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## Fire Island National Seashore News Release

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### President's National Park Service Budget Proposal for FY2008 Includes Increases for Fire Island National Seashore

*Patchogue, NY*— As a part of the National Park Service (NPS) Centennial Initiative, Fire Island National Seashore could see an increase in its base budget next year if President Bush's proposed budget for the NPS is enacted. According to Superintendent Michael Reynolds, "An additional \$461,000 per year is proposed for the Seashore, which will enable us to hire an additional 8 seasonal maintenance employees, 9 seasonal interpreters, and 6 summer lifeguards and law enforcement rangers." Fire Island National Seashore's FY2007 budget remains the same as it had been in FY2006 (\$3.953 million). "This summer we expect to offer slightly fewer programs," stated Reynolds, "but look forward to increasing our staffing and improving our facilities through the Centennial Initiative and this unprecedented proposal as the National Park Service approaches its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday."

The President's \$2.4 billion National Park Service budget for Fiscal Year 2008 calls for the largest increase in park operations funding ever proposed and leveraged public- private investments that could generate as much as \$3 billion to help the parks prepare for their 100th birthday in 2016. The proposed budget includes 3,000 new seasonal employees, continues increases for park maintenance and targets specific cultural and natural resource improvements.

"All of this is possible because the President recommends a \$230.0 million increase in park operations funding over his Fiscal Year 2007 budget request," said Mary Bomar, Director of the National Park Service. "That is the largest increase ever for park operations and programs that directly benefit national parks."

The FY2008 budget proposal is the first financial infusion for the President's Initiative to ready America's parks for the 2016 Centennial of the National Park Service.

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The “National Parks Centennial Initiative” is a potential \$3 billion investment in the coming 10 years. “This is money above and beyond our regular budget,” Bomar said. “It includes \$100 million of discretionary funds for parks each year and up to \$200 million a year within the Centennial Initiative, which would provide \$100.0 million a year to match donations for signature projects and programs.”

Bomar said the Centennial Initiative emphasizes three key goals:

- Engage all Americans in preserving our heritage, history and natural resources through philanthropy and partnerships.
- Reconnect people with their parks.
- Build capacity for critical park operations and facilities, and sustain them through the next century.

The FY2008 budget includes \$57.5 million to fully fund employee pay and benefits. “This is so important,” Bomar said. “Even as the National Park Service has received budget increases, we have frequently absorbed portions of employee pay raises. Over time, that eats away at park operations.”

All 390 national parks will benefit from the increased funding in this budget. For more information and the full press release from the National Park Service’s Washington Office ([www.nps.gov/news](http://www.nps.gov/news)), see the [press release](#) dated February 6, 2007.

For more information about Fire Island National Seashore, visit the park’s website at [www.nps.gov/fiis](http://www.nps.gov/fiis).

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