

History of the Fire Island Lighthouse

The Fire Island Lighthouse was an important landmark for transatlantic ships coming into New York Harbor at the turn of the last century. For many European immigrants, the Fire Island Light was their first sight of land upon arrival in America.

The first lighthouse was built on Fire Island in 1826. It was a 74-foot high, cream colored, octagonal pyramid made of Connecticut River blue split stone. The tower was built at the end of the island, adjacent to the inlet. This tower was not effective due to its lack of height. It was taken down and the stone was reused to build the terrace of the present lighthouse. Today a circular ring of bricks and stone are all that remain of the original lighthouse.

In 1857 Congress appropriated \$40,000 for the construction of a new lighthouse tower, 168 feet tall. It was lit for the first time on November 1, 1858. The lighthouse was in operation until the United States Coast Guard (USCG) decommissioned it on December 31, 1973. The new Aid to Navigation was a strobe light installed atop of the Robert Moses State Park Water Tower. The USCG gave the National Park Service a five-year permit to use the lighthouse tract. The park service was to prevent further deterioration of the buildings from neglect and vandalism.

In 1982, with public support, Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society (FILPS) was formed to assist the National Park Service in the preservation of this cultural icon. They successfully raised over \$1.3 million for the restoration and preservation of the Lighthouse. In 1984, the lighthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was restored to its 1939 condition, when electricity was first installed. On May 25, 1986, it was relit and reinstated as an official Aid to Navigation.

In December 1996 the FILPS, through an agreement with the National Park Service, took over the administration and maintenance of the Fire Island Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters.

In January 2006 FILPS took over operation and maintenance of the beacon from the USCG. The beacon will continue to remain on all charts as a private Aid to Navigation.

On November 1, 2008, the National Park Service and Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society celebrate the 150th anniversary of this iconic structure.

Special thank you to the following sponsors who contributed to the 150th Anniversary Celebration:

West Islip
String Ensemble

Fire Island Lighthouse Preservation Society
4640 Captree Island
Captree, New York 11702
631-661-4876
www.fireislandlighthouse.com

New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation & Historic Preservation

Friends of Fire Island
National Seashore

Suffolk County Community College:
Culinary Arts Program

Fire Island National Seashore
120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, New York 11772
631-687-4750
www.nps.gov/fiis

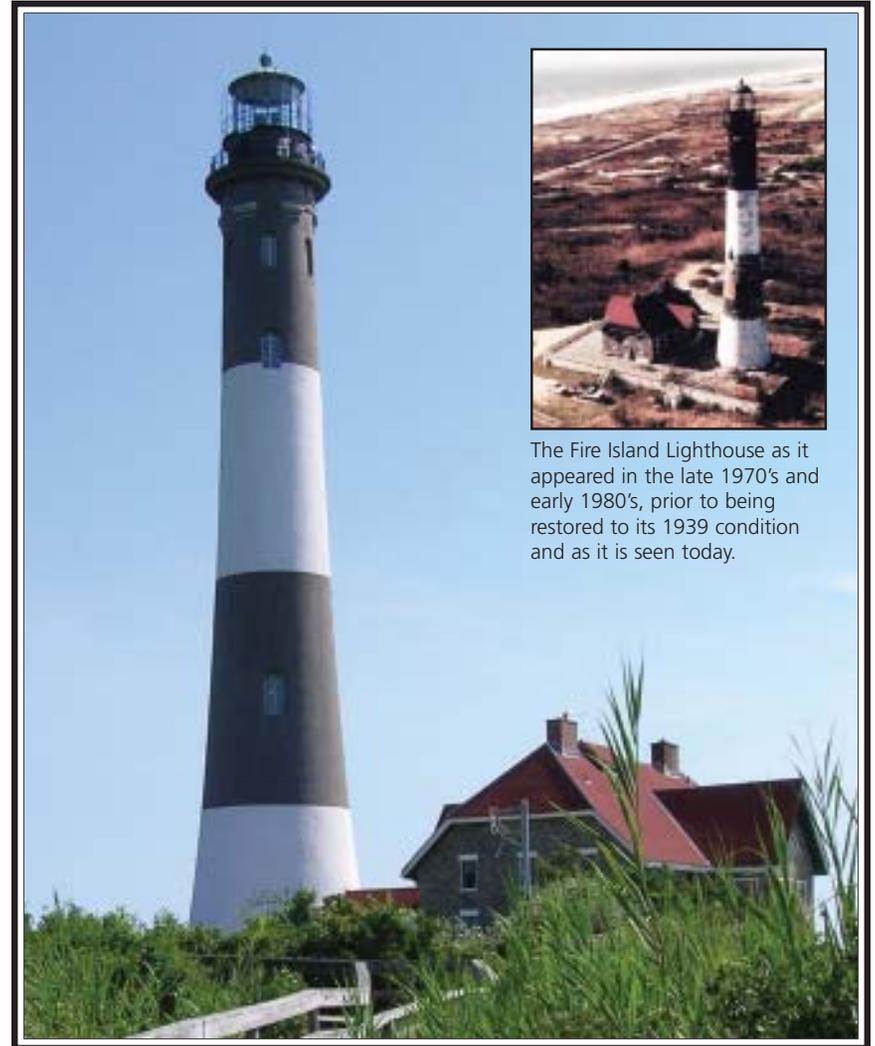


National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fire Island National Seashore
Long Island, New York



150th Anniversary Celebration of



The Fire Island Lighthouse as it appeared in the late 1970's and early 1980's, prior to being restored to its 1939 condition and as it is seen today.

The Fire Island Lighthouse

November 1-2, 2008

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.

