



February 2022



Dear Friends of Fort Monroe National Monument,

The National Park Service invites public input from March 1 to March 31, 2022, on potential future activities and recreational uses within a 50-acre section of Fort Monroe National Monument's North Beach, also known as Dog Beach or Area 4.

Fort Monroe National Monument proudly participates in the Fort Monroe Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) activities and seeks to "promote community awareness and obtain constructive community review and comment on environmental restoration actions that will accelerate the overall cleanup and subsequent community reuse of Fort Monroe." (Please see the RAB website <https://fortmonroerab.org/> for further information.)

In support of these collaborative goals, Fort Monroe National Monument is gathering input on potential future recreational activities and desired visitor experiences in North Beach Area 4. Public input will help shape a Rapid Visitor Use Assessment, which will be used to inform recommended remediation of North Beach by the Army prior to transfer to the National Park Service.

Project Background

The presidential proclamation establishing Fort Monroe National Monument in 2011 looked forward to recreational uses throughout the monument, including the North Beach area. North Beach consists of the northern portion of Old Point Comfort Peninsula, most of which is owned by the National Park Service and included within the monument boundaries. North Beach is an indigenous cultural landscape, "providing modern-day visitors a sense of what earlier people saw when they arrived in the new world."

Currently under the control of the United States Army, North Beach Area 4 includes sections that require site remediation before the area could be added to the national park system. This area is currently not a part of Fort Monroe National Monument. It was formerly used for waste disposal and remaining contamination has kept it closed off to the public. The National Park Service is coordinating with the Army to clean up this contamination with the goal of transferring land to the National Park Service to be used as a recreation area. Before a land transfer can occur and any public use reestablished, the Army must address contamination and safety concerns.

The National Park Service is conducting a rapid assessment of potential visitor uses for North Beach Area 4, which will be used to determine the level of cleanup needed at the site. Public input will be incorporated into discussions with the Army regarding management of North Beach Area 4, with the goal of remediating environmental contaminants, transferring ownership of this site to the Fort Monroe National Monument, and opening North Beach Area 4 to the public.

As we consider visitor use and activities at Fort Monroe National Monument, please join us for two virtual public meetings to discuss North Beach Area 4: March 14 at 5:00 p.m. eastern daylight time (EDT) or March 15 at 10:00 a.m. EDT. Both meetings will be identical, sharing the same information and collecting input. Information on how to access the meeting, along with the online public comment portal, can be found below or at the park's planning page parkplanning.nps.gov/northbeach.

I encourage your participation and look forward to hearing your ideas.

Superintendent Eola Dance

North Beach Area 4 Engagement Study Area Map



The NPS makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the accuracy or content of this map.

Coordinate System:
NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N

- 7 mile trail
- Route to Study Area
- Study Area

0 0.13 0.25 0.5 Miles



GIS Office,
Colonial National Historical Park

About the National Park Service



The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and

outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior and manages more than 400 park units that comprise the national park system. Administration of park units occurs in many ways, from traditional units that are federally managed to nontraditional units that rely on partnerships and may have little, if any, federal landownership.

About the Study Area

Purpose and Significance of Fort Monroe National Monument from the Fort Monroe Foundational Document, 2015:

The purpose of Fort Monroe National Monument is to preserve, protect, and provide for the appropriate public use of the historical, natural, and recreational resources of Old Point Comfort, strategically located at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and to interpret its storied history in the European colonization of our nation, exploration of the bay, slavery in America and the struggle for freedom, and the defense of our nation.

Fort Monroe provides one of the only public access points along the lower Chesapeake Bay in proximity to a large urban population. The fort's natural resources, sandy public beaches, dunal areas, numerous historic trails, and diverse open spaces offer rare opportunities for water- and land-based recreation, including water access points and interpretation along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

Old Point Comfort continues to be shaped by water, and its strategic location relies heavily on its surrounding waterways. Mill Creek lies to the north and west and is characterized by marsh lands on the Atlantic flyway.

The area managed by the National Park Service provides landscape elements characteristic of the earliest human occupation of this area. Old Point Comfort's shoreline along the Chesapeake Bay is characterized by seawalls, boardwalks, and jetties and to the northeast by several miles of sandy beaches, dunal areas, salt marsh, and coastal woods. The shoreline allows for public recreational access to water, outdoor recreation areas, and for the protection and enjoyment of natural resources, such as estuarine vegetation and wildlife native to the Chesapeake Bay region, as well as providing protection for diverse cultural resources.



We Want to Hear from You

Please consider potential recreational uses and experiences that you would like to see in North Beach Area 4 and share them with us through one of the methods identified below. Your ideas will assist with the National Park Service's collaboration with the United States Army for cleanup and a potential future transfer of ownership. In your comments, we are particularly interested to hear your responses to the following questions:

1. What natural and cultural resources in North Beach Area 4 should the National Park Service seek to protect and manage for public enjoyment?
2. If North Beach Area 4 is cleaned up to support public recreation, and the NPS takes ownership of the area in the future, what types of public recreational activities and experiences would you hope to see? We invite you to consider the following three categories of use:
 - » Activities that require facilities: these include pastimes that require amenities, such as hiking or biking trails, ballfields, visitor comfort stations, and boardwalks for walking
 - » Activities that rely on natural resources and their interpretation: these include activities dependent on specific resources present, including wading or swimming in the bay, sitting on the sand or walking among the trees, as well as opportunities to learn about and engage with the natural history of the area
 - » Activities that rely on cultural resources and their interpretation: these include opportunities to engage with the incredible human history of Old Point Comfort through educational programming or other interpretive tools such as an audio tour
3. Assuming North Beach Area 4 is remediated to a safe level for public access, do you support transferring ownership from the United States Army to Fort Monroe National Monument for public use? Please tell us why.
4. Do you have any other comments, concerns, or suggestions for this study?



How To Participate

For information and updates, visit the project site at parkplanning.nps.gov/northbeach. The comment period will be open from March 1 to March 31, 2022. Please send your ideas and comments in any of the following ways.

Online: Visit parkplanning.nps.gov/northbeach and click the "Open for Comment" link.

Virtual Public Meetings: Attend one of the virtual public meetings to learn more and discuss the project with park and regional NPS staff. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the current status of North Beach Area 4, to respond to questions, and to gather public input on potential public uses in the area. Additional information about these virtual events will be posted on parkplanning.nps.gov/northbeach when available.

March 14 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. EDT

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83526866127?pwd=MkdOa2JnQU9MYUFHeUxmMWYySVlpdz09>

Call-in Number: (1) 301.715.8592

Meeting ID: 835 2686 6127

Passcode: 401240

March 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. EDT

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81370677196?pwd=cDJXSIZIdUI0Z0hyMXA0Y1I2UHcydz09>

Call-in Number: (1) 301.715.8592

Meeting ID: 813 7067 7196

Passcode: 062364

By Mail: Send written comments to:

National Park Service
Attn: Area 4 Rapid Visitor Use Assessment/
Martha Droge
1234 Market Street, 20th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

By E-mail: Contact Superintendent Eola Dance at:
SuperintendentFOMR@nps.gov