

# Visitor Use Management Plan

Spring 2019

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cumberland Island National Seashore  
Georgia



## Message From the Superintendent

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to join us in this remarkable and meaningful visitor use management planning process. Your interest and vested time will help guide the future of Cumberland Island National Seashore.

Cumberland Island is a remarkable place that includes some of the finest natural habitats on the east coast, as well as some of the richest cultural history dating back 4,000 years.

Our effort to enhance the visitor experience is critically important as we balance visitor use with conservation and protection of the park's resources.

It is important to note that the island offers unique and distinctive experiences. Our backcountry experience, which includes wilderness, offers a primitive and isolated feeling. The frontcountry has some of these

same qualities, but also has potential for more visitor opportunities that are not primitive in nature.



Our mainland visitor center and mainland museum seek to meet the needs of those not able to visit the island. Please keep these in mind as you share your ideas and thoughts about possibilities for future visitor use.

Please take the time to learn about Cumberland Island, ask questions, and share your comments.

Thank you for your interest in Cumberland Island National Seashore.

Gary Ingram,  
Superintendent



## Envision the Future

The National Park Service (NPS) is pleased to announce its intent to plan for the future of Cumberland Island National Seashore (the park). The park will develop a visitor use management plan (the plan) to determine appropriate kinds and amounts of visitor use, develop strategies to enhance enjoyment of Cumberland Island National Seashore, and protect resources.

This plan will examine management options to enhance the protection of natural, cultural, and scenic resources and values, while providing visitors with opportunities to be inspired through personal connections with these resources. As an initial step in the development of the plan, the park is undertaking a civic engagement process.

## Key Issues

This plan is being initiated to help determine future visitor use and experiences at the park by addressing:

- **Visitor Capacity** – Analyze and determine visitor capacity of the island based upon the maximum amounts and types of visitor use that an area can accommodate while achieving and maintaining the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that are consistent with the purposes for which the area was established.
- **Visitor Access** – Evaluate access to, and around, the island, and adjust as appropriate for optimal resource protection and visitor experience.
- **Accessibility for Visitors of All Abilities** – Consider opportunities to improve Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) compliance for island facilities and services.
- **Visitor Use Facilities** – Determine what facilities may be necessary and appropriate to support visitor use.
- **Recreational Activities** – Evaluate existing and potential activities and services while considering the desired conditions for both the resources and visitor experiences.
- **Commercial Visitor Services** – Evaluate existing and potential opportunities for appropriate commercial services and special uses.
- **Wilderness and Enabling Legislation** – Determine how these mandates will impact decision making on visitor use.

*For more information on the purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values of the park please see the park's foundation document at: [https://www.nps.gov/cuis/learn/management/upload/CUIS\\_FD\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/cuis/learn/management/upload/CUIS_FD_FINAL.pdf)*



# Planning Process and Timeline

WE  
ARE  
HERE

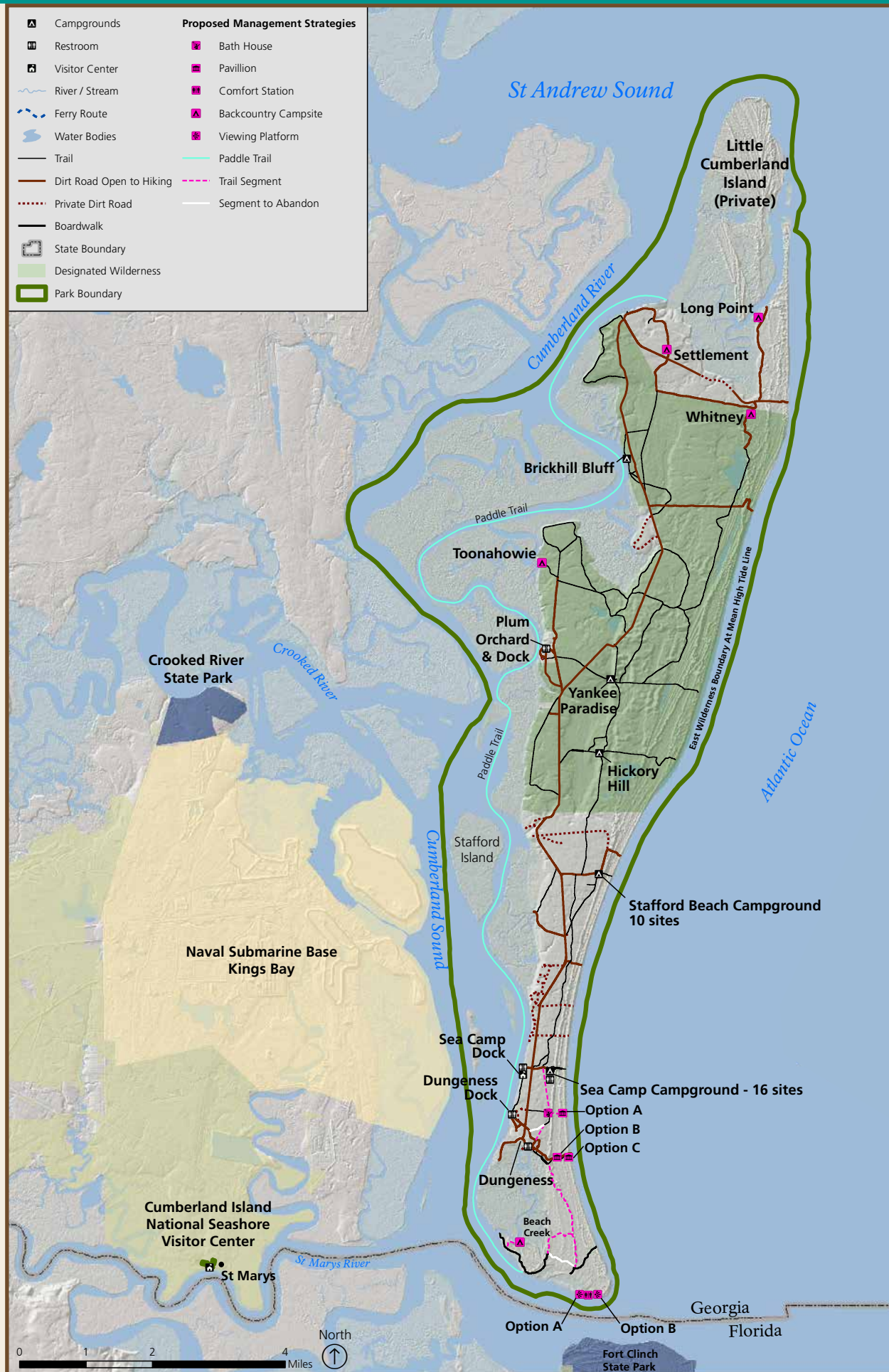
Schedule	Milestone	Planning Effort
Spring 2019	Public Engagement	Public listening sessions on issues and draft strategies.
Summer 2019	Develop and Analyze Management Alternatives	NPS staff review public engagement comments, and develop and analyze the impacts of possible management alternatives.
Fall 2019	Prepare Draft Plan and Initiate Environmental Compliance	NPS staff write plan for public review.
Winter 2019 / 2020	Public Review	VUM Plan released – public comment period.
Spring 2020	Decision Document	NPS selects the actions or alternative to be implemented and prepares decision document.

## *PURPOSE OF CUMBERLAND ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE*

*CUMBERLAND ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE maintains the primitive, undeveloped character of one of the largest and most ecologically diverse barrier islands on the Atlantic coast, while preserving scenic, scientific, and historical values and providing outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and solitude.*



# Map of Cumberland Island National Seashore





# Map of Southern Project Area



# Draft Strategies for Future Visitor Use Management

**We want to hear from you! Please share your thoughts about our draft strategies and let us know if there are other actions that we should consider.**



## General Strategies

- Identify the appropriate number of visitors on the island to protect resources and experiences and manage to visitor capacities. Make adjustments as needed to ensure desired conditions are maintained.
- Expand the Parallel Trail to connect the Dungeness Historic District with the Sea Camp area.
- Remove or realign South End Trail.
- Offer basic supplies (e.g., bug spray, ice, sunscreen, water) and bookstore sales near island ferry terminal(s).
- Offer kayak rental at Plum Orchard, Sea Camp, or Dungeness.
- Provide paid guided tours between Sea Camp or Dungeness and Plum Orchard. This would be separate from the longer Lands and Legacies Tours.
- Provide programming and a campsite to increase visitor opportunities and use in the Settlement district.
- Make facilities, programs, and services accessible and usable by all people to the extent practicable.
- Evaluate and intentionally decide locations, types, and amounts of appropriate bike use.

## Beach Areas

- Extend Nightingale Trail to provide beach access.
- Provide picnic tables and a shade pavilion near Dungeness Beach or Nightingale Beach.
- Provide restrooms and outdoor showers near Nightingale Beach.
- Develop a comfort station and/or viewing platform at South End Beach to accommodate visitors accessing the island by private watercraft.
- Actively manage visitor activity and visitor access on the south end of the island (St. Marys Inlet) to prevent disturbance of wildlife, particularly nesting shorebirds.

## Camping

- Increase the number of wilderness campsites AND available permits to offer more wilderness camping opportunities (not Sea Camp or Stafford Beach campgrounds).
- Increase solitude opportunities by increasing the number of wilderness campsites while maintaining the current number of wilderness camping permits (not Sea Camp or Stafford Beach campgrounds).
- Allow campfires at designated wilderness campsites.
- Create additional backcountry campsites that are accessible by canoes, kayaks, and small boats.
- Add three new campsites at Sea Camp Campground.

## Ferry

- Offer a ferry service to Plum Orchard Mansion.
- Disperse visitor arrivals and departures by increasing the frequency of ferry trips while decreasing the number of visitors on individual ferries.
- Provide smaller and faster ferry boats.
- Deliver ferry service to the island seven days a week during all months.





## We Would Like Your Feedback

Which potential management strategies do you feel would be most helpful in meeting the plan's vision for the future and why?

Do you have other suggestions that could address the plan's key issues that you would like us to consider?

Do you have ideas around accessibility, bike use, trails, paddle trails, etc. that you would like us to consider?

Please submit your comments by May 10, 2019



## Join the Conversation

As an integral part of the planning process, the National Park Service is asking for your input. Broad public participation will help shape the plan by giving us a better understanding of our visitors and their experiences, preferences, and needs. It can also help us identify existing or new opportunities to meet those needs while achieving our mission to preserve and protect resources.

We encourage you to get involved with the process and add your voice to the visitor use planning for the park.

The National Park Service will host listening sessions and provide information online to spread the word about this important effort. This is the beginning of the input process, and there will be future opportunities to provide additional input.

To find out more about meeting times, locations, and opportunities to comment please go to:

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuis>



## How to Comment

Your thoughts are important to us. Please submit your comments by **May 10, 2019**.

There are two ways to submit comments:

1. Submit comments electronically (*preferred method*): <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/cuis>
2. Hand-deliver or mail to the park Visitor Center in St. Marys or the park headquarters at:

Cumberland Island National Seashore  
101 Wheeler St.  
St. Marys, GA 31558

Please learn more about Cumberland Island National Seashore online, via the websites below:  
[www.nps.gov/cuis](http://www.nps.gov/cuis) or [www.facebook.com/CumberlandislandNPS](https://www.facebook.com/CumberlandislandNPS)

*Thank you for your interest in Cumberland Island National Seashore and for taking the time to join us in this remarkable and meaningful visitor use management planning process!*