

# Sandy Hook Unit

Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark  
White-tailed Deer Management Planning

Gateway National Recreation Area  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior



White-tailed deer walking in the dunes. *NPS Photo*

## Why is the National Park Service preparing to develop a management plan for white-tailed deer in the Sandy Hook Unit?

The National Park Service (NPS) is in the early stages of developing a management plan for white-tailed deer (the plan) in the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area (the park). The purpose of managing deer in the Sandy Hook Unit would be to support protection and enhancement of natural resources, preservation of cultural resources, and visitor use and experiences consistent with the park's General Management Plan (NPS 2014).

The NPS is concerned about deer impacts on:

- Natural regeneration of native vegetation and vegetation communities, leaving native

biodiversity at risk and creating conditions that facilitate the establishment and spread of non-native invasive species;

- Rare and unique habitats (such as the globally imperiled maritime holly forest and the maritime red cedar woodland) and species of special concern, including federally listed species;
- Cultural landscape preservation and rehabilitation treatments; and,
- Resource-based visitor uses and experiences that provide enjoyment for current and future generations of park visitors.

## How to participate in the planning process:

Your input is vital to the development of the plan. The NPS is seeking public input regarding how white-tailed deer impact public use opportunities and experiences in the Sandy Hook Unit. Comments received will help inform development of this plan.

These questions may assist you in thinking about the management of deer at the Sandy Hook Unit and providing insightful comments:

1. **What changes have you noticed in the deer population and/or vegetation at Sandy Hook over the years?**
2. **Have you observed any impacts from deer on the park's cultural landscapes?**

3. **Have you observed deer impacting visitor use and experience at Sandy Hook?**
4. **Are there other issues related to deer management at Sandy Hook that you think the park could consider?**

The NPS will host a public open house at the Sandy Hook Chapel, located at 35 Hartshorne Drive in the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area on Thursday, April 23, 2026, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Since this is an open house, there will be no formal presentation or recording.

Information provided at the Open House will be available at the project website, detailed on the reverse side of this page.

## How to learn more about the project and submit comments:



Learn more about the proposed plan and submit comments on the project website by scanning the QR code or viewing the following link:

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=135811>

Written comments will also be accepted via email to:

[Gateway\\_feedback@nps.gov](mailto:Gateway_feedback@nps.gov)

Or via mail to:

Superintendent  
Gateway National Recreation Area  
210 New York Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10305

All comments must be received or postmarked by 11:59 p.m. EDT on May 23, 2026.

Commenters should be aware that their entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While commentors may ask that their personal identifying information be withheld from public view, NPS cannot guarantee this.

There will be an additional opportunity to provide comments with the release of the Draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan/Environmental Assessment in 2027.

## Planning process and schedule:

The NPS is in the initial stages of the planning process, aiming to produce a management plan in Fall 2027 for implementation thereafter.

Planning Stage	Schedule
Civic Engagement Period Begins	April 23, 2026
Open House	April 23, 2026
Civic Engagement Period Closes	May 23, 2026
Analysis of Civic Engagement Comments	Summer 2026
Plan Development	2026
NEPA Process Begins	2027
Environmental Documents Released, Comment Period, and Public Meeting	2027
Analysis of Comments on Environmental Documents	2027
NPS Decision	Fall 2027

## Reference

National Park Service. 2014. Gateway National Recreation Area Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. Accessed April 2026 at <https://www.nps.gov/gate/learn/management/gmp-2012.htm>.



White-tailed deer by the barracks of Officers' Row on the Fort Hancock Parade Grounds. NPS Photo