

Fire Island National Seashore Summer Club Dock

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



You're Invited!

The National Park Service (NPS) requesting your input on the Fire Island Summer Club (Summer Club) Dock project proposed within the Fire Island National Seashore. Your participation is vital to the success of our planning process. Please get involved and submit written comments electronically. There are no public meetings planned.

Project Background

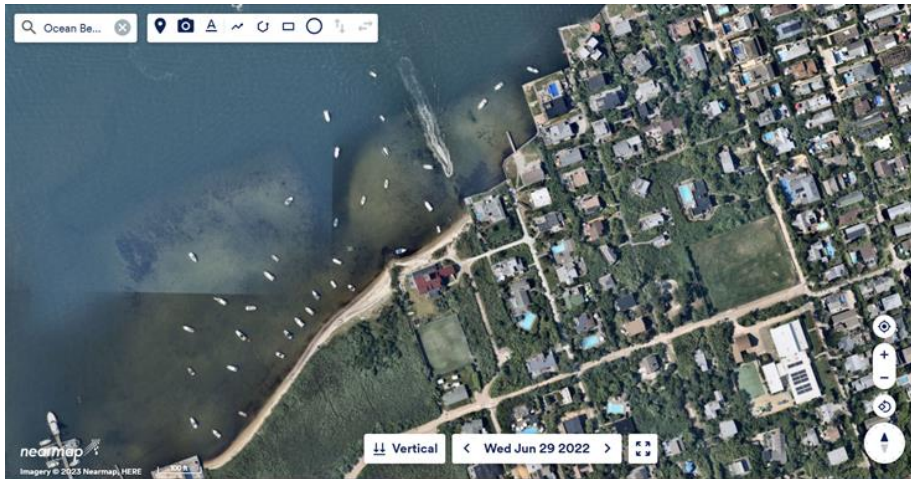
Summer Club is a condominium community, incorporated in 1946, with 46 homes and a community clubhouse. Fire Island does not have a network of roadways for transportation between communities and permits for driving access are limited. Water-based transportation is the primary means of access to Fire Island communities, including Summer Club.

Preliminary Purpose and Need

The purpose of the NPS action is to determine whether to issue a Special Use Permit for the Summer Club community to construct a proposed dock. NPS has jurisdiction over the Great South Bay water column where the dock is to be built. Summer Club asserts the dock is needed so that members have more efficient access to their homes. Currently, there are two options for access to Summer Club residences during the summer season: (1) moor a vessel offshore of the community and wade or use a dinghy to get to the shore, or (2) take the Ocean Beach ferry and travel over ½ mile on foot to get to the community, and another ¼ mile to get to their homes. Residents, especially seniors, find both of these options challenging when traveling with luggage, goods, and/or young children/pets. In addition to providing access for Summer Club residents, the proposed dock will reduce existing impacts to submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV, eelgrass) beds to the east and west of the dock (see figure below).

Fire Island National Seashore Summer Club Dock

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Nearmap image from 6/29/2022 showing 38 vessels moored in and around SAV beds adjacent to the proposed dock location.

Preliminary Proposed Action

The NPS is proposing to issue a Special Use Permit for Summer Club to construct a dock at Fire Island National Seashore (FINS) for year-round access to the community. The draft plan for the proposed dock is 445' x 8' and includes up to 24 mooring slips, enough for 52% of condominium residents, and would provide access via the outer dock for water taxi drop off for Summer Club guests. The dock would extend into Great South Bay where NPS has jurisdiction over the water column.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to discuss the potential environmental impacts of the Summer Club dock on the resources over which NPS has jurisdiction in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA); the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508); US Department of the Interior NEPA regulations (43 CFR 46); NPS Director's Order 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making (NPS 2011b); and the NPS NEPA Handbook (NPS 2015).

Preliminary Alternatives

NEPA requires federal agencies to explore a range of reasonable alternatives. The alternatives considered for analysis are the result of early engagement with stakeholders and agency consultation. The EA is expected to analyze two action alternatives, the Community Dock (Preliminary Preferred Alternative) and Drop-off Dock with Moorings, as well as the No Action alternative, for analysis.

Detailed construction methodology and equipment for both action alternatives is similar, and would be dependent on (1) permit conditions and (2) the contractor selected for construction of the dock. In general, construction of the preliminary action alternatives would utilize a combination of in-water equipment for pile installation and transport of goods and materials; and land-based equipment for pier and wavebreak construction. Construction would be performed in the offseason, with pile installation to be completed between November 1 and April 14 as recommended by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The remaining structures would be constructed by hand from south (i.e. from the Clubhouse deck) to north once pile installation is complete.

If the goal of *de minimis* loss of SAV is not achieved, adaptive management strategies will be utilized to reduce impacts. Strategies could include modification of the dock structure or restoration of SAV beds in the vicinity of the dock.



Affected Environment and Impact Topics

Water Quality: Both the construction and operation phases of the preliminary proposed action have the potential to increase turbidity in the Great South Bay water column. The EA shall evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed dock on turbidity, focusing on the installation of piles, operational impacts of piles, and potential impacts of the proposed wavebreaks.

Sediments and Sediment Movement along Shoreline: Both the construction and operation phases of the proposed action have the potential to impact sediments in the Great South Bay water column. The EA shall evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed dock on suspended sediments and sediment transport along the shoreline, focusing on the installation of piles, operational impacts of piles, and potential impacts of the proposed wavebreaks.

Wetlands: The NPS has identified wetlands in the vicinity of the proposed dock. The EA shall summarize existing wetland conditions, including federal and state regulated wetlands; and shall present analysis of potential impacts of the dock on these wetlands.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation: A 2018 field survey and 2019 Long Island South Shore Seagrass mapping have identified SAV in the vicinity of the proposed dock. The EA shall present existing data concerning SAV (i.e., eelgrass) beds and analyzes how the proposed dock may impact those beds in the water column.

Finfish, Shellfish, and Aquatic Invertebrates: Finfish, shellfish, and aquatic invertebrates are known to traverse the water column in the project location. The EA shall provide a summary of finfish, shellfish, and aquatic invertebrates expected in the project area water column based on habitat type; briefly summarize the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment performed for the project; and discuss potential impacts of the proposed dock on finfish, shellfish, and aquatic invertebrates, with a focus on those species that utilize SAV.

Threatened and Endangered Species: Some threatened and endangered species are known to traverse the water column in the project location. The EA will present a summary of aquatic species that may be present in the area of the proposed dock and are listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, including both federal and state listed species; and will assess potential impacts of the proposed dock on these listed species, including discussion of how mitigation measures incorporated into the project design would minimize potential impacts to listed species.



The Planning Process

The public is encouraged to provide substantive comments on the Preliminary Proposed Action for the Summer Club Dock project.

Once we have gathered public input on the Preliminary Proposed Action, and refined a proposal and a range of alternatives, the NPS anticipates moving on to the next phase of the project by initiating the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process, which will allow for additional opportunities for public input.

How to Comment

The NPS is seeking substantive comments that describe why parts of the Preliminary Proposed Action may not work, provide new ideas or factual information, or present reasonable alternatives other than what is described in this newsletter. Comments that merely support or oppose the proposed action are not considered substantive. Commenters may wish to consider the following questions:

- What elements of the Preliminary Proposed Action are most important and why?
- What other information should the planning team consider when developing alternatives?
- Are there other elements or ideas that should be considered and analyzed?
- What is missing, and why should it be considered?
- Are there other NPS resources or impact topics that should be considered in the analysis?

	How to Comment
1	Submit written comments online at: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/FISC_dock
2	RE: Summer Club Dock Fire Island National Seashore Resource Stewardship Division 120 Laurel Street Patchogue, New York 11772

Comments will be accepted starting August 30, 2024. The comment period ends September 30, 2024.

Notes: Comments will not be accepted by fax, e-mail, or any other way than those specified above. Please also note that your entire comment—including personal identifying information such as your address, phone number, and e-mail address—may be made publicly available at any time pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Comments submitted by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations will not be accepted.