



White-tailed Deer Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Chronology of Major Events

- 1964** Fire Island National Seashore is established as a unit of the National Park Service.
- 1966** The Sunken Forest Preserve is officially donated to Fire Island National Seashore. The preserve contains the Sunken Forest, a globally rare holly maritime forest.
- 1967** Permanent vegetation plots are established in the Sunken Forest to measure long-term changes.
- 1971** Island-wide aerial survey documents 46 deer on Fire Island.
- 1978** Fire Island National Seashore's first General Management Plan is approved. Aerial survey estimates 50 deer inhabit the island.
- 1983** Island-wide aerial surveys are conducted two times per year from 1983-1998. By 1989 the deer population is estimated at 500.
- 1985** Study of deer home range, movements, physiological parameters and incidence of Lyme disease in ticks is initiated by Fire Island National Seashore.
- 1986** Vegetation plots established in 1967 for long-term monitoring of Sunken Forest are re-surveyed. Major browsing impacts to vegetation are observed.
- 1988** A limited public hunt occurs on Fire Island. The hunt is supported by the National Park Service and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation but is met with local resistance. The hunt is discontinued in 1989.
- 1993** The Humane Society of the United States initiates a long-term study to investigate whether an immunocontraceptive vaccine, porcine zona pellucida (PZP) could be useful at Fire Island as a deer management tool. Fire Island National Seashore and United States Geological Survey (USGS) become partners of the project during its second and third phases. (Phase I: 1993-1997, Phase II: 1998-2002, Phase III: 2003-2009)
- 1995** USGS scientists conclude past aerial surveys were underestimating abundance within Fire Island communities and recommend distance sampling as a new ground-based method of estimating deer herd abundance. Initial distance sampling surveys estimate a density of 80 deer/km². Other areas, both within Fire Island communities and other areas of the park, are added to the annual survey effort by 1999 and continue today.

- 1996** Planning for a Fire Island National Seashore White-tailed Deer Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement begins. Public scoping meetings are held throughout 1995 and 1996. Due to limited data and consensus on alternatives, a decision is made to discontinue the plan/EIS.
- 1998** Fire Island National Seashore receives funding to develop an educational outreach campaign to eliminate the feeding of deer and encourage stewardship in Fire Island communities. The project is discontinued in 2002 due to exhaustion of funds.
- 2002** Mapping and classification of park vegetation communities throughout the park is completed.
- Sunken Forest vegetation plots are re-surveyed and an exclosure study that investigates impacts of small versus large herbivores is completed. White-tailed deer are identified as the primary herbivore in the Sunken Forest.
- 2003** Distance sampling surveys estimate deer population to be 500-700.
- 2005** Cornell University, under a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, initiates a study to understand human dimensions of issues related to deer at Fire Island National Seashore. In-person interviews with Fire Island residents and stakeholders, as well as mail surveys, are used to describe and understand the views of local residents with respect to deer issues.
- 2006** Planning for a new Fire Island National Seashore General Management Plan (GMP) begins, including evaluation of management goals related to natural resources.
- Revised Cultural Landscape Inventory is completed for the William Floyd Estate.
- 2009** The long-term study initiated by the Humane Society investigating PZP is completed.
- Deer population is estimated to be 300-500.
- 2011** Planning begins for a White-tailed Deer and Vegetation Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Deer Plan/EIS) to address issues associated with the abundance, distribution and behavior of deer within Fire Island National Seashore.
- Notice of Intent to prepare a Deer Plan/EIS is published in the Federal Register.
- 2012** Alternatives are developed based on the best available science, feasibility and input from the public.
- 2014** Internal review of the Draft Deer Plan/EIS is completed and the document is revised. Draft Deer Plan/EIS provided for public review and comment (60-days).

