



### Scoping for GMP Issues

October/November 2006

#### in this issue

- [Fire Island: Mosquitoes](#)
- [Fire Island Facilities and Operations](#)

#### Scoping to date - What We've Heard



Fire Island National Seashore hosted a series of public scoping meetings during July, August, and September this year. The purpose of the meetings was two-fold. First, we wanted to get the word out that we are developing a new general management plan for the park (the last one was completed in 1977). Second, we wanted to encourage members of the public to share their thoughts and concerns about present and future conditions and activities at Fire Island National Seashore.

During the summer months, public open houses were held on Fire Island at Ocean Beach, Davis Park, Sailors Haven, Watch Hill, Cherry Grove, Fire Island Pines, Saltaire and Lighthouse Beach. In September, three additional open houses were held on Long Island at Mastic Beach, Patchogue, and Stony Brook. Over 400 members of the public participated in these sessions including many representatives of local government, special interest groups, and other organizations.

The types of issues raised varied widely. We learned that in general, there was broad public support for the National Seashore in both its resource management efforts and public programs. Many meeting participants expressed an interest in seeing a greater NPS ranger presence and more visitor programs. We also learned that there was quite a bit of confusion on the part of the public about how the communities and the National Seashore relate to one another – particularly in the “who’s responsible for what” department. This was particularly true when discussing the good, the bad, and the ugly about boardwalks.

Concerns about coastal erosion, deer, mosquitoes, and invasive species dominated the comments relative to resource management. Vehicular access – both for and against – was the focus of numerous comments and represented many varying interests including contractors, year round and part-time residents, and recreational drivers. Access to beaches for disabled visitors was also highlighted as a concern. Another issue noted was the scale and quality of development within the communities.

Not surprisingly, at some locations certain topics took considerable precedent over others. For instance, at Sailors

#### Greetings!

Throughout the latter part of the summer and into the fall of 2006, Fire Island National Seashore held numerous scoping meetings to hear from the public about the park-related issues they consider to be most important. These are generally those issues that have the greatest impact on stakeholders—both visitors to our managed public use areas and to community residents and visitors.

It has been a rather concerted effort, and resoundingly successful. By providing numerous methods of submitting comments - including comment cards, rack cards, writing on butcher paper at the scoping sessions, sending in letters, and emailing issues via [the park's website](#) - we heard a vast array of opinions. The official close of public scoping will be January 12, 2007. But, rest assured that there will be many more opportunities for public input as this process moves forward.

This e-newsletter is intended to inform you of some of what we've heard so far (see article in left sidebar), and highlight two specific issues by addressing them in more detail (below).

The park will be holding one more public scoping meeting during this phase of the General Management Plan (GMP) process:

November 14, 2006 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

**All Souls Church (in Reidy Hall)**  
1157 Lexington Avenue (at 80th Street)  
New York, NY 10021  
[All Souls Church website](#)

#### • Fire Island: Mosquitoes

The Fire Island National Seashore (FIIS) mosquito surveillance and management program was implemented in 1998 in response to public concern over Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), and later West Nile Virus (WNV).



Recently, Suffolk County has been developing a new vector control plan for areas within its jurisdiction on Long Island and Fire Island. Because of the complicated jurisdictions on Fire Island, this plan must balance the needs of human health, community issues related to vector control, and National Park Service law and policy as it relates to natural processes and use of pesticides within a National Park Service (NPS) area.

The National Park Service must protect and preserve natural processes (which includes mosquitoes as a part of the natural food chain) and must prevent impacts to other resources (such as beneficial insects, like dragonflies, or fisheries and shellfish). Fire Island National Seashore is currently involved with Suffolk County in creating an updated plan that balances the needs of communities along with NPS policy concerns. This year the scoping process for the mosquito plan on Fire Island generated good attendance at public meetings and almost 200 written comments from the public on proposed concepts the County and the NPS are considering. The plan and an Environmental Assessment will now be written. This issue is being addressed and proceeding ahead of the General Management process due to the urgent needs of Suffolk County.

Once a decision on mosquito management is reached through a new County and NPS plan, it will be carried forward to the General Management Plan as a previously analyzed and approved management direction that will be incorporated into the new general plan for the Seashore. Mosquito Management is an example of one of a few issues that must be carried through ahead of the normal planning schedule, because they are currently underway while the longer-term GMP process continues. In the meantime, control measures by the County continue as they have in the past in communities and the NPS continues its sampling and monitoring programs. How do those programs work?

The FIIS mosquito program relies on two important documents: the Mosquito Surveillance and Management Protocol and the Mosquito Action Plan (MAP). These are updated annually in collaboration with county, state and federal organizations, including Suffolk County Vector Control (SCVC), Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDOH) and United States Geological Survey (USGS). These documents contain specific criteria for varying levels of alert and action, as well as the procedures for handling dead birds, the management of freshwater sources, and equipment

Haven and Watch Hill, the vast majority of comments focused on the operation and condition of the marinas and associated facilities (e.g. showers). At Lighthouse Beach, a substantial number of people turned out in support of continued clothing optional use of the beach in that area.

New York State Assemblywoman Ginny Fields reviews written material at Cherry Grove



Community members discuss issues in Fire Island Pines.



Park visitors write their issues and concerns on butcher paper at the Fire Island Lighthouse session.



::FINS Planning Team  
[fire\\_island\\_gmp@nps.gov](mailto:fire_island_gmp@nps.gov)  
::Fire Island National Seashore  
<http://www.nps.gov/fiis/>

requirements.

Mosquito sampling for the 2006 trapping season began on June 9 and collecting was carried out until September 25. A total of 17 traps were maintained throughout the park in six different study sites for the entire season. Two types of traps were used: a carbon dioxide-baited light trap and a water-baited gravid trap. Typically, the light traps yield a significantly greater amount of mosquitoes than the gravid traps. Although we had a very active mosquito season, average catch overall was fewer than 3,000 mosquitoes in light traps. The highest yield from a gravid trap this year was 598 mosquitoes on September 16 from a collection obtained from Watch Hill. Only a single WNV-positive mosquito pool was detected within the FIIS jurisdictional boundaries. No further mosquito-borne illnesses were detected within the park. This process helps the County and the NPS keep track of disease issues and balance the needs of vector control with preservation of park resources.

For more information about Fire Island National Seashore's Mosquito Monitoring program, visit the [park's web site](#).

[Fire Island National Seashore's mosquitoes information website](#)

## • Fire Island Facilities and Operations



Park facilities includes all of the physical infrastructure and operations that you see—such as boardwalks, restrooms, and visitor centers—plus all of the necessary support functions that are less

obvious—the barge that hauls materials and debris on and off the island, the plumber, boat mechanic and staff member who monitors water quality, or the contractor hired to dredge a navigation channel.

Facilities Management at Fire Island National Seashore continues to be a top priority for the park. Safety and visitor experience are the driving forces behind the goals and objectives of the maintenance division, while maintaining a balance between recreation and resource. Given the harsh marine environment, boats and vehicles will always require significant maintenance and upkeep, and storms and ice will continue to damage beach-front access stairs, docks and buildings. Along with the toll that the marine environment takes on park facilities, it will always be more expensive and logistically challenging to maintain facilities and operations on a barrier island.

Regardless, the park continues to upgrade trails and structures, by utilizing the latest technologies in sustainable products, including the use of recycled plastic lumber to resurface boardwalks. This specific technology has greatly reduced the number of splinters and tripping hazards incurred by park visitors. In an effort to reduce “eyesores” throughout the federal facilities, the park has removed the dilapidated and condemned Sailors Haven “motel.” The rehabilitation of the Sailors Haven marina has resulted in a more enjoyable and safer facility. Facility conditions continue to improve at our culturally significant areas as well, with work being done on both the Fire Island Lighthouse buildings and the William Floyd Estate.

Our recently released [Business Plan](#) evaluated the Seashore's finances for fiscal year 2004. It identified a \$1.5 million gap—a shortfall of 30%-- between actual and required funding for all of the Seashore's expenses. Operations and maintenance of park facilities accounts for 35% of the Seashore's annual budget. When adjusted for inflation, the Seashore's appropriations have remained essentially flat over the past 20 years, resulting in some difficult choices for park management, including staff and program reductions and deferred maintenance.

Through the GMP process, the Seashore will be exploring ways to deal with issues about current and future park facilities and operations.

In the meantime, the park continues its daily routines to the best of its abilities. As the temperatures decline and visitation drops off, the park's permanent staff will continue to work through the winter. Gradually upgrading facilities and planning programs and operations, we anticipate providing the best possible summer next year for the thousands who come to Fire Island National Seashore.

[Fire Island National Seashore Facilities](#)