



White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan

Environmental Impact Statement

Fire Island National Seashore

Public Scoping Comment Analysis Report

Updated July 2012

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS PUBLIC SCOPING?

Public scoping is the process by which the National Park Service (NPS) solicits public input on the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document, such as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Public scoping is conducted early in the NEPA planning process and is not a single event or meeting. Tools such as mailings and/or meetings may be used to educate the public on the project and on the planning process guiding the preparation of an EIS. After the public scoping period ends, the NPS uses an established protocol to analyze and summarize the public comments received during the scoping period. This report describes the public scoping process for the Fire Island National Seashore White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan/EIS (plan/EIS) and presents the analysis and summary of public comments received.

PUBLIC SCOPING FOR THE WHITE-TAILED DEER AND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN EIS

The Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on June 17, 2011. A public scoping period for the plan/EIS was open from June 17, 2011 through July 31, 2011. A press release was posted on the park's website and emailed to a media and General Management Plan list, articles were published in local Fire Island newspapers, and links were submitted via Twitter. A copy of the newsletter was posted on the park's website, as well as on the NPS's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) web site. The park's deer page (<http://www.nps.gov/fiis/naturescience/deer.htm>) was updated late in the scoping period due to web posting problems. During this time, the public was encouraged to submit comments on the scope of the planning process (purpose, need, objectives, or any issues associated with the plan) through the PEPC web site (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/FireIslandDeerPlanScoping>). Comments also were accepted by postal mail and in person at the park.

During the scoping period, twelve pieces of correspondence were received and entered into the PEPC system. The PEPC system serves as a database where the NPS can analyze and summarize public scoping comments.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Primary terms used in the document are defined below.

Correspondence: A correspondence is the entire document received from a commenter. This includes letters, e-mails, written comment forms, comments entered directly into PEPC, and any other written comments provided either by postal mail or in person at the park.

Comment: A comment is a portion of the text within a correspondence that addresses a single subject. It could include such information as an expression of support or opposition for an alternative, additional data regarding the existing condition, or suggestions for resource topics to be considered.

Code: A category or grouping centered on a common subject. The codes were developed during the scoping process and were used to track major subjects. Each comment is assigned at least one code.

Concern: Concerns are statements that summarize the issues identified by each code. Each code was further characterized by concern statements to provide a better focus on the content of comments. Some codes required multiple concern statements, while others did not. In cases where no comments were received on an issue, the issue was not identified or discussed in this report.

Quotes: Representative quotes have been taken directly from the text of the correspondence received from the public and further clarify the concern statements. Quotes have not been edited for grammar.

METHOD OF COMMENT ANALYSIS

As stated above, twelve pieces of correspondence were received during the public scoping comment period. Correspondence was received by one of the following methods: hard copy letter via postal mail, hard copy letter delivered in person at the park, e-mail, or correspondence entered directly into the internet-based PEPC system. Letters received by e-mail, through the postal mail, or submitted in person at the park were entered into the PEPC system for analysis.

Once all the correspondence was entered into PEPC, each was read, and specific comments within each correspondence were identified. Over 75 comments were derived from the correspondence received. When identifying comments, every attempt was made to capture the full breadth of comments submitted.

For categorization purposes, each comment was given a code to identify the general content of a comment and to group similar comments together. A total of 21 codes were used to categorize the public scoping comments received. An example of a code developed for this project is *AL1000 – Support Non-Lethal Methods*. In some cases, the same comment may be categorized under more than one code, reflecting that the comment may contain more than one issue or idea. It should be noted that the issues brought up in the public scoping comments are unlikely to be the only issues considered in the EIS. Issues to be considered in the EIS will be informed not only by the public comments but by a number of other sources as well, including information on site conditions; federal laws, regulations, executive orders (EO), NPS *Management Policies 2006* (NPS 2006), and director's orders; and staff knowledge of the park's resources.

HOW WILL THE COMMENTS BE USED?

As described above, all comments are categorized under codes and summarized within concern statements, such as "Some commenters feel that fencing and/or education is ineffective for managing deer at Fire Island National Seashore" and "Some commenters feel the deer are negatively impacting the vegetation at Fire Island National Seashore." These concerns are listed in the Concern Report section of this document. These concerns will help guide the issues, alternatives, impact topics, and references to be considered during drafting of the EIS.

Another public comment period will be conducted following the release of the draft White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan/EIS. In order to incorporate formal consultation and

coordination with cooperating agencies, the proposed public review of preliminary management alternatives has been eliminated. In an effort to keep the end project – a deer management plan – on target for completion and implementation, the next opportunity for public review and comment will be after the release of the draft management alternatives in the draft plan/EIS, which is anticipated by the fall of 2013.

GUIDE TO THIS REPORT

This report is organized into the five sections described below. The *Content Analysis Report* and the *Concern Statement Report* are provided in the following sections of this document. Additional PEPC reports are provided as appendixes to this document.

Content Analysis Report: This is a basic report produced from PEPC that provides information on the numbers and types of comments received, organized by code and by various demographics. The first table summarizes the number of correspondence by geographic origin (by state). All correspondence was received from government agencies, organizations, or individuals within the United States. The next table displays the number of correspondence by organization type (i.e., organizations, governments, individuals, etc.), followed by a table that summarizes the comments received by code or topic. The last table displays the number of correspondence by correspondence type (i.e., amount of comments received through PEPC, e-mail, hard copy letters, etc.).

Concern Statement Report: This report summarizes the comments received during the public scoping process. In the report, comments are organized by codes and further summarized into concern statements. Representative quotes are provided for each concern statement. A list of concern statements, in table format, is provided at the beginning of the *Concern Statement Report* section for quick reference.

Index by Organization Type Report: This report provides a listing of all groups that submitted comments, arranged and grouped by the following organization types (and in this order): county government, state government, civic groups, and unaffiliated individuals. The commenters or authors are listed alphabetically, organized by the various organization types. The listing for each commentator includes their correspondence number and the codes that their comments fell under. This report is contained in Appendix A.

Index by Code Report: This report lists which commenters or authors (identified by organization type if they were commenting in an official capacity) commented on which topics, as identified by the codes used in this analysis. The report is listed by code, and under each code is a list of the authors who submitted comments that fell under that code (if an official organization correspondence) and their correspondence numbers. This report is contained in Appendix B.

CONTENT ANALYSIS REPORT

Correspondence Distribution by State

State	Percentage	Number of Correspondence
AK	8.33%	1
DC	8.33%	1
NY	66.67%	8
UNKNOWN	16.67%	2
Total		12

Correspondence Signature Count by Organization Type

Organization Type	Number of Correspondences
County Government	1
State Government	1
Civic Groups	1
Unaffiliated Individual	9
Total	12

Comment Distribution by Code

(Note: Each comment may have multiple codes. As a result, the total number of comments may be different than the actual comment totals)

Code	Description	Number of Comments
AL1000	Support Non-Lethal Methods	11
AL1100	Oppose Non-Lethal Methods	2
AL2000	Support Lethal Reduction Methods	6
AL2100	Oppose Lethal Reduction Methods	2
AL2200	Lethal Reduction Methods	4
AL3000	New Alternative Elements: Deer	3
AL3100	New Alternative Elements: Vegetation	1
CC1000	Consultation and Coordination: General Comments	10
GA1000	Impact Analysis: Scientific Data Used	1
IS1000	Issue: Vegetation	5
IS2000	Issue: Social Impacts	2
IS3000	Issue: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat	4
IS4000	Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety	11
IS5000	Issue: Visitor Experience	2
IS6000	Issue: Four-Poster Program	1
IS7000	Issue: Use of Volunteers and Contractors	1
MT1000	Miscellaneous Topics: Comments Outside the Scope of this Document	6

NI1000	NEPA Issues: Public Outreach	2
NI2000	NEPA Issues: Analysis	5
NI3000	NEPA Issues: Law and Policy	3
PN1000	Purpose and Need	5

Correspondence Distribution by Correspondence Type

Type	Number of Correspondences
Web Form	9
Letter	2
E-mail	1
Total	12

CONCERN REPORT

As described above, this report summarizes the comments received during the public scoping period for the White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan/EIS. Table 1 below provides a concise list of concern statements, by code, for quick reference. It is followed by the full concern report from PEPC, which includes representative quotes.

Table 1: Code, Corresponding Concern ID, and Corresponding Concern Statement	
AL1000 – Support Non-Lethal Methods	
Concern ID: 30772	Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should implement non-lethal deer management methods, such as fertility control or education programs.
AL1100 – Oppose Non-Lethal Methods	
Concern ID: 32114	Some commenters feel that fencing and/or education is ineffective for managing deer at Fire Island National Seashore.
AL2000 – Support Lethal Reduction Methods	
Concern ID: 32858	Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should implement lethal deer management methods, such as public hunts or direct reduction by park staff.
AL2100 – Oppose Lethal Reduction Methods	
Concern ID: 32874	Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should not implement lethal deer reduction methods.
AL2200 – Lethal Reduction Methods	
Concern ID: 32876	Some commenters feel that if lethal deer reduction methods are implemented at the park, the following should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of humane methods • Donation of deer meat to local food banks • Consumption of meat by the hunters • Safety of the public during hunting
AL3000 – New Alternative Elements: Deer	
Concern ID: 32883	Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should consider additional alternative elements in their analysis, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imposing fines for feeding the deer in the park • Releasing predators into the park • Removing the deer completely from the park

Table 1: Code, Corresponding Concern ID, and Corresponding Concern Statement	
AL3100 – New Alternative Elements: Vegetation	
Concern ID: 32884	One commenter feels that the National Park Service should consider additional alternative elements in their analysis, such as fencing, siviculture management, and other technologies available.
CC1000 – Consultation and Coordination: General Comments	
Concern ID: 30796	Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should involve stakeholders in the planning process including coordination with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York State Department of Environmental Conservation • Fire Island Environmental Coalition • Adjacent municipalities and their residents • Applicable interest groups
GA1000 – Impact Analysis: Scientific Data Used	
Concern ID: 30802	One commenter feels that data, studies, or other evidence used to prepare the EIS should be specific to the park.
IS1000 – Issue: Vegetation	
Concern ID: 30809	Some commenters feel the deer are negatively impacting the vegetation at Fire Island National Seashore.
Concern ID: 30810	Some commenters do not believe deer are affecting vegetation at Fire Island National Seashore.
IS2000 – Issue: Social Impacts	
Concern ID: 32136	One commenter feels that the National Park Service gives wildlife habitat priority over human habitat.
IS3000 – Issue: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat	
Concern ID: 30818	Some commenters would like the EIS to consider the role deer and other large ungulates play in the ecology of Fire Island National Seashore.
IS4000 – Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety	
Concern ID: 30819	Some commenters are concerned about the safety risks associated with the presence of deer in the park, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyme disease • Other tick-borne illnesses • Spread of rodents • Physical human/deer encounters

Table 1: Code, Corresponding Concern ID, and Corresponding Concern Statement	
Concern ID: 32964	One commenter feels that education is not a sufficient method to improve upon the inconvenient precautions visitors must take to avoid ticks at Fire Island National Seashore.
IS5000 – Issue: Visitor Experience	
Concern ID: 32153	One commenter feels that the National Park Service should analyze how recreational pursuits could impact deer and other wildlife.
IS6000 – Issue: Four-Poster Program	
Concern ID: 32967	One commenter would like to see the four-poster program continued at Fire Island National Seashore.
IS7000 – Issue: Use of Volunteers and Contractors	
Concern ID: 32970	Some commenters are concerned about the potential use of volunteers and contractors to conduct deer management programs in the park.
MT1000 – Miscellaneous Topics: Comments Outside the Scope of this Document	
Concern ID: 30827	One commenter feels that the plan should address scraping the seashore to protect the dunes.
NI1000 –NEPA Issues: Public Outreach	
Concern ID: 32988	One commenter feels that the National Park Service should establish a webpage specifically for the deer and vegetation management plan.
Concern ID: 32989	One commenter feels that the EIS should document both past and current public scoping efforts associated with deer management at the park.
NI2000 – NEPA Issues: Analysis	
Concern ID: 32990	Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should conduct a comprehensive analysis of natural and cultural resource topics as part of the EIS, including factors that contribute to the affected environment within the park. The analysis methodologies used should also be specified in the EIS.
NI3000 – NEPA Issues: Law and Policy	
Concern ID: 32991	One commenter feels that only those individuals that could be impacted by deer management policy at the park should be involved in decision-making efforts.
Concern ID: 32992	Some commenters feel that the park must review and abide by National Park Service and Fire Island National Seashore statutes, regulations, and policies related to ungulate management.

Table 1: Code, Corresponding Concern ID, and Corresponding Concern Statement	
PN1000 – Purpose and Need	
Concern ID: 30782	<p>Some commenters question the initial assumptions and hypotheses used in the description of this project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer are a natural resource and require protection • Blaming ungulates for impacts at the park is too simplistic

The following report is organized by codes and then concern statements. Representative quotes are provided for each concern statement.

Representative quotes provided below are taken directly from PEPC and are shown exactly as they were entered. Grammar and spelling have not been changed. These representative quotes are not the only comments received under this particular concern statement; however, these quotes have been chosen to represent those comments categorized under each concern statement.

Report Date: 09/23/2011

AL1000 - Support Non-Lethal Methods

Concern ID: 30772

CONCERN STATEMENT: Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should implement non-lethal deer management methods, such as fertility control or education programs.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 4 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 213286 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: Simply put, you need to havedevelopment of a birth control method/drug for the deer.
Corr. ID: 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute
Comment ID: 215661 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups
Representative Quote: AWI hopes that this same trend is not continued at FINS and, instead, that a new trend is developed whereby, if the science dictates that the deer must be managed and that said management is consistent with NPS statutes, regulations, and policies, that it be done using humane, non-lethal means.
Corr. ID: 7 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 219718 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: The first thing you have to do is educate the public, especially the residents on Fire Island not only how it is bad to feed the deer, but also how to secure their garbage so as not to enable the deer.
Corr. ID: 10 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 218549 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: Study, monitor, and educate.

AL1100 - Oppose Non-Lethal Methods

Concern ID: 32114

CONCERN STATEMENT: Some commenters feel that fencing and/or education is ineffective for managing deer at Fire Island National Seashore.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 10 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 219725 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: Fencing should be a last resort.
Corr. ID: 11 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 219734 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: Fencing the deer out would not work as the deer are excellent swimmers.

AL2000 - Support Lethal Reduction Methods

Concern ID: 32858

CONCERN Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should implement

STATEMENT: lethal deer management methods, such as public hunts or direct reduction by park staff.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 2 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 207110 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Permits for hunting deer and removing the meat from the Island need to be implemented.

Corr. ID: 2 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 207111 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Hunting should be relegated to the 17 miles of Fire Island that does not support human habitat. This will allow the herd to take proper proportion in relation to the food sources naturally available, reduce the tick infestation that is rampant, prevent the deer from cross-feeding (they have stolen meat off my barbeque), as well as protect human habitat in general.

Corr. ID: 5 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219714 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: You need a realistic culling program.

Corr. ID: 9 **Organization:** NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marines Resources

Comment ID: 219736 **Organization Type:** State Government

Representative Quote: Public deer hunting should be given serious consideration as the preferred management alternative. The legislation which established FINS specifically authorized the National Park Service to allow hunting. Public deer hunting is the most cost-effective method of deer control on Park Service properties. We would welcome the opportunity to help develop a practical and effective deer hunting program at FINS.

Corr. ID: 10 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219727 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: I favor public hunt outside the Seashore.

AL2100 - Oppose Lethal Reduction Methods

Concern ID: 32874

CONCERN STATEMENT: Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should not implement lethal deer reduction methods.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 215663 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: AWI is gravely concerned about the trend it sees within the NPS to lethally manage native ungulates in national parks.

Corr. ID: 7 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219722 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: And lasly, deer have a special place in the hearts of a lot of people. You know, the whole Bambi thing. It would not be wise for NPS to encourage the shooting or the harming of the deer. Half the public does not particularly like the things NPS does. They don't need more reason to hate FINS.

AL2200 - Lethal Reduction Methods

Concern ID: 32876

CONCERN STATEMENT: Some commenters feel that if lethal deer reduction methods are implemented at the park, the following should be considered:

- Use of humane methods
- Donation of deer meat to local food banks
- Consumption of meat by the hunters

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 4 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 219710 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: I am not a proponent of hunting in general, but the deer have no natural predators and their population is obviously out of control at this juncture. the notion of educating homeowners not to feed deer and to have deer behavior changed is not remotely sufficient. At this point, I believe hunting is a necessity, and hopefully opened up to that portion of the population that will use the animal as food and not just "sport."
Corr. ID: 10 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 220173 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: I favorsupplying a nearby community food bank.
Corr. ID: 11 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 218585 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: Venison is delicious and nutritious. Lets eat them
Corr. ID: 10 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 219729 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: If this fails, I favor park rangers in uniform (not contractors or volunteers) doing direct reductions, away from visitors...

AL3000 - New Alternative Elements: Deer

Concern ID: 32883
CONCERN STATEMENT: Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should consider additional elements in their analysis, including:
 -Imposing fines for feeding the deer in the park
 -Releasing predators into the park
 -Removing the deer completely from the park
Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 4 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 213287 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: Fines for feeding the deer could also be imposed.
Corr. ID: 11 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 218584 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: There deer need to be removed completely from Fire Island. This is a more effective strategy than using pesticides for controlling ticks, and is far better for the environment. The understory of SF would return, and this is a rich ecosystem for many creatures that can no longer nest or live there.
Corr. ID: 12 **Organization:** *Not Specified*
Comment ID: 219715 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: I support Off-Season release of deer predators into Sunken Forest. Domestically-reared Red Wolves can be habituated to return to den on command, e.g. whistle, bell. At advent of Tourist Season, can be returned to captivity. Charged collars/chips will make it easy to monitor their activities.

AL3100 - New Alternative Elements: Vegetation

Concern ID: 32884
CONCERN STATEMENT: One commenter feels that the National Park Service should consider additional alternative elements in their analysis, such as fencing, siviculture management, and other technologies available.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute
Comment ID: 229543 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups
Representative Quote: This review must also examine technologies available (i.e., fencing, silviculture management) to address any legitimate plant or forest regeneration management concern.

CC1000 - Consultation and Coordination: General Comments

Concern ID: 30796

**CONCERN
STATEMENT:**

Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should involve stakeholders in the planning process including coordination with:
 -New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
 -Fire Island Environmental Coalition
 -Adjacent municipalities and their residents
 -Applicable interest groups

**Representative
Quote(s):**

Corr. ID: 3 **Organization:** Fire Island Environmental Coalition

Comment ID: 212158 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: The population has been significantly reduced as a result of the experiment. Why have you seen fit to not work with and communicate with us?

Corr. ID: 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219757 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: Furthermore, FINS should consider establishing a public body, with balanced and proportional representation of interest groups and residents to provide further input to the NPS throughout the planning process. If such a body is established, AWI would consider serving on it if offered the opportunity.

Corr. ID: 9 **Organization:** NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

Comment ID: 219735 **Organization Type:** State Government

Representative Quote: The Department looks forward to providing additional input as a full partner in development of the draft White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan, and we hope we can work in cooperation with your office to ensure that the plan is effective for protecting the natural resources at Fire Island, consistent with State laws, regulations, and policies.

Corr. ID: 10 **Organization:** Not Specified

Comment ID: 219726 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Work cooperatively with neighbors to adjust populations.

GA1000 - Impact Analysis: Scientific Data Used

Concern ID: 30802

**CONCERN
STATEMENT:**

One commenter feels that data, studies, or other evidence used to prepare the EIS should be specific to the park.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219883 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: Any data, study, or other evidence used to claim that deer are causing one or more impacts to the FINS ecosystem should, preferably, be from studies conducted within FINS. If the NPS cites to studies conducted elsewhere (as it has done in other deer management planning documents) it runs the risk of using evidence to substantiate a

claim in FINS based on studies conducted in entirely different ecosystems or under different management regimes.

IS1000 - Issue: Vegetation

Concern ID: 30809

CONCERN STATEMENT: [Some commenters feel the deer are negatively impacting the vegetation at Fire Island National Seashore.](#)

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 4 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219713 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: The deer are very beautiful creatures, but the prevalence of seeing them, and their lack of fear--all demonstrate the population is not controlled and is posing hazards, not the least of which is the indigenous vegetation to the area.

Corr. ID: 4 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219700 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: I am also concerned that the deer are destroying native plants and habitat that will alter the environment and have an adverse impact on other species.

Corr. ID: 5 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 215436 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: fourth, the deer are a menace to much of the flora that makes Fire Island such a unique and magical place. We are particularly concerned about the destruction of native vegetation in areas like sunken forest and Watch Hill.

Concern ID: 30810

CONCERN STATEMENT: [Some commenters do not believe deer are affecting vegetation at Fire Island National Seashore.](#)

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 7 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219721 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: The deer provide a valuable chore of eating the poison ivy. That's a good thing.

Corr. ID: 8 **Organization:** Fire Island Wildlife Foundation

Comment ID: 217377 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: I am not personally concerned with "protecting the vegetation." People with ornamental vegetation have no problem fencing it in. I see the deer eating poison ivy and various weeds. Otherwise, the island seems lush and verdant. The soil is obviously rich enough to support large quantities of Russian Olives, bayberries, pine trees and those magnificently persistent fragmities.

IS2000 - Issue: Social Impacts

Concern ID: 32136

CONCERN STATEMENT: [One commenter feels that the National Park Service gives wildlife habitat priority over human habitat.](#)

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 2 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 207108 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: The communities have long sought a meaningful balance between wildlife habitat and human habitat. Consistently, human habitat has been relegated to the bottom of the list. (As examples, the piping plover project, or the sea amaranth project, which systematically impede our human habitat, may be cited.)

....

Reduce the status of the deer, and our solutions are more varied.

IS3000 - Issue: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Concern ID: 30818

CONCERN

STATEMENT:

Representative Quote(s): [Some commenters would like the EIS to consider the role deer and other large ungulates play in the ecology of Fire Island National Seashore.](#)

Corr. ID: 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219748 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: It is important to note that AWI is not dismissing the NPS mandate to protect plants and landscapes. However, it firmly believes that deer and other large ungulates are keystone herbivores whose actions, movements, feeding ecology, and distribution undoubtedly shape the landscape, ecosystem function, and plant production, abundance, diversity, and vigor. This is not something to resist or alter but, rather, to embrace as part and parcel of ecosystem function within a system of land areas that are supposed to be subject to management by nature (with minimal, if any, management by humans).

Corr. ID: 11 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 218583 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: The plan needs to reflect the fact that the deer are not native to Fire Island. They are alien exotics, or invasive natives. They are dependent on us, and not truly wild. They are wildlife, but rather they are a threat to the native wildlife. For example, they eat sea beach amaranth, a fact that is easy to prove. (I have not personally done the experiment).

Corr. ID: 11 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219732 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Plant ecologist Henry Art found no evidence of deer in SF before the early '60's, and photographs of the understory in SF, then and now dramatically show there could not have been a year round deer presence of any size when I was a kid (or the understory would have disappeared much earlier).

The deer are here because of us. Their high population is maintained, far above the natural carrying capacity of the island because we feed them, inadvertently or not.

IS4000 - Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety

Concern ID: 30819

CONCERN

STATEMENT:

Representative Quote(s): [Some commenters are concerned about the safety risks associated with the presence of deer in the park, such as :](#)

- Lyme disease
- Other tick-borne illnesses
- Spread of rodents
- Physical human/deer encounters

Corr. ID: 4 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 213284 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: I am concerned that sufficient steps will not be taken to curb the exploding deer population which poses a threat to human health due to the presence of lyme disease and other tick borne illnesses.

Corr. ID: 5 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 215437 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Third, they encourage the spread of other vermin, especially mice and rats, by attacking bagged food garbage and spreading it.

This is a problem especially with day trippers and infrequent visitors who are unaware of the need to hang garbage properly.

Corr. ID: 5 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 215438 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Second, we have had unfriendly run-ins with stags in the rutting season-- this is a very frightening experience.

Concern ID: 32964

CONCERN STATEMENT: One commenter feels that education is not a sufficient method to improve upon the inconvenient precautions visitors must take to avoid ticks at Fire Island National Seashore.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 4 **Organization:** *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 219711 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: If you want to have public access for humans to the nature trail and any of the more remote sections of the park--without being dressed from head to toe and sprayed with insecticide, something more definitive than what is suggested about "education" must be done.

IS5000 - Issue: Visitor Experience

Concern ID: 32153

CONCERN STATEMENT: One commenter feels that the National Park Service should analyze how recreational pursuits could impact deer and other wildlife.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 229574 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: FINS visitor use numbers, patterns of visitation, patterns of use during visits, deer-vehicle accidents inside FINS, speed limit restrictions on NPS roads, recreational pursuits within FINS (i.e., hiking, biking, walking, swimming) and how such pursuits may impact, positive or negatively, deer and other wildlife.

IS6000 - Issue: Four-Poster Program

Concern ID: 32967

CONCERN STATEMENT: One commenter would like to see the four-poster program continued at Fire Island National Seashore.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 8 **Organization:** Fire Island Wildlife Foundation

Comment ID: 217378 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: I am, obviously, a strong supporter of the 4-poster program. Should New York State approve it's universal use in the state, I believe that it should be continued and expanded on Fire Island.

IS7000 - Issue: Use of Volunteers and Contractors

Concern ID: 32970

CONCERN STATEMENT: Some commenters are concerned about the potential use of volunteers and contractors to conduct deer management programs in the park.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 229513 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: While, in some cases, the NPS employs other federal agents to kill ungulates (i.e., through the USDA/APHIS division of Wildlife Services) it has also recently elected to use "volunteers" to help reduce native ungulate densities. This too is highly disconcerting as there is a fine line between a "volunteer" being used to hunt native wildlife in parks within which hunting is legally prohibited to opening those parks (and

perhaps others) to sport hunting. As the NPS is well aware, there are interest groups, including ones with influence and power, who would like to sport hunt wildlife within America's park system - the only system of land areas where wildlife, with only a few exceptions (e.g., Grand Teton National Park) are truly protected. Similarly, there is concern that the NPS could elect to employ for-profit companies that provide kill-for-hire services to reduce wildlife within park units expending federal tax dollars to kill federally protected (in the context of living within a national park) wildlife.

MT1000 - Miscellaneous Topics: Comments Outside the Scope of this Document

Concern ID: 30827

CONCERN STATEMENT: One commenter feels that the plan should address scraping the seashore to protect the dunes.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 2 **Organization:** Not Specified

Comment ID: 219696 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Re-enact the rights of every community to scrape their part of the Sea Shore in order to protect the dunes, and thereby their habitat. It should be permit-free, and at the expense of each community to do so. Snow fence should be encouraged. The piping plover and amaranth can abide, naturally, in the snow fence areas. As it stands now, the stakes and lines that go up every April to 'protect' these items are being taken by the sea in the late fall, having never been removed by the agency that placed them there. It is a danger to everything in letting those miles of stakes and line be absorbed by the ocean.

Corr. ID: 2 **Organization:** Not Specified

Comment ID: 207109 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: As for the vegetation on Fire Island that is part of this report, I do not see enough about scraping the Sea Shore to protect the dunes. The policy that is in effect prevents scraping after sea grasses have been placed. This is ridiculous. The more sand that is placed on top of these forbes, the deeper their roots grow. Despite this knowledge, the implementation of protections prevent this from occurring, except naturally.

...
Bring scraping of the beach back, even in the presence of sea grasses.

NI1000 - NEPA Issues: Public Outreach

Concern ID: 32988

CONCERN STATEMENT: One commenter feels that the National Park Service should establish a webpage specifically for the deer and vegetation management plan.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219758 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: Finally, in order to improve the transparency of this process, AWI strongly recommends that the NPS consider establishing a webpage on this deer/vegetation management plan to insert within the FINS webpage where the NPS could provide access to any and all data, studies, maps, charts, or any other evidence that it may rely on in its decision-making process. This could be of benefit to the NPS by saving it the time and effort needed to respond to any Freedom of Information Act requests that may be submitted to obtain information related to this planning process.

Concern ID: 32989

CONCERN One commenter feels that the EIS should document both past and current

STATEMENT: public scoping efforts associated with deer management at the park.
Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 1 **Organization:** Suffolk County Dept. of Planning
Comment ID: 219694 **Organization Type:** County Government
Representative Quote: As previously mentioned, I did not see any reference to the rather extensive public scoping process that was employed by FINS to develop a deer management plan during the period from November 1995 to June 1996. Three work groups were formed at that time to scope out options for the William Floyd Estate, Wilderness Area and West End of FI, and obtain public comment. I facilitated the Floyd Estate Work Group and held about 6 public meetings; Steve Jones lead the West End Group, and Tom Isles did the same for the Wilderness Area. As I recall, the discussions were informative and contentious. I still have the records/files for my group, and could provide them to FINS, if desired. Mike Bilecki was involved in this effort, that was started by Jack Hauptman.

Let me know if you would like the files.

NI2000 - NEPA Issues: Analysis

Concern ID: 32990

CONCERN STATEMENT: Some commenters feel that the National Park Service should conduct a comprehensive analysis of natural and cultural resource topics as part of the EIS, including factors that contribute to the affected environment within the park. The analysis methodologies used should also be specified in the EIS.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 3 **Organization:** Fire Island Environmental Coalition
Comment ID: 212155 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual
Representative Quote: Your office appears to have minimal knowledge and info re the success of the deer birth control experiment. Please provide as part of any recommendations or plan the data on deer darting year by year since its inception. Your stated population studies show from 1989 to the present the deer population on Fire Island went from 500 to 300-500. This demonstrates the dramatic success of the program i.e. in Seaview alone we have seen a drop at bait stations from more than 40-50 deer to 5. It appears from your own data the deer population has not grown on Fire Island since 1989 thanks to the success of the deer project

Corr. ID: 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute
Comment ID: 219755 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups
Representative Quote: THE EIS must disclose the methodologies used to collect said data, identify the strengths and weaknesses of said methodologies, and identify other factors that may be affecting the health and ecology of the floral component of the FINS ecosystem unrelated to herbivory or other impacts attributable to deer or other wildlife.

Corr. ID: 6 **Organization:** Animal Welfare Institute
Comment ID: 219754 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups
Representative Quote: - Comprehensive analysis of the ecology of FINS. It is important that the NPS is planning on preparing a deer and vegetation management plan in this case. In other cases, for example, Valley Forge National Historical Park, the NPS created a deer management plan while claiming that a forest management plan will be developed some time in the future. Considering that forest and deer management within Valley Forge are inextricably linked (i.e., forest regeneration is the trigger for killing deer), the NPS grossly erred by not developing a deer and forest management plan concurrently. As this is not the case for FINS, it is important that the EIS fully discloses and analyzes all vegetation/forest

production, abundance, composition, trend, and vigor data collected throughout the years.

Corr. ID: 6

Organization: Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219884 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: Moreover, when identifying other threats to plants/ecosystem, the NPS must do more than simply make general references to such threats but must explore, in detail, issues such a climate change and how it is and may impact FINS vegetation (i.e., warming or cooling trend, precipitation patterns, sea level rise, increased salinity of soil and/or underground aquifers), extreme climatic events (i.e., droughts, winter snow storms, excessive rain), precipitation patterns (i.e., amount and timing of precipitation events going back at least twenty years), plant disease (i.e., evidence of plant disease within FINS), soil quality and erosive potential (including the impact of ungulate density on soil quality), and forest regeneration (and potential causes of a lack of regeneration).

Corr. ID: 6

Organization: Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219752 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: - Comprehensive analysis of the history of deer and other wildlife management on FINS. This analysis must extend to the time before FINS was a unit of the NPS and should continue to the present. Any past management actions, lethal and non-lethal, must be disclosed and comprehensively discussed. The immunocontraception program employed on deer on FINS must be fully detailed and analyzed including the methodologies used, the number and sex of deer treated, the costs of the program, and the results of the effort over time. In addition, the NPS has to explain the basis for its decision to terminate the immunocontraception program, what motivated that decision, when that decision was made, why it was made, and whether the pending management plan for FINS is related to other NPS deer/vegetation management plans, if there is any overarching policy driving this recent upsurge in ungulate plans, and whether the NPS is, indeed, engaged in a trend toward embracing lethal control over natural regulation as the primary management policy in America's national parks or even in a subset of the parks. This would also, necessarily, include historical to modern-day data on the FINS deer population including population estimates, methodologies used to develop estimates, strengths and weaknesses of using such methodologies, population density, population trends, range of FINS deer beyond FINS boundaries, and any information about deer that live entirely beyond FINS borders.

Corr. ID: 6

Organization: Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 229572

Organization Type: Civic Groups

Representative Quote: This review must include a full description of deer management options that may be available and/or exercised outside the boundaries of FINS, numbers of deer killed or contracepted, and disposal of deer.

NI3000 - NEPA Issues: Law and Policy

Concern ID:

32991

**CONCERN
STATEMENT:**

One commenter feels that only those individuals that could be impacted by deer management policy at the park should be involved in decision-making efforts.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 2

Organization: Not Specified

Comment ID: 219697 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: On a side bar, I find it of interest to note that these comments are being tallied in the West. All policy should be dictated by

those who abide on this coast, and by those who must live with said policies. It should also be tallied by us, as I am not so certain that opinions that may conflict with the Department of the Interior's position, will be heard.

Concern ID:

32992

**CONCERN
STATEMENT:**

Some commenters feel that the park must review and abide by National Park Service and Fire Island National Seashore statutes, regulations, and policies related to ungulate management.

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 6

Organization: Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219753 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: - Comprehensive analysis of the statutes, regulations, and policies relevant to the NPS and, more specifically, to FINS. Please note that 16 USC 1, which includes reference to the NPS impairment standard, does not provide a legal basis for the NPS to engage in the management, including lethal management, of ungulates within national parks. The NPS, however, has erroneously relied on this statute as the sole justification for decisions made to use lethal options against native wildlife in other parks. The impairment standard primarily applies to public uses of national parks and, in some cases, to NPS decisions (e.g., to construct a road, fence, facility) but cannot and should not be applied to the lethal control of native wildlife for consuming vegetation. Instead, though very narrow in its applicability, the NPS can only use the standard contained in 16 USC 3 to try to justify the lethal management of native ungulates. Please note that this standard requires the NPS to prove that the ungulate or species is detrimental to the public use of the park not merely to the use of the park. If the NPS continues to claim that 16 USC 1 is the standard that permits it to employ lethal options, it must explain how that can be given the clear intent of the NPS for the impairment standard to be applicable, with a few narrow exceptions, to public uses of park units.

Corr. ID: 6

Organization: Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 229507 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: If the NPS were to prefer this method, not only must it prove that lethal control is necessary and consistent with its statutory mandate,

PN1000 - Purpose and Need

Concern ID:

30782

**CONCERN
STATEMENT:**

Some commenters question the initial assumptions and hypotheses used in the description of this project, including:

-Deer are a natural resource and require protection

-Blaming ungulates for impacts at the park is too simplistic

Representative Quote(s): **Corr. ID:** 2

Organization: Not Specified

Comment ID: 219695 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: By considering the deer a natural resource, we are saddled with protecting them.

Corr. ID: 3

Organization: Fire Island Environmental Coalition

Comment ID: 212156 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: I don't understand how you can establish purpose needs and objectives if you do not know the facts of what has happened todate.

Corr. ID: 4

Organization: Not Specified

Comment ID: 213285 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: I do not see anything in the current plan that

definitively provides for the population to be culled via either fertility control or hunting.

Corr. ID: 6

Organization: Animal Welfare Institute

Comment ID: 219749 **Organization Type:** Civic Groups

Representative Quote: The mere fact that native ungulates may graze or even overgraze plant species, may create so-called browse lines, or may inhibit forest regeneration is a natural function of their presence on the landscape. Of course, there are other factors, operating either synonymously or independently of ungulates that may cause these same impacts (i.e., plant disease, decline in soil quality, drought or other climatic events, climate change), therefore blaming ungulates entirely for these impacts is far too simplistic.

There is little question that, with only a few examples, that today's national park units do not encompass the full range of biological diversity that they once enjoyed.

Corr. ID: 10

Organization: *Not Specified*

Comment ID: 218548 **Organization Type:** Unaffiliated Individual

Representative Quote: Address the unnatural population numbers of deer. Know the ecology of deer. If they are over-populated, know what the impacts and benefits to other species and processes. Keep deer, and all other biota, within natural range of variability.

APPENDIX A: INDEX BY ORGANIZATION TYPE REPORT

Index By Organization Type (09/23/2011)

Civic Groups

Animal Welfare Institute - 6; AL1000 - Support Non-Lethal Methods. AL2100 - Oppose Lethal Reduction Methods. AL3100 - New Alternative Elements: Vegetation. CC1000 - Consultation and Coordination: General Comments. GA1000 - Impact Analysis: Scientific Data Used. IS2000 - Issue: Social Impacts. IS3000 - Issue: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat. IS4000 - Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety. IS5000 - Issue: Visitor Experience. IS7000 - Issue: Use of Volunteers and Contractors. MT1000 - Miscellaneous Topics: Comments Outside the Scope of this Document. NI1000 - NEPA Issues: Public Outreach. NI2000 - NEPA Issues: Analysis. NI3000 - NEPA Issues: Law and Policy. PN1000 - Purpose and Need.

County Government

Suffolk County Dept. of Planning - 1; NI1000 - NEPA Issues: Public Outreach.

State Government

NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marines Resources - 9; AL2000 - Support Lethal Reduction Methods. CC1000 - Consultation and Coordination: General Comments.

Unaffiliated Individual

Fire Island Environmental Coalition - 3; CC1000 - Consultation and Coordination: General Comments. NI2000 - NEPA Issues: Analysis. PN1000 - Purpose and Need.
Fire Island Wildlife Foundation - 8; AL1000 - Support Non-Lethal Methods. IS1000 - Issue: Vegetation. IS4000 - Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety. IS6000 - Issue: Four-Poster Program.
N/A - 2; AL2000 - Support Lethal Reduction Methods. IS2000 - Issue: Social Impacts. MT1000 - Miscellaneous Topics: Comments Outside the Scope of this Document. NI3000 - NEPA Issues: Law and Policy. PN1000 - Purpose and Need. 4; AL1000 - Support Non-Lethal Methods. AL2200 - Lethal Reduction Methods. AL3000 - New Alternative Elements: Deer. IS1000 - Issue: Vegetation. IS4000 - Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety. PN1000 - Purpose and Need. 5; AL2000 - Support Lethal Reduction Methods. IS1000 - Issue: Vegetation. IS4000 - Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety. 7; AL1000 - Support Non-Lethal Methods. AL2000 - Support Reproductive Control (chemical). AL2100 - Oppose Lethal Reduction Methods. IS1000 - Issue: Vegetation. IS3000 - Issue: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat. MT1000 - Miscellaneous Topics: Comments Outside the Scope of this Document. 10; AL1000 - Support Non-Lethal Methods. AL1100 - Oppose Non-Lethal Methods. AL2000 - Support Lethal Reduction Methods. CC1000 - Consultation and Coordination: General Comments. PN1000 - Purpose and Need. 11; AL1100 - Oppose Non-Lethal Methods. AL2200 - Lethal Reduction Methods. AL3000 - New Alternative Elements: Deer. IS3000 - Issue: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat. IS4000 - Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety. 12; AL3000 - New Alternative Elements: Deer.

APPENDIX B: INDEX BY CODE REPORT

Index By Code

AL1000 - Support Non-Lethal Methods

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

Fire Island Wildlife Foundation - 8

N/A - 4 , 7 , 10

AL1100 - Oppose Non-Lethal Methods

N/A - 10 , 11

AL2000 - Support Lethal Reduction Methods

NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish, Wildlife and
Marines Resources - 9

N/A - 2 , 5 , 7 , 10

AL2100 - Oppose Lethal Reduction Methods

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

N/A - 7

AL2200 - Lethal Reduction Methods

N/A - 4 , 10 , 11

AL3000 - New Alternative Elements: Deer

N/A - 4 , 10 , 11 , 12

AL3100 - New Alternative Elements: Vegetation

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

CC1000 - Consultation and Coordination: General Comments

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

Fire Island Environmental Coalition - 3

NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Fish, Wildlife and
Marines Resources - 9

N/A - 10

GA1000 - Impact Analysis: Scientific Data Used

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

IS1000 - Issue: Vegetation

Fire Island Wildlife Foundation - 8

N/A - 4 , 5 , 7

IS2000 - Issue: Social Impacts

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

N/A - 2

IS3000 - Issue: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

N/A - 7 , 11

IS4000 - Issue: Visitor Conflicts and Safety

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

Fire Island Wildlife Foundation - 8

N/A - 4 , 5 , 11

IS5000 - Issue: Visitor Experience

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

IS6000 - Issue: Four-Poster Program

Fire Island Wildlife Foundation - 8

IS7000 - Issue: Use of Volunteers and Contractors

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

MT1000 - Miscellaneous Topics: Comments Outside the Scope of this Document

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

N/A - 2 , 7

NI1000 - NEPA Issues: Public Outreach

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

Suffolk County Dept. of Planning - 1

NI2000 - NEPA Issues: Analysis

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

Fire Island Environmental Coalition - 3

NI3000 - NEPA Issues: Law and Policy

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

N/A - 2

PN1000 - Purpose and Need

Animal Welfare Institute - 6

Fire Island Environmental Coalition - 3

N/A - 2 , 4 , 10