

Fire Island National Seashore

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Electronic Newsletter

What's Happening in the Park

May/June 2007

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Superintendent
Mike Reynolds

The next major step in the development of the park's new GMP is a review and revision of Fire Island National Seashore's themes.

Current Primary Interpretive Themes

Message from the Superintendent:

Fire Island National Seashore's general management planning process is picking up a little momentum this summer as we enter the phase of re-examining **park purpose and significance**, identify the park's **fundamental resources and values**, then re-evaluate the park's **primary interpretive themes**. After a similar exercise with National Park Service staff, a small focus group of stakeholders has been invited to participate in another foundation workshop in June. To arrive at a manageable group size, the list was whittled down to the minimum number of participants who could represent the broad range of constituents and interests in the park. For a complex, diverse entity like Fire Island, that was no small task. If you were not able to be a part of either of these workshops, please be assured that you will have an opportunity to voice your concerns and opinions as the products from the workshops are created.

The end product of each of these workshops is the articulation of 1) the park's purpose relative to the intent of Congress, 2) the park's national significance within the context of the National Park System, and 3) the stories that are central to conveying the park's significance. Taken together, these statements form the park's **Foundation for Planning** and will influence the definition of park priorities and management direction.

The next step will involve **opportunities for public input** as we conduct topical planning workshops and begin to develop park goals in the fall and winter of 2007.

Concurrent with the GMP process for Fire Island National Seashore is the National Park Service's **Centennial Initiative: 1916 - 2016**. Unveiled on August 25, 2006--the NPS's 90th anniversary--the president has challenged the NPS to prepare, guard and conserve the parks and make them relevant to the American people in honor of the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.

Just released is the response, *The Future of America's National Parks: A Report to the President of the United States by the Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne*, May

Change & Continuity

- The constantly changing nature of barrier islands is a dramatic example of how dynamic natural processes create diversity and stability.
- The perpetual motion of Fire Island dramatically illustrates that constant change can contribute to stability and equilibrium.

Natural Systems

- Held special by the community before its legislated preservation, the ancient Sunken Forest has remained intact as a remarkable natural feature, little affected by human presence.
- Fire Island, Great South, Bellport and Moriches bays, and the Atlantic Ocean together form a link in the chain of barriers that protect the mainland from nature's moods

Human-Island Interaction

- Fire Island National Seashore is an ongoing exploration of how people can live and recreate responsibly in a complex and dynamic barrier island environment.
- Fire Island National Seashore provides a window into an isolated maritime environment characterized by distinctive island communities dominated by the dangers and opportunities wrought by the sea.

Wilderness Close to Millions

- The Fire Island Wilderness survives our competing interests to maintain the ideal of wilderness and to develop every available piece of land.

2007. The Centennial Initiative is intended to "prepare parks for the Service's next century, when new trends will reshape our society and make unprecedented demands of preservation, education, and recreation."

You can learn more about this ambitious and inspirational program at www.nps.gov/2016/.

We had a good turn-out for the park's biennial **Science Conference**, which was co-sponsored by Stony Brook University on May 9 & 10, 2007. Proceedings will be created and posted on the park's web site later this summer. This was a good opportunity for the general public and for stakeholders to meet the scientists and researchers, and the park's resource management staff.

Also, please be aware that we at Fire Island National Seashore have developed several new programs, both on the island and at the William Floyd Estate, so I invite you to take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about the park from all our staff, volunteers, students, and of course each other, our visitors.

We appreciate your support and input as you become more engaged in keeping Fire Island National Seashore relevant in the 21st century. Thank You!

Mike Reynolds

• Fire Island Facilities



After recovering from relatively minor storm damages in mid-April's Nor'Easter, Fire Island National Seashore's facilities have opened for the summer season.

William Floyd Estate staff set up a new sales area inside the "Old Manor House." This is an embellishment you can visit at the end of your tour.

The park maintenance crew has done a significant amount of work on several historic outbuildings at the Floyd Estate,

- The Fire Island Wilderness is a place where visible effects of people are minimal, and visitors can experience the natural environment without cushioning.
- The Fire Island Wilderness, Watch Hill and the Sunken Forest provide opportunities to millions of urban and suburban visitors for exploration, discovery, recreation, and solitude.

Communication, Navigation, and Lifesaving

- The Fire Island Light Station protected ships and sailors in a major maritime approach to New York Harbor in the 19th century, and was the site of rapidly evolving technology in communications and navigation in the 20th century.

Loyalty vs. Liberty

- William Floyd's bravery in signing the Declaration of Independence exemplifies the tension between feelings of loyalty and desire for liberty that characterized the struggle of the American Revolution.

Floyd Family Continuum

- The diverse cultural resources of the William Floyd Estate provide a dynamic moving picture of over 250 years of one influential American family's life. The house, outbuildings, and grounds tell the story of two distinct lifestyles for the Floyds and their servants/slaves.

Make Every Trip to Fire Island a Safe One

with an emphasis on roofing and exterior work at this time. Some of the outbuildings will be included in the new interpretive programs at the Estate.

Wilderness Visitor Center was kept open all winter to be used for a number of programs. During the summer season, when the center is open, you can talk with the ranger on staff. You can then walk approximately one mile down the beach to see an example of barrier island overwash, which is prime habitat for piping plovers.

The greatest number of plovers normally nest on the beach adjacent to the wilderness area.

Old Inlet lost the sand underneath its boardwalk during the April 15 storm. Park maintenance staff dismantled the stairs and removed it before the lumber could be further damaged. Also, visitors will find that the dock was improved this spring.

If you're walking westward along the beach from the visitor center to Old Inlet, you will encounter the vault toilet just off the beach at the Old Inlet boardwalk.

Watch Hill, Fire Island National Seashore's largest recreational development opened this year on May 12, 2007.

The highlight of this site is the reopening of the Watch Hill restaurant, the *Pier at Watch Hill*. You may notice that a lot of additional work has been accomplished at this facility. On most buildings near the marina, the peeling paint has been removed to better match the renovated restaurant. Portions of the marina have been improved with expanded deck space. The boardwalk to the beach is being resurfaced with recycled plastic lumber. The re-routed Watch Hill Nature Trail survived the winter without its annual buckling.

Piping plovers at Watch Hill have expanded their nesting sites, which is good. But not necessarily if you have your dog at the beach. Pets are never allowed on lifeguarded beaches, but now the closed area extends to the site's easternmost boardwalk behind the guarded beach. Pet owners will need to use the western boardwalk at this site.

Sailors Haven Visitor Center has been spruced up over the winter, with new tile flooring in the visitor center, a new roof and siding, and a stabilized front porch. The rockers are on their way!

Barrett Beach/Talisman is getting ready for its special weekend programs on July 21-22 and August 18 and 19, 2007. Mark your calendars to take the ferry from Patchogue either of those weekends. Talisman has several new picnic tables and more recycled plastic lumber boardwalks have been installed.

Fire Island Lighthouse is sporting new windows in the connector between the keepers quarters and the tower.

A variety of national safety initiatives in May and June can apply to your experience at Fire Island National Seashore. Learn more.

[National Safe Boating Week](#)

May 19 - 25, 2007

[National Hurricane Awareness Week](#)

May 20-26, 2007

[National Rip Current Awareness Week](#)

June 3-9, 2007

[Always Use Caution In and Around the Water](#)

Learn More

[General Management Planning](#)

[Volunteer!](#)

[Check Latest Press Releases](#)

The **West Entrance** facility is still under construction.

Document Your Visit to Fire Island's Visitor Centers

The *National Park Passport Book*, developed by Eastern National, is a great, inexpensive way to record your visit to national parks around the country. A non-affiliated special interest group, the [National Park Travel Club](#), has evolved around the hobby of collecting these stamps.

Each Fire Island National Seashore visitor center has a unique stamp. You're encouraged (challenged!) to visit each site and collect all 6: Headquarters in [Patchogue](#), [William Floyd Estate](#), [Wilderness Visitor Center](#), [Watch Hill VC](#), [Sailors Haven VC](#), and [Fire Island Lighthouse](#).

[Get Out and Visit Your National Seashore](#)

• **Fire Island Interpretive Programs**



William Floyd Estate's new [programs](#) started on June 1. The estate is enjoying record visitation since its opening on May 26. You may want to make your reservations for special tours soon, since spaces are limited.

The [Fire Island Trek](#) is already filled for this June's excursion.

A [horseshoe crab](#) program is being conducted at both the Fire Island Lighthouse (June 30) and at the Wilderness Visitor Center (June 29) to watch these creatures come ashore to lay their eggs.

New [Junior Ranger Programs](#) are being offered at each island visitor center this summer. They will all be held on Fridays at 2:00 p.m., starting July 6.

The Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society is conducting its six-week **Junior Lighthouse Keeper**



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To help newcomers prepare for a visit, Fire Island National Seashore Videos are available on-line:

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

[Enjoy a Park Program This Summer](#)