



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Fire Island National Seashore News Release

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Winter Programs at Fire Island National Seashore this February

Patchogue, New York— Have you enjoyed the blanket of snow, but anxiously await spring and summer to get back outdoors? Don't miss the opportunity to explore the beach and fields during the quieter winter months. Bundle up, put on your hiking boots, and come on out. Fire Island National Seashore and its partners are providing several opportunities to explore and enjoy the park in its least visited season. While most facilities are closed at this time of year, the **Fire Island Lighthouse** is open daily. The seashore's **Wilderness Visitor Center**, at the southern end of William Floyd Parkway, is open this winter from Wednesday through Saturday, weather permitting. The **William Floyd Estate** in Mastic Beach, while closed for the season, is offering a guided bird walk in February as part of the 12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count.

For added value to your trip, plan your wintertime visit to Fire Island National Seashore to coincide with one of the park's special indoor or outdoor programs. During the month of February, three special programs are scheduled for the Fire Island Lighthouse, with additional children's activities planned for Presidents Week. From February 16- 20, 2009, a daily special activity for children will be offered at 11 a.m. The other guided programs include evening tower tours on Sunday, February 8, and Friday, February 13. Program fees are charged by the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society for these two tours. A free ranger- guided bird walk at the Lighthouse starts at 9 a.m. on Sunday, February 22. Parking is available at Robert Moses State Park Field 5; the Fire Island Lighthouse is a ¾- mile walk along the boardwalk or beach.

Guided hikes on the beach are offered on three Saturdays this February at the Wilderness Visitor Center. Park at Smith Point County Park (*free at this time of the year*), then walk to the National Park Service visitor center where you'll join the park ranger at 9 a.m. for a three- hour tour. The program on February 7 is a Winter Waterfowl Workshop, conducted by naturalist MaryLaura Lamont. Other hikes will be conducted on February 14 and 28. Part of these 3- mile roundtrip hikes take you into the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness, and part is on the Atlantic beach. Every stroll down the ever- changing beach provides a new glimpse into the life in and near the ocean. Mermaids purses, surf clams, cockles and other shells are among potential finds.

(more)

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

The William Floyd Estate grounds will be open for a special ranger- guided bird walk in conjunction with the 12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (*a citizen science program coordinated by the National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology*). Ranger Lamont will conduct this program at 9 a.m. on Saturday, February 14, with a rain date of Sunday, February 15. Last year's count, taken from the beach in front of the federal wilderness area, generated a list of 20 species (354 birds) including a rare sighting of the red- necked grebe. Another entry for Fire Island National Seashore counted 16 species (360 birds), including 60 snow buntings. Join our guided program or gather and submit your own entries for this year's event. (www.birdcount.org)

For more information about William Floyd Estate programs, call 631- 399- 2030. For Wilderness Visitor Center programs, call the Interpretation staff at 631- 687- 4768 or 631- 281- 3010. For more information or reservations for Fire Island Lighthouse programs, call the Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society at 631- 661- 4876.

For more information about Fire Island National Seashore, visit the park's website at www.nps.gov/fiis.

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William Floyd Estate

*Closed for the season, but open for special programs throughout the winter.
Call 631-399-2030 for winter directions.*

- **Great Backyard Bird Walk:** Saturday, **February 14**, 9 am - Noon

Wilderness Visitor Center

Open Wednesday - Sunday, weather permitting. Call 631-281-3010.

- **Winter Waterfowl Workshop:** Saturday, **February 7**, 9 am - Noon
- **Hike for Lovers:** Saturday, **February 14**, 9 am - Noon
- **Exploring Burma Trail:** Saturday, **February 28**, 9 am - Noon

Parking for programs offered at Fire Island National Seashore's Wilderness Visitor Center is at Smith Point County Park. (*Be prepared for a 5 minute walk to the Wilderness Visitor Center.*) Admission for each of these programs is free.

Fire Island Lighthouse *Open weekends January 1 - March 31, noon to 4 pm; open weekdays January 12 - March 31, 10 am - 4 pm, weather permitting. Call 631-661-4876 for information or reservations.*

- **Evening Tower Tour:** Sunday, **February 8**, 4:30 p.m.
*Fee for program (\$15/person). Experience the Lighthouse at night. View the night sky during the Snow Moon from the top of the tower. (Moonrise at 4:26 p.m. and Sunset at 5:18 p.m.) **Reservations required.***
- **Lighthouses are for Lovers:** Friday, **February 13**, 4:30 pm
*Fee for program (\$25/couple). Enjoy the sunset with "someone special" at the top of the lighthouse tower. **Reservations required.***
- **Winter Birding at the Lighthouse:** Sunday, **February 22**, 9 - 11 a.m.
***Free** ranger-guided program. Observe and identify some of Fire Island's various bird species. Waterfowl, shorebirds, hawks and songbirds should all be found on the western end of this barrier island. Bring binoculars and dress warm! Program will meet at the eastern end of Robert Moses State Park Field #5, and meander down to the lighthouse by 11 a.m.*