



National Park Service  
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## Fire Island National Seashore News Release

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### National Park Week/Junior Ranger Day Programs at Fire Island National Seashore: Variety of Activities Planned for April 19 - 27, 2008

*Patchogue, NY*— Fire Island National Seashore and its partners and volunteers are providing several opportunities to help you celebrate National Park Week this year. As part of an annual nationwide event, **National Park Week 2008** is being held from **April 19 to April 27**. The theme this year is *Kids in Parks*. Across the country, National Park Service (NPS) sites will celebrate the natural and cultural history preserved in these treasures by promoting active learning, recreation, inspiration, and stewardship. Long Island's local national parks offer a chance to explore and learn about the significance of national treasures close to home.

Fire Island National Seashore will launch National Park Week with a *March for Parks 2008* event at the Fire Island Lighthouse on **Saturday, April 19 at 8 a.m.** The annual **Fire Island Lighthouse Area Trek** is a special 2- hour guided tour of the grounds of the historic Fire Island Light Station and beyond, to the site of the Surf Hotel and the former Fire Island State Park. A \$10 program fee includes light refreshments and commemorative T- shirt. Reservations are required. Call the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society at **631- 661- 4876** to sign up.

National Park Week coincides with Earth Day (April 22). This year special **Earth Day Hikes** into the Fire Island Wilderness are scheduled to honor the event. Three- hour programs will leave the Wilderness Visitor Center on **Sunday, April 20** and **Tuesday, April 22 at 10 a.m.**

Fire Island National Seashore's **National Junior Ranger Day** activities on **Saturday, April 26**, include **Orienteering** at the **Fire Island Lighthouse** and at the **Wilderness Visitor Center**, both available from **9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.**, along with a new program at the Wilderness Visitor Center.

*Ocean Discovery* is offered from **1 – 2 p.m.** on **April 26** at the **Wilderness Visitor Center**. This program includes a craft activity for kids as they learn about waves, tides, marine life, and how people have had an influence on the marine ecosystem.

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**EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™**

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

*Finding Your Way around the Park* is an orienteering/mapping program developed for children and their families to learn more about Fire Island National Seashore. Site specific programs provide an enjoyable way to explore the grounds around the historic **Fire Island Lighthouse** or the **Wilderness Visitor Center**, gateway to New York State's only federally designated wilderness area, the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness. Kits include a guide booklet, clipboard, compass, work booklet, and a park map. Children must sign out a kit with their parents. Participants in this program on **Saturday, April 26, 2008**, will receive a **Junior Ranger** patch. The activity may also help local girl scouts and boy scouts earn their orienteering badges. Call **Irene Rosen** at **631- 687- 4765** for more information.

To learn more about National Park Week 2008 and March for Parks and National Junior Ranger Day, visit the National Park Week website at [www.nps.gov/npweek/](http://www.nps.gov/npweek/). For more information about the Junior Ranger Program and Webrangers, visit websites at [www.nps.gov/webrangers/](http://www.nps.gov/webrangers/) and <http://www.nps.gov/learn/juniorranger.htm>.

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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### **March For Parks 2008: Fire Island Lighthouse Trek**

**Saturday, April 19, 2008**

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. (2- hour, 4- mile round- trip hike)

\$10 fee; Reservations required: **631- 661- 4876**

Meet at Field 5 in Robert Moses State Park. (*\$6 fee for parking after 8:00 a.m.*)

Dress for the weather! Free T- shirt and light refreshments

**Discover** a history of maritime navigation and communication as you hike past the foundation of the first Fire Island Lighthouse, built in 1826 at the westernmost end of Fire Island. **Explore** a heritage of tourism as you continue your hike to the site of the historic Surf Hotel. David Sammis' Surf Hotel was built on Fire Island in 1856 and enlarged in 1857 to accommodate 100 guests, then expanded again in 1870 to accommodate 400 guests at a time. Purchased by the state of New York in 1892 to be used to quarantine immigrants during a cholera epidemic in Europe, the property became New York's first state park—Fire Island State Park—in 1908. Western Union Telegraph Company built a tower and telegraph station on the Sammis property in 1868, abandoned by 1920 as technology evolved, and destroyed along with all Fire Island State Park facilities in the 1938 hurricane. **Learn** more about the history of communications on Fire Island, as you hike past the site of an experimental U. S. Navy Radio Compass Station, built in 1906 and expanded in 1934- 36. You can appreciate the value of quality construction as you discover the buildings that survived the infamous Great Hurricane of 1938, the *Long Island Express*. The current Fire Island Lighthouse and its keeper's quarters were completed in 1858, and still stand strong today. Constructed twice as high as the first lighthouse and lighted by a state- of- the- art first order Fresnel lens, this light could be seen by ships at sea for more than 20 miles. Removed in 1933, the first order Fresnel lens was replaced by a steady progression of lighting apparatus until the Fire Island Light was decommissioned by the U. S. Coast Guard in 1973, and transferred to the National Park Service. **Protected** from deterioration by the efforts of the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, which was formed in 1981 to restore and relight the Fire Island Lighthouse through the use of donated funding and philanthropy, you can witness on- going **stewardship** of our nation's cultural and natural resources. The Fire Island Light Station was relit in 1986 as an active aid to navigation, and restored in 1987 with facilities and a visitor center open to the public. In 1996, the National Park Service entered into a 10- year agreement with the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society—renewed in 2006—to operate the lighthouse and visitor center for Fire Island National Seashore. New exhibits were installed in 2003, and the Society assumed responsibility for maintaining the Fire Island Light as a private aid to navigation in 2006. Current efforts are afoot for the construction of a new building to house the historic first order Fresnel lens near its original home 150 years ago. You can help perpetuate the philosophy of partnership and philanthropy as you participate in the Fire Island Lighthouse Trek on April 19.

## Fire Island National Seashore Junior Ranger Programs

Fire Island National Seashore also has a Junior Ranger workbook that kids ages 7 – 12 may complete at any time. Complete the activities in the booklet to earn a Fire Island National Seashore Junior Ranger patch or badge.

During the summer, Fire Island National Seashore will host a *Junior Ranger: Path to Discovery* program at each of its visitor centers on Fridays at 2:00 p.m. For more information, registration or questions about Fire Island National Seashore's programs, call the Interpretation staff at 631-687-4765, or visit the park's web page, [Be a Junior Ranger](#).

The Fire Island Lighthouse conducts a 6- week summer *Junior Lighthouse Keeper* program on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, in July and August. A \$75 fee covers all six programs. For more information or registration for this program, call the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society at 631-661-4876.

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