.gov/fiis/parkmgmt/gmp-foundation-documents.htm](http://www.nps.gov/fiis/parkmgmt/gmp-foundation-documents.htm)) and at the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment site ([PEPC](http://parkplanning.nps.gov)) at [parkplanning.nps.gov](http://parkplanning.nps.gov). The park's first GMP newsletter, which will include a summary of the scoping comments that the GMP planning team gathered during the scoping phase of the process, should be available on the PEPC site by the end of December. The newsletter will also invite public comment on the draft park purpose, park significance, fundamental resources and values, and related resources. A series of small topic-specific workshops will be conducted this winter

- **Land Use and Development**
- **Preliminary GMP Alternatives Unveiled**

Fire Island National Seashore provides additional opportunities to enjoy and learn more through its recreational and educational programs this fall.

#### **Fire Island Lighthouse**

Saturday, November 24, 4 p.m.  
[Evening Tower Tour](#): by reservation

Saturday, December 8, 11:30 a.m.  
[5th Annual Reenactment of Flying Santa](#)

#### **Special Programs at William Floyd Estate**

Sunday, November 18, 9 a.m.  
["Autumn Bird Walk"](#)

#### **Wilderness Visitor Center**

Wednesday, November 14 & 21, 7:30 p.m.  
["Star Watch"](#)

Weekends through December 29, 10 a.m.  
[Mid-Morning Stroll](#)

[Fire Island National Seashore Videos](#) are available on-line:

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

to help explore some key planning questions in greater depth.

In the meantime, our park staff and partners have been celebrating the end of the summer and planning for next year. Annual fiscal year reports for 2007 have been completed. FINS's Government Performance and Review Act (GPRA) results have been entered, and the park met or exceeded most of its goals for the year. Although fewer park interpretive programs were offered this year, the number of participants increased in 2007. The William Floyd Estate expanded its repertoire of ranger-guided programs this past spring, summer and fall, with very positive results.

The Friends of Fire Island National Seashore ([FFINS](#)) funded the park's horse patrol program in 2007, and expects to support this program again in 2008. The Friends of Watch Hill ([FOWH](#)) celebrated the end of a spectacular season with a special program at the Watch Hill Marina over the Columbus Day weekend.

Almost 100 volunteers celebrated at the Fire Island Lighthouse this past September. Volunteer coordinator Irene Rosen distributed annual awards to the VIPs (Volunteers in Parks).

To celebrate National Public Lands Day (September 29, 2007) a number of civic groups participated in beach clean-ups which benefited Fire Island National Seashore. The Bellport Rotary conducted its clean-up from the Wilderness VC to Bellport Beach. Several scout groups and Patchogue Rotary Interact have waited for cooler weather to complete their projects.

The summer's [threatened and endangered \(T & E\) species](#) program ended on a low note: piping plover chick productivity was lower than normal in 2007. The fall immunocontraceptive [deer-darting](#) program, however, progressed well at the Fire Island Lighthouse and from Kismet to Robbins Rest and Fire Island Pines. A winter darting program is planned for the easternmost western Fire Island communities (Cornielle Estates through Point O'Woods), as the park continues its research to determine the efficacy of administering a birth control vaccine as part of a potential deer management plan.

Good news: We have learned that funding has been approved for the design of a new [Patchogue Ferry Terminal](#). An *Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands* grant from the U. S. Department of Transportation was

## Threatened & Endangered Species



### **Piping Plover Update: Low Productivity for 2007**



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**30 Day Review of EA for Sailors Haven Dredging Closes on December 10**



awarded in FY2007. This matches a previous state grant earmarked for the terminal. This facility has been envisioned since the park was established. We look forward to getting started on the new plan.

Funding was also secured in FY2007 for the painting of the Fire Island Lighthouse, and a number of other improvements. FY2008 funding will cover the dredging of the channel into Sailors Haven Marina. Some of these new projects are expected to begin soon.

We appreciate your support and contributions as you help us shape the future of Fire Island National Seashore. Thank You!

*Mike Reynolds*

- **Sportsman's ORV Driving for Fishing and Hunting on Fire Island**

Title 36 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* addresses wildlife protection, hunting and fishing in



National Park Service units in its [Chapter 1, Part 2, Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4](#)

Fire Island National Seashore's 1964 [enabling legislation](#) states "The Secretary [of the Interior] shall permit hunting, fishing, and shellfishing on lands and waters under his administrative jurisdiction within the Fire Island National Seashore in accordance with the laws of New York and the United States of America, except that the Secretary may designate zones where, and establish periods when, no hunting shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment." *Public Law 88-587, Section 5*

By the time the park's 1977 General Management Plan was completed, the Seashore had a cooperative hunting agreement between the Park Service and New York State for hunting migratory waterfowl.

### **Hunting**

The South Shore of Long Island has a rich heritage of waterfowl hunting on the Great South Bay. Old-timers tell of fall and winter

skies blackened by flocks of migratory ducks. Seasonal hunting camps and shacks sprouted up on Fire Island every year. The descendants of William Floyd maintained their property as a hunting preserve long after the family stopped using the estate in Mastic as a full-time residence. By permit in designated areas, waterfowl hunters may still continue this activity via boat or on foot.

According to current NPS Management Policies 2006, "the park in which hunting and trapping occur must also publish special regulations to govern the activity. Those regulations may be more restrictive than applicable state laws when necessary to prevent unacceptable impacts. Before the Service issues regulations or other restrictions, representatives of appropriate tribes and state and federal agencies will be consulted to ensure that all available scientific data are considered in the decision-making process. Any such regulations or other restrictions will be developed with public involvement."

Hunting within Fire Island National Seashore is an issue that may be addressed in the park's new GMP. Currently, any deer hunts--even on private lands within the boundaries of the park--would require an extensive environmental assessment leading to a deer management plan. Special regulations would then need to be promulgated. The exception to this requirement would only be for a *bona fide* research application or project.

### Fishing

Migratory fish like the striped bass provide an opportunity for recreational anglers to enjoy the natural resources found within park boundaries. The NPS manages fishing activities to achieve park management objectives. Before the Service issues regulations or other restrictions, representatives of appropriate tribes and state and federal agencies will be consulted to ensure that all available scientific data are considered in the decision-making process. Any such regulations or other restrictions will be developed with public involvement and in consultation with fish and wildlife management agencies as appropriate, consistent with departmental policy at 43 CFR Part 24, and as described in section 4.4.3

Commercial fishing can be allowed in National Park Service areas when specifically authorized by a special rule. Fire Island National Seashore does not have any provision for commercial fishing.

Saltwater fishing on Fire Island does not require a license, but New York State limits and seasons apply to all anglers. To provide access for anglers, a seasonal sportsman's ORV driving permit may be purchased at the Wilderness Visitor Center.

### [Driving on Fire Island](#)

While there are no paved roads down the length of Fire Island, if you've been to the island in the off- season, you're probably aware that there is hardly "no driving" within the national seashore. Driving regulations help ensure a balance between use and preservation for resident and commercial vehicle permit holders.

The 1977 GMP identified the use of four - wheel-drive vehicles as an increasing concern to visitors, some property owners, local government officials and NPS managers. The number of permits authorized in 1976 was 412. Measures to further reduce the amount of driving on Fire Island have been implemented in the ensuing years. Current driving regulations for FINS allow for at least 355 permits, spread among an appropriate mix of types.

The Negotiated Rulemaking or reg-neg process was utilized in 2002-2004 to help reach consensus on a number of issues associated with the promulgation of new driving regulations for the Seashore. While consensus was reached on a number of items, the balance of the regulatory language has been worked and reworked both in the park and at the Washington Office level. An economic analysis and environmental assessment are currently being completed, and should be available for public review this coming year.

Recreational driving was specifically omitted from the new regulations, with the intention of addressing this issue later in the park's new GMP.

### [Learn More About NPS Special Park Uses](#)

- **Potential for a Research Natural Area?**

More than 75% of Fire Island National Seashore is marine or estuarine.



A Research Natural Area, or RNA, adds a new layer of protection for the marine resources of a National Park Service unit. The RNA could be a no-take ecological preserve that provides a sanctuary for species affected by fishing and loss of habitat. A RNA also provides opportunities for boaters, divers, snorkelers, and researchers to explore and study the significant marine environment protected within the park.

Within the past half century, there has been a dramatic decline in the commercial harvest of shellfish species from the Great South Bay. Since 1976, the harvest of hard clams has declined 100 fold. One of the recent science synthesis papers created in preparation of the park's new GMP --[\*Conservation and Management of Living Marine Resources\*](#)-- submitted the following suggestion: "It is recommended that the Seashore take a leadership role in reaching out cooperatively to government and non-government agencies toward increasing restoration of Great South Bay living marine resources and increasing public awareness of coastal zone management issues."

The NPS intends to pursue science and public review to begin to look at options for further protecting and managing its marine resources for current and future generations.

Stay Tuned!

[\*\*Learn More About Research Natural Areas\*\*](#)