



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fire Island National Seashore 120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, NY 11772

631 289-4810 phone
631 289-4898 fax

Fire Island National Seashore News Release

Release date: Immediate

Contact(s): Paula Valentine, Public Affairs

Phone number: 631- 687- 4759

Date: October 15, 2008

Release code: 08- 16

150th Anniversary Celebration for Fire Island Lighthouse on November 1, 2008; *Junior Ranger Activities on November 2*

Patchogue, New York— The Fire Island Lighthouse has long been a significant cultural feature along the south shore of Long Island. For many European immigrants, the Fire Island Light provided their first sight of land after a transatlantic voyage to New York Harbor. The current Fire Island Lighthouse was constructed in 1858. With a 168-foot tower, it's the tallest lighthouse in New York. It was built to replace a smaller light tower completed in 1826 on the western end of the Fire Island. The current light, at 180 feet above sea level, can be seen from more than twenty miles at sea, providing a warning of dangerous shoals and helping prevent shipwrecks off Fire Island. Since the official lighting of its powerful first order Fresnel lens on November 1, 1858, this Fire Island Light has been a valuable aid to navigation for local boaters and baymen, and a source of fascination and inspiration for many more people. Today, more than 100,000 visitors come to the Fire Island Lighthouse every year. To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the lighting of this beacon, the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society and Fire Island National Seashore are hosting a grand celebration on **Saturday, November 1, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**, and an afternoon of special Junior Ranger activities on **Sunday, November 2, from noon to 4 p.m.** at the **Fire Island Lighthouse**.

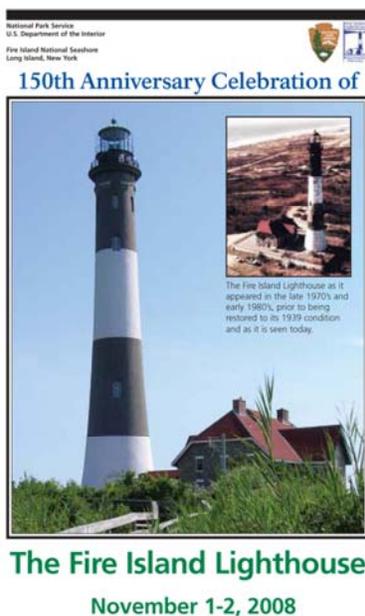
On Saturday, November 1, maritime- related exhibits, special programs and demonstrations, tours, music, children's crafts, and a special birthday cake are some of the highlights of the day. Parking is available at Robert Moses State Park Field 5 (*a small fee is charged for parking*). A free shuttle is available from the parking lot to the Fire Island Lighthouse on Saturday from 10 - 5, or you may take the ¾-mile boardwalk trail to the lighthouse. Arrive early and catch the 9 a.m. ranger- guided bird walk, or tour the exhibitor tent and Keepers Quarters museum, which open at 9:30 a.m. Tower tours and other programs begin at 10 a.m. and run throughout the day. The special recognition ceremony will be held at 1 p.m., followed by the cutting of the birthday cake.

On Sunday, November 2, the celebration continues. The focus of Fire Island Lighthouse programs on Sunday is on the future stewards of our resources. Activities will be offered especially for children from noon to 4 p.m. Kids can participate in ranger- conducted programs or complete workbooks to earn their own Fire Island National Seashore Junior Ranger patch or badge.

(more)

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

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



Saturday, November 1, 2008

- 9:00 • Ranger-led Bird Migration Walk — Meet @ RMSP Field #5
- 9:30 - 5:00 • Guest Exhibitors — Tent
• Keepers Quarters/ Visitor Center — Open
- 10:00 - 4:00 • Maritime Crafts — Terrace
• Decoy Carving Demonstration — Tent
• Boat house; history of the USLSS — Open
- 10:00 - 4:30 • Tower Tours: Reduced Fee — Tower Entrance, Keepers Quarters
- 10:30 - 11:30 • "ShipMates" perform Sea Chanties — SE corner, Keepers Quarters
- 11:30 - 2:00 • West Islip Strings perform — Tent on Terrace
- 11:30 - 3:00 • Book signing by Vivian Farrell, author of "Roberts Tall Friend" — NE corner, Keepers Quarters
• Food Service — Tent
- 12:00 - 12:30 • United States Coast Guard Boat/ Helicopter Rescue Demonstration — Great South Bay
- 1:00 - 1:30 • 150th Celebration: Special Ceremony — NE corner Terrace
- Honoree Color Guard: Boy Scout Troop #46, Massapequa, NY
- Guest Speakers and Presentation
- Cutting the Birthday Cake
- 2:00 - 2:30 • Living History Program: Fire Island's Time Line — Front Entrance to Keepers Quarters, Terrace
- 2:30 - 3:00 • Meet Marilyn and Gottfried Mahler: Lighthouse Keepers Family: 1950's — SE corner, Keepers Quarters
- 4:00 - 4:30 • "Fire Island in Winter" program — SE corner, Keepers Quarters

Sunday, November 2, 2008

Celebration For The Future Fire Island Presents Junior Rangers: Path To Discovery Day

- 9:30 - 5:00 • Keepers Quarters/ Visitor Center — Open
- 10:00 - 4:30 • Tower Tours: Reduce Fee — Tower Entrance, Keepers Quarters
- 11:30 - 3:00 • Boat house; history of the USLSS — Open
- 12:00 - 4:00 • Seaside Crafts: windsocks, mobiles, shark strings, animal creations, and more... — Tent
- 12:00 - 1:00 • Ranger-led program: Junior Ranger "Discovering the Ocean" — Meet under Tent
- 1:00 - 2:00 • Ranger-led program: Junior Ranger "Animal Tracking" — Meet under Tent
- 2:00 - 3:00 • Ranger-led program: Junior Ranger "Orienteering and Map Discovery" — Meet under Tent

NOTE: Children who participate in any two of the ranger-led programs will earn their own Fire Island National Seashore Junior Ranger Patch.



Fire Island National Seashore Junior Ranger Booklets (ages 8-12 or advanced 13+) will be available. Children who successfully complete a Junior Ranger Activity Booklet will receive the award for that booklet.



For more information, contact the Fire Island National Seashore Office of Interpretation at 631-687-4765 or call the Fire Island Lighthouse at 631-661-4876, or visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/fiis.

Plan Your Day

On Saturday, November 1, arrive early to catch a Fire Island naturalist- guided bird migration walk at 9 a.m. Meet Park Ranger MaryLaura Lamont at the east end of Robert Moses State Park Field 5 parking lot, and stroll along the beaches, boardwalk and trails to the Fire Island Lighthouse. This program includes a stop at the hawk watch platform staffed by the [Fire Island Raptor Enumerators](#).

Birds, butterflies and dragonflies are not the only things that migrate on Fire Island. When the first Fire Island Lighthouse was constructed in 1826, it was built on the western end of Fire Island beside the inlet. Since that time, the barrier island migrated westward for more than five miles until the Fire Island Inlet was stabilized in the 1940s.

While at the Field 5 parking lot, look for the [Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club](#). Members will be transmitting to other radio operators around the world, carrying on another historic use of the Fire Island Light Station.

In 1878, the Western Union Telegraph Company installed a wired apparatus in the lighthouse. In 1906, the U. S. Navy established an experimental radio compass station on a portion of the light station tract, using new wireless technology.

From the parking lot at Field 5, it's a ¾- mile stroll down the boardwalk to the lighthouse. The Fire Island Lighthouse museum and the exhibit tent will open at 9:30 a.m. The free shuttle bus service starts at 10 a.m., when the special programs and demonstrations, tours, music, and children's activities begin.

While you tour the historic grounds of the Fire Island Light Station, you can catch a morning performance of sea chanties by a new local group, the [Shipmates](#), at 10:30 a.m. inside the lighthouse, or be serenaded by the [West Islip String Ensemble](#) while sitting on the lighthouse terrace. Both groups are donating their time and talents in support of the Fire Island Lighthouse celebration.

(more)

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

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

Under the exhibitors' tent, make your rounds to learn more about local maritime history, and the partnerships that are helping preserve and promote your enjoyment of maritime resources on Long Island's South Shore.

The [Long Island Maritime Museum](#) plans to have a table-top display there, along with the [Long Island Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society](#), [Long Island Traditions](#), and more. Traditional maritime crafts, such as decoy carving by local artisan Jamie Reason, will be demonstrated. Other organizations involved in the history of lifesaving include the [United States Coast Guard Auxiliary](#), with their boating safety exhibit and Fire Island National Seashore's new *Bernie the Boater* Junior Ranger booklet. Another significance of the Fire Island Light Station has been communications, and the [Long Island Wireless Historical Society](#) is expected to be under the tent. Also on hand are organizations that help promote this and other special sites along the Great South Bay. The [Fire Island Lighthouse](#) and [Robert Moses State Park](#) are both recognized South Shore Estuary Reserve [Bayway Destinations](#). A new tourism group called [Explore the South Shore](#) will be available with additional information.

Stop by the rescue boat or walk to the Great South Bay at noon to see the [United States Coast Guard](#) in action. They will be demonstrating a simulated helicopter/water rescue, weather and resources permitting.

Plan to spend some time at the children's craft tables, where kids can create their own aquarium in a plate, a lighthouse, keepers' hat, message in a bottle, sand art, and more.

Tower tours, which allow you to climb 192 steps to the gallery at the top of the lighthouse, are reduced to \$2/person during this event. The bookstore at the base of the lighthouse in the Keepers Quarters Museum is stocked with an abundance of items to help you remember your visit. For that special souvenir, pick up a copy of Vivian Farrell's [Robert's Tall Friend](#) (the official book of Suffolk County, Long Island, New York, and the official children's book of the Town of Babylon) or Robert Müller's [Long Island Lighthouses](#).

Authors of these two engaging books, which feature the Fire Island Lighthouse, will be on hand to sign copies of their book. Members of the Norris family, main characters in Robert's Tall Friend, are also expected to be here for the celebration. All sales help support the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, which was formed in 1982 to help restore and preserve the deteriorating lighthouse, and which is now the official National Park Service cooperating association that keeps the Fire Island Lighthouse open.

To help you find your way around the festivities and answer your questions, dedicated National Park Service volunteers who regularly work at the Fire Island Lighthouse will be on hand.

Special programs will be conducted all afternoon. A recognition ceremony, escorted in at 1 p.m. by Boy Scout Troop #46 from Massapequa, New York, will honor the Fire Island Lighthouse and its partners and supporters. Afterwards, you can enjoy a very special birthday cake created by the [Suffolk County Community College Culinary Arts Program](#). Soda and hot dogs will be available, as long as supplies last.

While the exhibitors are still under the tent, formal programs continue throughout the afternoon.

- At 2 p.m., *Fire Island's Living History Timeline* will be presented on the lighthouse terrace. This custom program will take you from the beginning of the barrier island's human occupation to the present day.
- At 2:30 p.m., you can retreat to the Keepers' Quarters to meet a *Fire Island Lighthouse Keeper's Family*, with Marilyn and Gottfried Mahler. The Mahlers actually lived in the lighthouse from 1948 – 1954, and gladly share their experiences as the keeper and his family.
- At 4 p.m., you can end your day by learning what life is like on *Fire Island in Winter*, presented by a Fire Island National Seashore seasonal ranger and year-round Fire Island resident.

A free shuttle will be provided from Robert Moses State Park Field # 5 during Saturday's event, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A small parking fee is charged, but there is no entrance fee for this event.

(more)

On Sunday, November 2, the Keepers Quarters museum and visitor center will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fire Island Lighthouse tower tours begin at 10 a.m., with the last tour of the day leaving at 4:30 p.m. Tower tour fees are reduced to \$2 per person all weekend to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Fire Island Lighthouse.

Under the tent at the Fire Island Lighthouse on November 2, programs will be offered especially for children from noon to 4 p.m. Craft tables will be available all day with on- going projects such as windsocks, paper plate seashore animals, weaving, and seashore mobiles. At 1:00 p.m., ranger- led programs begin:

- 12 - 1 p.m. Discovering the Ocean
- 1 - 2 p.m. Animal Tracking
- 2 - 3 p.m. Orienteering and Map Discovery

All children who participate in any two of the ranger led programs will earn their own Fire Island Junior Ranger Patch. Other opportunities will be available: Fire Island National Seashore's new Junior Ranger booklet (age 8- 12 or our new advanced booklet 13+) will be available. Children who successfully complete any of the Junior Ranger activity booklets will receive the award from that booklet.

A variety of other Junior Ranger activities will also be offered at the Fire Island Lighthouse on November 2. Fire Island National Seashore's latest junior ranger activity booklet, a new advanced workbook for ages 13 and older, will be unveiled this weekend. Children who successfully complete any of the Junior Ranger activity booklets will receive the award for that booklet.

The Boat House showing the history of the United States Life Saving Service will be open from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Here you may learn what these men and women experienced to save lives from the sea.

To get to the Fire Island Lighthouse, take the Robert Moses Parkway to Robert Moses State Park, then drive east. Parking is available at Field 5 (*small fee charged for parking*) and a $\frac{3}{4}$ - mile boardwalk trail leads to the lighthouse.

For more information about these and other programs, contact the park's Interpretation and Education office at 631- 687- 4765 or the Fire Island Lighthouse at 631- 661- 4876. For more information about Fire Island National Seashore, visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/fiis.

#