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Groundbreaking Ceremony for Fire Island National Seashore's New Ferry Terminal in Patchogue on October 17, 2008

Patchogue, New York— Fire Island National Seashore's Acting Superintendent Sean McGuinness announced last week that a brief groundbreaking ceremony for the new Patchogue- Watch Hill Ferry Terminal will be conducted on Friday, October 17, 2008 at 12:30 p.m. The event will be held at the Watch Hill Ferry Terminal at 166 West Avenue, along the Patchogue River in Patchogue, New York.

The project entails the construction of a new ferry terminal along the Patchogue River, replacing an existing temporary 1,500 square foot shelter with a 4,000 square foot year- round facility. The new building will include improved restroom facilities, an indoor waiting area and a multi-purpose room. It will be elevated and moved back from river's edge, and will be tied into the Village of Patchogue sewer system.

The Patchogue- Watch Hill Ferry Terminal grounds and facilities are owned by the National Park Service, and the ferry service is provided by an official NPS concessioner. Since 1968, when Fire Island National Seashore's Watch Hill development first opened, ferry service has been provided to this site by the Davis Park Ferry Company, Inc.

The Patchogue- Watch Hill Ferry Terminal is within easy walking distance of Long Island Railroad (LIRR) terminal in Patchogue, making Watch Hill the most convenient Fire Island destination for people using public transportation. For the past three years, the LIRR has provided special transportation packages to make the excursion from Manhattan even more affordable.

Earlier this summer the last of the requirements for public review—a Draft Statement of Findings (SOF) for Floodplain Management—was completed and all appropriate permits and approvals are in place for this long- awaited infrastructure improvement for Fire Island National Seashore.

(more)

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A new National Park Service ferry terminal in Patchogue, New York and a visitor center and new headquarters complex for Fire Island National Seashore were proposed in the park's 1978 General Management Plan. Park boundaries were expanded in November 1978 to include up to twelve acres of land in Patchogue for this purpose. A ten-acre parcel of land was purchased at the head of the Patchogue River in 1980, and the existing building was completed as a temporary structure by 1985. A *Development Plan for the Patchogue Ferry Terminal Site* was prepared in 1986. Funding for the parking lot was secured in the early 1990s, and a new elevated 178-car lot constructed in 1991. A schematic design plan for a *Fire Island Terminal and Interactive Learning Center* was started in 1995, and the *Development Concept Plan for the Patchogue Ferry Terminal Site* was produced in 1999. As part of the National Park Service's procedures to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project was completed in January 2002. After a period of public review, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the preferred plan was signed on October 8, 2002.

Building plans were started in 2003, but completion of the planning process was put on hold until construction funding could be secured. Funding for the \$3.58 million construction project has come from a number of competitive sources, primarily transportation infrastructure funds.

To learn more about this project, go to www.nps.gov/fiis/parkmgmt/planning-patchogue-ferry-terminal.htm. For more information about Fire Island National Seashore, visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/fiis.

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