



Visitor Programs and Events

Spring 2016

Brooklyn & Queens, New York

Find Your Park, National Park Week and the Centennial Celebration Did you Find Your Park?

Have you ever thought about what makes a park “yours?” Is it proximity or convenience, some place nearby where you go to rest, relax and recharge? Is it a special place that requires planning and effort to reach, perhaps far away? Or is it a state of mind that you can bring on whenever you are in a special place?

We know from talking with our wonderful visitors that Gateway, with its nature, vast beaches, open spaces, trails and its historic structures, provides a special place for many of you. With visitation figures hovering around eight million people per year, we are in the top three or four for visitation in the NPS, so we must be on the “I found my park” list for many of you. City dwellers in our area have a great desire to find park space. To see what other people have found, and to share “your park” go to www.findyourpark.com and have a look.

The annual National Park Week celebration, April 16- 24, is also the launch pad for the centennial celebration as the nation salutes and celebrates the 100 year anniversary of the NPS. As you might imagine we have some special programs and events planned for the summer season including some events occurring during the spring. We are producing a special Centennial Celebration Brochure which will be published for National Park Week. At Sandy Hook, there is the Annual Coastal Defense Weekend and Ocean Fun Day to occur May 20-22. This celebration includes an evening Lantern Tour, a World War II Harbor Defense “Field March” Tour, and open houses at several batteries. Ocean Fun Day, sponsored by the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium offers a day-long series of activities for the entire family. See the Sandy Hook Guide for details of these and other program offerings.



Egret, Manhattan, photo Gail Carlsson, an entry from Photo Contest 2014.

At Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge we have some special programs for kids planned: On Sunday March 6 at 1:00 PM, we have an Owl Adventure including a hike outside. Stick around for the Harp Petting Zoo Program at 3PM—you can see and hear and touch the harps that Mia Theodoratus will bring for show and tell.

On Sunday March 20, join us for a reading of *Sleigh Bells in Springtime* by Jessica R. Kratz, local author and NYC Parks and Recreation Ranger from Staten Island, who will be with us at 3:30PM. Find out what the reference to sleigh bells might be. Also celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act with a day of fun activities for the entire family, including bird-house building, birding walks, live bird demonstrations with Volunteers for Wildlife. Then join us to help re-plant the West Pond bird blind with native plants. Event is all day from 9AM to 4PM.

At Staten Island, on May 15 at Great Kills Park, join us for a Junior Bioblitz- Celebrate International

Migratory Birds 9:30 AM. Working with an expert, help to create a bird and plant checklist to use as you explore various habitats. In Staten Island we are also offering a special Centennial Series: *Discussing the Untold Stories of the National Park Service*. These five talks on weekends in March and April will be given at the Fort Wadsworth Visitor Center.

On Wednesday May 25, the first day of Fleet Week, there is no better vantage point to watch the parade of ships enter New York City’s Harbor than the Overlook at Fort Wadsworth. A US Coast Guard representative will narrate the passing ships, and there will be an exhibit as well. Stick around for tours of Fort Tompkins. See the Staten Island Guide for details of these and other program offerings.

Enjoy Spring in Your Park, and stay safe...remember no swimming until the lifeguards are back on duty, Memorial Day Weekend.

--C. Markis

Visitor Center Hours

Current hours: open Wednesday-Sunday 10 AM-4 PM.

RVC - Open 7 days/week,
9 AM-5 PM effective March 6.
JBWR - Open 7 days/week
9 AM-5 PM effective April 17.

MARCH

A Springtime Hike at Breezy Point

Fort Tilden, Building 1, Queens
Sunday, March 6
10 AM - 12:30 PM

Carpool in a caravan led by Mickey Maxwell Cohen of the American Littoral Society to the little-known western tip of the Rockaway Peninsula. Highlights will include seashells and other stranded critters, dune foliage, shore birds and a surprising variety of rocks and minerals used in the construction of the Breezy Point Jetty. Binoculars and a magnifying glass will be helpful. This is an American Littoral Society and Gateway NRA Partnership Program.

Have a Hoot with a Ranger

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Sunday, March 6
1 PM – 2:30 PM

Junior Rangers are invited to an owl adventure. Learn about these beautiful birds and their diet by investigating owl pellets. Be prepared to take a hike along the west pond trail to search for owl habitat.

Harp Petting Zoo for Kids

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Sunday, March 6
3 PM – 4 PM

In winter you might not see much wildlife, but come to see what strange beasts these are. Harpist Mia Theodoratus will bring a variety of instruments for demonstration. See a pedal harp, a Celtic harp, an electric harp. Kids with an inquisitive mind and clean hands can examine instruments. A performance by the ensemble will conclude the program.

Centennial Find Your Park Event

Exhibit Opening & Reception “Queens County Parks: Urban Landscapes” by Paul Melhado

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Saturday, March 12
2-4 PM

Please come to meet and greet Paul Melhado, whose photographs of Urban Landscapes of Queens County Parks will be shown. Melhado has documented all 32 of the borough's parks and selections will be displayed.

Spring into Nature!

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Sunday, March 13
11 AM – 12 PM

This ranger-led walk will serve as an introduction to the migratory birds that will be visiting the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge this spring.

Stargazing

Community Gardens
Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn
March 18
8 PM – 10 PM

Come gaze at the wonders of the night sky over Floyd Bennett Field with the Amateur Astronomers Association. Weather permitting; clear or partly cloudy skies only.

Fort Tilden History Walking Tour

Fort Tilden, Building 1, Queens
Sunday, March 20
10 AM – 12 PM

Join a park ranger for a walking tour of historic Fort Tilden, and its role in 20th Century coastal and air defense.

Sleigh Bells in Springtime A Special Story for Kids

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Sunday, March 20
3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

After a quiet winter the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge comes alive with sound. Join us for a reading of *Sleigh Bells in Springtime* by Jessica R. Kratz, local author and NYC Parks and Recreation Ranger from Staten Island.

Spring Equinox and Spring Peepers

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Sunday, March 20
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Watch the last sunset of winter while exploring the folklore of the Vernal Equinox. Then, join National Park Ranger Tim Farrell on the East Pond Trail for a real spring treat - the evening chorus of amorous spring peepers. Discover more about these tiny but fascinating tree frogs on a stroll to Big John's Pond.

Early Spring Bird Walk

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Saturday, March 26
10AM – 1PM

Meet at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for a slide program and walk to look for Phoebes, American Oystercatchers, Osprey and other early migrants. Leader: Don Riepe. Call (718) 474-0896; e-mail: donriep@gmail.com for info & reservations. With NYC Audubon and American Littoral Society

Have a Hoot with a Ranger

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens
Sunday, March 27
1 PM - 2:30 PM

Junior Rangers are invited to an owl adventure. Learn about these beautiful birds and their diet by investigating owl pellets. Be prepared to take a hike along the west pond trail to search for owl habitat.

The Prepared Paddler

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn
Ryan Visitor Center
Monday, March 28
6:30 PM- 8:30 PM

Interested in going paddling in Jamaica Bay? Get an overview of paddling best practices. Learn about the skills and equipment you will need, so you can plan your next trip. Space is limited; call 718/338 3799 to make a reservation.

Beach Cleanup North Channel Bridge

Saturday, April 2

10AM - 1PM

North Channel Bridge Parking Lot
Join Sadhana: League of Progressive Hindus for a monthly beach clean-up at the North Channel Bridge as part of an ongoing effort to improve the coastline habitat of Jamaica Bay.

Making a House a Home

Saturday, April 2

10 AM – 11 AM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Learn all about the nests birds call home. We will discuss the nesting habits of different birds, how they build their abodes and have a nesting touch table.

Dead Horse Bay, New York's Best Kept Natural Secret

Sunday, April 3, 2016

10 AM - 12:30 PM

Floyd Bennett Field

Main Entrance Ranger Station

Hike the trails and shoreline at Dead Horse Bay with Mickey Maxwell Cohen, American Littoral Society naturalist and author of *Discovering the Trails of Dead Horse Bay*.

Explore the nature and fascinating history of this little known area. This is an amazing adventure into the world of Urban Archaeology. Sturdy footwear is essential. This is an American Littoral Society/Gateway NRA Partnership Program.

Build a Bird Feeder Workshop

Sunday, April 3

12 PM – 2 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Want to attract birds to your own back yard? Come learn about some inexpensive, easy ways to build feeders with everyday things found around the house.

Centennial Find Your Park Event

The Big Hike

Floyd Bennett Field

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn

Ryan Visitors Center

Sunday, April 9

10 AM – 2 PM

Join a National Park Ranger for a brisk 3.5 mile hike across the runways, forests, fields and shoreline of Floyd Bennett Field's North side. Have lunch at the Ryan Visitors Center and then embark on the 3 mile afternoon leg of the hike, to the South side of Floyd Bennett Field. Reservations are required for either hike. Dress for the weather, wear good walking shoes and bring water and a snack or lunch.

Bike Tour of Floyd Bennett Field

Floyd Bennett Field

Ryan Visitor Center Flagpole

Sunday, April 10

11 AM – 12:30 PM

Join a National Park Ranger for a guided bike tour of Floyd Bennett Field. See runways, shoreline, hangars and other historic and natural features on this fun 6.5 mile bike ride. Reservations are required; please call 718 338 3799 to make a reservation. Bring your own bike and helmet, dress for the weather and bring water and a snack or lunch.

Stargazing

Friday, April 15

8 PM-10 PM

Community Gardens

Floyd Bennett Field

Come gaze at the wonders of the night sky over Floyd Bennett Field with the Amateur Astronomers Association.

Weather permitting; clear or partly cloudy skies only.

Junior Ranger Day

Saturday, April 16

9 AM – 5 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and Ryan Visitor Center

Join us at either of our two Jamaica Bay area visitor centers for family-friendly activities to earn a Junior Ranger badge.

Fort Tilden History Walking Tour

Fort Tilden, Building 1

Sunday, April 17

10 AM-12 PM

Join a park ranger for a walking tour of historic Fort Tilden, and its role in 20th Century coastal and air defense.

Birds: Myths and Legends

Sunday, April 17

2 PM-3 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Birds have been a symbol of power and freedom for as long as humans have existed. Join us for a discussion at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge to hear about different bird folklore from around the world.

Earth Day Clean-up

Friday, April 22

11 AM – 1 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

On Earth Day, if you want to roll up your sleeves and pitch in with a service project, join us at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for an Earth Day clean-up.

Spring into Japan

Saturday, April 30

2 PM – 3:30 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Cherry blossoms may be one of the most recognized signs of spring in NYC. Come out to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge to learn about the history of NYC's cherry blossoms, the art of Origami, and the traditional Japanese poem, the Haiku.

Beach Cleanup North Channel Bridge

Saturday, May 7

10AM - 1PM

North Channel Bridge Parking Lot

Join Sadhana: League of Progressive Hindus for a monthly beach clean-up at the North Channel Bridge as part of an ongoing effort to improve the coastline habitat of Jamaica Bay.

Mighty Monarchs

Sunday, May 8

11 AM – 12 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

It's National Start Seeing Monarchs Day! Children and their families are invited to join a Park Ranger at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge to learn about the mighty monarch. This interactive program will teach kids about the life cycle of the Monarch Butterfly as well as the story of their incredible migration.

Flight of the NC – 4

Jacob Riis Park

Bathhouse Entry Pavilion

Sunday, May 8

1 PM – 2 PM

Join a National Park Ranger for a slide show and discussion, in celebration of the 97th anniversary of the flight of the NC – 4, the first crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by air, which departed from the Rockaway Naval Air Station, site of present-day Jacob Riis Park, on May 8, 1919.

Stargazing

Friday, May 13

8 PM – 10 PM

Community Gardens

Floyd Bennett Field

Come gaze at the wonders of the night sky over Floyd Bennett Field with the Amateur Astronomers Association. Weather permitting; clear or partly cloudy skies only.

International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday, May 14

9 AM – 4 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act with a day of fun activities for the entire family, including bird-house building, birding walks, live bird demonstrations with Volunteers for Wildlife. Then join us to help re-plant the West Pond bird blind with native plants.

Celebrate Beach Plum Blossoms

at Plumb Beach

Sunday, May 15

10 AM – 12 PM

Plumb Beach Round House

Enjoy the profusion of Beach Plum blossoms while learning about the ever-changing Plumb Beach with American Littoral Society naturalist Mickey Maxwell Cohen. Learn about heroic plans to halt the most severe ongoing beach erosion in our area. Binoculars and a magnifying glass will be helpful. This is a Gateway NRA/ American Littoral Society Partnership Program.

Endangered Species Day Information Session and Clean Up

Sunday, May 15

11 AM – 12:30 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Learn about some of the vulnerable species that live in Jamaica Bay and how we can help keep them from disappearing. Then join a National Park Ranger in cleaning up the shoreline with a trash pick-up.

Warblers for Beginners

Sunday, May 15

2 PM – 3 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

For many birders spring means warblers. Identifying these fast and tiny birds can be quite a challenge and even intimidating. Join a ranger for an intro to the warblers that can be found at the Wildlife Refuge. A brief slideshow and ID hints will precede a walk around the West Pond Trail.

Can you Canoe?

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn

Gateway Marina

Saturday

May 21

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Enjoy this beginner's paddle along Dead Horse Bay with a National Park Service Ranger. Open to the public, ages 6 and up with an adult. Dress to get wet; bring sunscreen, a snack and water. Canoes, personal floatation devices, paddles and instruction will be provided.

Reservations are required; call 718 338 3799 for more information.

Jamaica Bay Ecology

Sunset Cruise

Saturday, May 21

5 PM – 8 PM

Jamaica Bay

Join us aboard the 100 ft. boat "Golden Sunshine" for a 3-hour cruise into the backwater marshes of Jamaica Bay. Learn about the history, ecology and wildlife of this 13,000 acre preserve and see nesting osprey, terns, egrets, herons, oystercatchers and more. Cost: \$55 includes narrated tour plus wine & cheese, drink, fruit, and snacks. Leader: Don Riepe. Call (718) 474-0896; E-mail: donriepe@gmail.com to reserve.

The Full Flower Moon and Woodcock Walk

Saturday, May 21

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge

Enjoy a legendary Jamaica Bay sunset and then watch the full flower moon rise over the first urban national park. If conditions are right, we may witness the elaborate courtship display ritual of the elusive American woodcock.

Horseshoe Crab Walk

Sunday, May 22

9 AM – 12 PM

Meet at the Jamaica Bay Refuge visitor center and carpool to a nearby shoreline site to see the horseshoe crabs come ashore to mate and lay eggs. Hundreds of shorebirds will join us on the beach. Leaders: Mickey Cohen, Don Riepe. Call (718) 474-0896; E-mail: donriepe@gmail.com to reserve. With American Littoral Society and NYC Audubon.

Makeup, Medicine and More – Alternative Plant Uses

Sunday, May 22

1 PM – 3 PM

Spring has sprung and so have many of the plants at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge! Plants are more than just pleasing to the eye however. Come and learn about the flora of Jamaica Bay and their many alternative uses. Prepare for a hike around the west pond as well as a recipe exchange afterwards.

Beach Campfire

Jacob Riis Park

Bay 14 (Boardwalk and Beach 169th St.)

Friday, May 27

7 PM – 10 PM

Kick off the traditional beginning of the summer season, and enjoy the evening on the beach at our traditional beach campfire. Bring a blanket or chair to sit on, a musical instrument if you play one, and fixings to make s'mores or roast marshmallows.

Floyd Bennett Field 85th Anniversary

Ryan Visitor Center

Sunday, May 29

10 AM – 5 PM

Help us celebrate the anniversary of Floyd Bennett Field's opening as New York's first municipal airport, and the field's very important role in early aviation history, and as a naval air station!

Recurring Programs

Canarsie Walk-up and Paddle

Canarsie Pier, Brooklyn

Saturday

May 28 – August 27

1:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Kayak tryouts for those who have never done it before. Open to the public, ages 6 and up with an adult. No reservation required. Dress to get wet; bring sunscreen, a snack and water. Kayaks or canoes, personal floatation devices, paddles and instruction will be provided.

Camp Gateway Walk up and Paddle

Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn

Seaplane Ramp

Saturdays and Sundays

May 28 – August 28

9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Kayak tryouts for those who have never done it before. Open to the public, ages 6 and up with an adult. No reservation required. Dress to get wet; bring sunscreen, a snack and water. Kayaks or canoes, personal floatation devices, paddles and instruction will be provided.

Riis Landing Walk-up and Paddle

Riis Landing, Queens

Sundays

May 29 – August 28

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Kayak tryouts for those who have never done it before. Open to the public, ages 6 and up with an adult. No reservation required. Dress to get wet; bring sunscreen, a snack and water. Kayaks or canoes, personal floatation devices, paddles and instruction will be provided.

--end of listings--

Do you receive email notifications of Gateway's programs and events? If you are not on our mailing list and would like to be, please send a message to Charles.Markis@nps.gov, with 'program guide' in the subject line and we will add you.

The ♥ symbol denotes a hike or walk of moderate activity. Improve your health, as you enjoy your park .