Park News

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Out of the Gateway

New concessioner selected for beach clubs

by GATE Public Affairs

After a competitive bid process, the NPS has selected a new concessioner, JBay, LLC, to run two beach clubs in Rockaway, Queens.

"People ask us why we opened this contract to competitive bids now," said Superintendent Linda Canzanelli. "The answer is simple: it's the law. When concessioners compete fairly for government contracts, the visitor wins."

The NPS solicited offers for the contracts last September. Proposals for each beach club prospectus were evaluated separately by WASO.

JBay was selected to run both the Silver Gull Beach Club and the Breezy Point Surf Club. The company begins operation of both beach clubs effective April 1 for a term that extends over the next 10 summers. Rates will remain at last year's levels while the new concessioner works to accommodate all visitors and enhance services.

GATE is the only park in the NPS with beach clubs. *PHOTO: Bob Ordan, used by permission.*

JBay's parent company, Ortega National Parks, LLC, has more than 45 years of hospitality experience and over 16 years experience operating NPS concessions.

Both beach clubs offer private cabanas, food service, recreation and both pool and ocean swimming. Visitors can purchase seasonal or day-use passes.

Parking fees to rise at Sandy Hook, Riis Park

by GATE Public Affairs

NPS Director Jon Jarvis recently approved parking fee increases for two GATE locations following a public comment period last fall. These are the first parking fee increases for Sandy Hook since 2001 and for Jacob Riis Park since 2004. This is the fourth time the park has increased parking fee rates since 1983, when fees were first established. There is a fee for parking in beach areas between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Fees have paid for hundreds of park improvement projects. These include lifeguard operations, visitor protection, facility maintenance, shoreline monitoring and kayaking programs.

Summer parking fees help fund GATE lifeguard operations. *PHOTO: John Vaage, used by permission.*

	Jacob Riis Park	Sandy Hook
Vehicles	$10 (up from $5)	$15 (up from $10)
Vehicles over 20'	$20	$30
Season passes	$65	$75
Season, over 20'	$130	$150
No fee after...	6 P.M.	5 P.M.

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The Superintendent Speaks: Flying high with the Ryan Center

On May 5 and 6, Floyd Bennett Field's Ryan Visitor Center will reopen to the public with food, music and fun for all ages. The first floor of the former city airport terminal has been lovingly restored to the way it appeared when Amelia Earhardt and Wiley Post walked its corridors. The newly restored visitor center will serve as the grand entrance to Floyd Bennett Field, making it more visible and vital, and letting visitors and residents know where they can hike, bike, camp, fish, enjoy aviation history and reconnect with the great outdoors.

As we face challenging economic times, it is important that we use the funding Congress gives us wisely. Partnerships make our budget go further while helping us accomplish our mission. GATE has many long-term partners including the city, state and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who have partnered to restore Jamaica Bay and HARP's dedicated volunteers who fix, restore, interpret and keep alive the art of repairing historic aircraft. At Crooke's Point at Great Kills Park, a pilot project with NYC Parks and other partners is turning a severely degraded area into a coastal upland maritime habitat. At Sandy Hook volunteers from the Army work with youth to restore a historic gun battery. Our new Volunteer Coordinator Keith White will be working with division chiefs, program managers and other employees to help strengthen and increase the number of volunteers we have in the park. If you have an idea for a volunteer project or you are looking for volunteers to help you, please contact him.

The Ryan Center restoration has been many years in the making and required the dedication, commitment and work of many, many people to make it a reality. It is a great reminder that working together makes all things possible. As with the aviators of old, the sky's the limit.

WELCOME

Broc Cordinnier, maintenance mechanic, SIU
Anesdi Espada, laborer, SIU
Larry Ferguson, laborer, SHU
Allison Luchnick, visitor use asst., SHU
Kim McLeod, I&E administrative support assistant, HQ
Colleen Sorbera, park ranger, JBU
Keith White, volunteer-in-parks coordinator, Public Affairs, HQ

Maintenance does a makeover

by Deputy Superintendent Suzanne McCarthy

The Staten Island auto shop has recently seen a makeover with the help of the maintenance staff, in particular Perry Barber. The shop is now cleaned out and organized for an easier and safer work environment. Old items have been recycled or disposed of properly or stored in the hazardous material area awaiting proper disposal.

The Staten Island auto shop before and after its makeover. *NPS PHOTOS.*

Whether you work at a computer or in a shop, please take the time to clean work spaces and storage areas. A clean, organized work space or storage area is an important safety prevention strategy. Consider scheduling a clean-up day for work spaces and storage areas such as attics, basements, store-rooms and closets. Identify property to be disposed. Let's lighten our load and get our Spring Cleaning underway!

Weeds give way to diverse native habitat at Crooke's Point

by Chief of Natural Resource Management Division Doug Adamo

In a two-acre section of Crooke's Point, a coastal upland maritime habitat will soon take root. The pilot project, a cooperative effort with New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's MillionTreesNYC initiative, will replace invasive plant species with native trees and shrubs, nurturing a more diverse wildlife population at Great Kills Park.

Machinery cuts through the tangle of thorny, non-native vines. *NPS PHOTO*

GATE is establishing coastal upland maritime habitat at Floyd Bennett Field and Miller Field as well. These steps will make the area more inviting for a wider variety of migratory birds, insects and native fauna.

In January, GATE began clearing paths using vegetation-cutting equipment. A month later, the site was treated with herbicides approved by both NPS and NYS in accordance with the NPS Integrated Pest Management plan. Use of herbicides will be limited in scope to avoid adverse effects in the soil, water or wildlife. No work is currently taking place during migratory season.

In October 2013, MillionTreesNYC will donate trees and shrubs sourced from local populations. The site will be monitored to measure the extent of project success. Monitoring data will be used to develop a plan to guide future project work on the 25-acre site.

26,000 Acres: GATE news in brief

GATE has a softball team!

The team plays and practices at the field behind the Carriage House at Fort Wadsworth. Games get started on Monday nights at 6 P.M., with the first practice on April 2. Anyone interested can show up and take a swing!

Natural resource spotlight: Snowy owls

Did you notice this winter's snowy owl irruption? An irruption occurs in years when lemmings, the owls' favorite food source, become scarce. They were spotted at Sandy Hook and Breezy Point.

A female snowy owl visits Sandy Hook. *PHOTO: Joe Reynolds, used by permission.*

FBF's Ryan Center reopens May 5-6

After years of restoration, the former air terminal at Floyd Bennett Field will reopen to the public. Come to see the new murals and exhibits and the christening of the full-scale replica of Wiley Post's Winnie Mae, built from scratch by volunteers from HARP. Enjoy food, music and activities for all ages. Learn more at 718-338-3799.

Most GATE residents see rents drop

Rental rates decreased for almost 95 percent of GATE housing units this year. Every four years, rental rates are recalculated based on the Consumer Price Index and local rental costs, which have dropped because of the recession.

GATE is open for suggestions

Have an idea or opinion? Write it down, drop it in a blue envelope with "Employee Suggestion Box" on the outside and place it with other park mail going to Headquarters. Names are optional. Thanks to the employees who mentioned this idea at the spring All-Employee Meeting.

Treasure Your Island **helps families scope out things to do on Staten Island.** *NPS PHOTO.*

Treasure Your Island returns to Fort Wadsworth

The fourth annual Treasure Your Island Community Awareness Day will take place Sunday, May 20. The event brings Staten Islanders together with over 20 cultural and recreation organizations on the island. The day of free family fun runs from 11:30 A.M. noon to 4:30 P.M. and includes food, music from local schools, dance and military reenactments. Learn more at **www.treasureyourisland.com** or by calling Steve Salgo at 718-354-4602.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway National Recreation Area was created by Congress in 1972 for urban residents to enjoy a national park experience in the New York metropolitan area. Gateway spans 26,000 acres, across two states and three boroughs of New York City. Visitors can hike, bicycle, kayak and enjoy organized sports, marvel at historic forts and aircraft and reflect on the tranquility of nature.

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

The GATE Way is the SAFE Way

by Safety Officer Eugene Kuziw

Take 10 for safety--OSHA 10!

GATE employees deserve a safe working environment. The best way to learn about your rights and responsibilities is to take an OSHA 10 course. In New York City, this course is mandatory for all contruction employees, but any employee can take the class. As a part of the OSHA Outreach Training Program, OSHA 10 provides training for workers and employers on the recognition, avoidance, abatement and prevention of safety and health hazards in workplaces. It also provides information regarding workers' rights and employer responsibilities.

Employees from several divisions attended OSHA 10 class at Fort Wadsworth in March. *NPS PHOTO.*

As an OSHA authorized trainer, I teach the ten-hour class (hence the name OSHA 10). Jamaica Bay and Staten Island Units have already completed their OSHA 10 courses. Another one is scheduled at Sandy Hook Unit on April 11-12. I will be leading a class at the Statue of Liberty in April as well.

Knowing our rights and responsibilities builds a culture of safety where we all look out for each other. Let's make sure that the GATE way is the SAFE way!

MAST students use technology to preserve plants

by MAST students Nicholas McDonald, Chelsea Soriano and Brian Kempf

Students at the Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST, located at Sandy Hook's Fort Hancock) are working on an Interactive Herbarium Project for their Directed Field Research Class and we can't "leaf" it alone.

We are immersed in a first-of-its-kind project, combining old-school plant preservation methods and adding a digital twist through the use of QR codes, Wikis, and Geographic Information Systems. When completed, our project will yield both a physical interactive and virtual herbarium. By having both a physical and virtual herbarium, people everywhere will be able to enjoy the vast diversity of vegetation located in the unique confines of Sandy Hook.

Got a smartphone? Take a photo and see where this QR tag leads you. *IMAGE: MAST.*

The result of our project, the Sandy Hook Herbarium, will be a multi-faceted venture spanning beyond the limits of normal herbaria. QR tags will be placed around Sandy Hook so visitors with smart phones can scan the tags to identify both plants we have in the herbarium, as well as larger plant species that cannot be pressed. MAST students will be mapping and creating suggested trails for visitors to explore and identify plants along the way. Students have also created a fully functional website (sandyhookherbarium.org) that contains information on specimens collected, which will continue to grow.

The Sandy Hook Herbarium distinguishes itself from other herbaria in that it is entirely student-created and student-run. Nine high school seniors at MAST, under the guidance of instructors David Alfonse and Cheryl McDonald, are creating the bulk of the project in their Directed Field Research class.

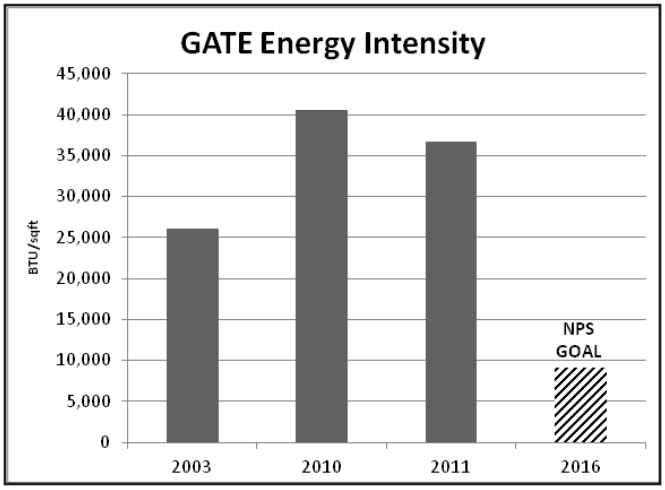
John Dempsey takes a digital photo, while Bright Okere gathers plants. Both are MAST students. *PHOTO: Cheryl McDonald, MAST.*

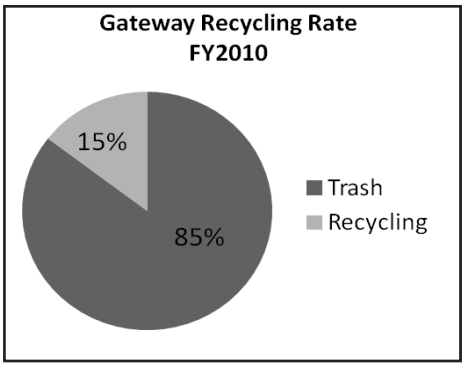
Additionally, we seek mentors to aid in the process of creating an herbarium. These mentors come from a wide range of professions: botanists, electronic specialists, college professors, artists and NPS employees. We learn skills related to herbaria, and more importantly, processes which can be used in any application. We are learning about much more than plants and QR codes. We are also learning about life.

What part do *you* play reducing GATE's "footprint"?

By Environmental Protection Specialist Kathleen Cuzzolino

The NPS is committed to improving the way facilities and operations are managed in order to reduce the Service's environmental footprint. What is an "environmental footprint"? It is everything from the energy we use and trash we throw away, to the air pollution and wastewater we generate. Like your footprints on the beach, it is what you leave behind when you do your work.





The NPS has targeted goals in both energy use and recycling. By 2016, parks must reduce their total energy used by 35 percent from 2003 levels and divert 50 percent of solid waste from landfills. As you can see by the graphs shown here, Gateway still has a long way to go. We all contribute to Gateway's footprint and we can all help make it smaller.

To do that, we need to think big *and* think small. Shut down your computer. Consolidate operations to close a building. Print documents double-sided. Bring a reusable coffee cup or water bottle to work. Learn about what is recyclable in your unit and expand your unit's recycling program. What part do *you* play?

Maintenance fixes West Pond

By Public Affairs Staff Support Assistant Rance Robeson

Thanks to the efforts of Jamaica Bay maintenance staff, birds are returning to the Wildlife Refuge's West Pond. Several bird species depend on the pond for water, foraging and nesting.

The pond spillway system, which prevented salt water flowing from the bay from overflowing into the freshwater pond, was found compromised last year.

"We knew that this was the job of jobs, and, if we could complete this, we would have done a great thing," said Facilities Manager Gus Halouvas.

The main pipe burst in two points: at the base and on the pond side just before the gate valve. Maintaining the gate valve controlled the inflow and outflow of water. Workers used concrete sealant to plug both leak points. Now the West Pond is temporarily operational for wildlife and public recreation.

West Pond and East Pond were designed and built as community development projects in 1953 by New York City Parks Department Commissioner Robert Moses. These bird sanctuaries were outfitted with 15-inch pipes to manage the water levels and to expose the shoreline annually for bird foraging. Bird blogger Andrew Baksh calls the West and East Ponds "some of the best places in the U.S. for viewing shorebirds."

Efforts to preserve the pond will continue. GATE is hoping to restore the spillway gate and conduit and to install a new emergency auxiliary system at both ponds to improve drainage. Some preliminary work has occurred at the East Pond as well. Although funding to fully fix the pipeline is not yet available, routine maintenance will help maintain the original system so that birds and birdwatchers alike can continue to enjoy the ponds during the spring season.

Jorge Colon, Charlie Ott, Stacey Barden and Preston Baransky fix West Pond. *NPS PHOTO.*

NYSDEC gets fishy with GATE

By Park Ranger Kathy Garofalo

Educators from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation taught NPS employees about fishing in a program called *Train the Trainer* held at the Great Kills Park Educational Field Station in February. Melissa Cohen, Darin Alberry and Alan Brassard discussed fisheries management, open seasons, possession limits and sizes.

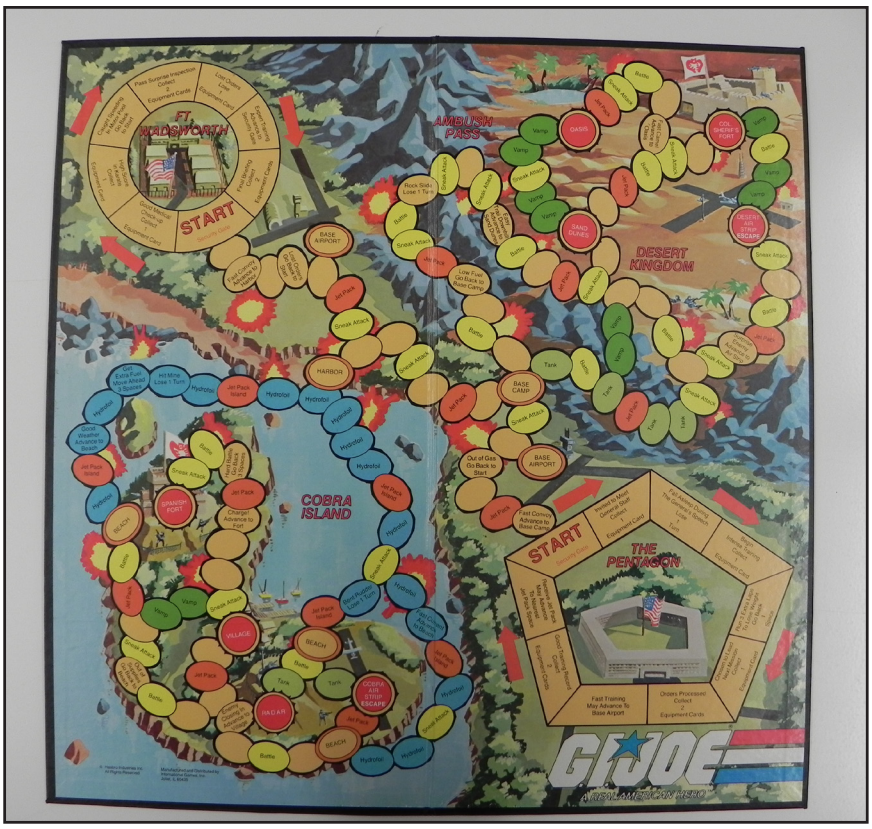
Staff learned how to identify fish and practiced how to prepare a fishing rod and reel, learning specific knots to attach the hook and bobber. DEC staff also discussed best practices, such as bending back the barb for easy release of the fish once it has been caught.

Artifact of the Season: GI Joe's HQ found at Fort Wadsworth

by Chief Curator Felice Ciccione

While we all know about GI Joe, how many of us knew that his secret headquarters was located five stories below Fort Tompkins? Look in the upper lefthand corner of the board!

In our collection, we have a GI Joe board game from 1982. In order to get to their assigned military objectives, players start at Fort Wadsworth or the Pentagon and go through training and on dangerous missions, fighting their arch enemy COBRA!



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The next issue of *Out of the Gateway* comes out in mid-June. Please send your photos, articles and tips to John_Warren@nps.gov at GATE's Public Affairs Office.

Out of the Gateway is published four times a year by the Public Affairs Office of Gateway National Recreation Area.

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Comments? Suggestions? Contributions? Contact us!
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Ocean Fun Day / Coastal Defenses Day set for May 20

by GATE Public Affairs

Sandy Hook will host Ocean Fun Day and Coastal Defenses Day on Sunday, May 20. New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium (NJSGC) will again offer Ocean Fun Day at Fort Hancock, while GATE will focus on military history with Coastal Defenses Day.

Touching turtles helps children appreciate the value of marine ecology. *PHOTO: NJSGC.*

This year features some new attractions as well as old favorites. NOAA will hold an open house of its marine lab while the U.S. Coast Guard will conduct tours of its base at the Hook's northernmost tip.

Rangers and volunteers from the Army Ground Forces Association and the NY-56 Nike Volunteers will staff Battery Gunnison, the Mortar Battery, History House and the Nike missile site. The Sandy Hook Foundation will sponsor a trolley to shuttle visitors to all events.

NJSGC has presented Ocean Fun Day for the past nine years with generous support from New Jersey Natural Gas.