



FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES



FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

GMP NEWSLETTER 2, APRIL 2010

NOTE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

After more than 30 years, Fire Island National Seashore is engaged in the preparation of a new general management plan (GMP). This is the second newsletter being issued regarding this planning effort. Much has been accomplished since the first newsletter was published in January 2008. In this issue we are presenting the preliminary management alternatives for the National Seashore. We encourage you to take this opportunity to offer your thoughts and comments on these alternatives before we present them formally in a draft general management plan.

The management alternatives being presented were prepared by the National Park Service planning team in consultation with park staff; representatives of the Fire Island communities; state, local, and county agencies and organizations; and members of the general public. Through numerous workshops and other outreach efforts, the planning team has received quite a bit of input from these stakeholders.

Herein is described the current management of the park and summaries of three preliminary management alternatives. Each of the management alternatives outlines a different approach for how the visiting public would experience the park and how it would be managed. Also described are a number of proposals that are considered so fundamental to park management that they would be

pursued regardless of which alternative is selected for implementation. These proposals are referred to as “Elements Common to All Action Alternatives.”

In the formal draft plan, one management alternative will be selected as the “preferred” option by the National Park Service. Ultimately, the preferred management alternative could be a combination of proposals from each of the preliminary alternatives described here.

Please share your thoughts with us. We need your help to complete the draft alternatives phase of the planning process!

Sincerely,

K. Christopher Soller
Superintendent



FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

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WHAT IS A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (GMP)?

A GMP, a planning requirement of the National Park Service (NPS), lays out a vision for a park and provides guidance for its management over the next 15 to 20 years. The planning process takes 3 to 5 years to complete. General management planning offers an open, structured decision making process that is (1) logical and trackable, (2) based on scholarly and scientific information and analysis, and (3) based on understanding and consideration of public input. General management plans provide the foundation for decision making in each of the National Park System's 392 national parks.

PARK PURPOSE AND MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

The park purpose is derived from the park's enabling legislation and states why the park was established as a unit of the National Park System. It is among the core statements that compose the Foundation for Planning for the park. In addition to the Foundation for Planning, the planning team has developed a statement of Management Philosophy in response to the complex environment in which the park operates and to acknowledge the need for a collaborative approach to protecting the park's resources. The alternatives being developed by the planning team must all be consistent with park purpose and should support the management philosophy. The planning team has refined these statements in response to comments received from the public.



Rhythmic waves, high dunes, ancient maritime forests, historic landmarks and glimpses of wildlife—
Fire Island has been a special place for diverse plants, animals and people for centuries.
Far from the sounds and pressures of nearby big-city life, Fire Island National Seashore's dynamic barrier
island beaches offer solitude and camaraderie, and spiritual renewal to civilization-weary people.



DRAFT PARK PURPOSE

Together with the Fire Island communities, government agencies, and other partners, Fire Island National Seashore conserves, preserves, and protects for the use and appreciation of current and future generations relatively unspoiled and undeveloped beaches, dunes, and other natural features and processes. These include Fire Island's larger landscape and its surrounding marine environment. These resources possess high natural and aesthetic values to the nation as examples of great natural beauty and wildness in close proximity to large concentrations of urban populations.

Fire Island National Seashore conserves, preserves and protects the historic structures, cultural landscapes, museum collections and archeological resources

associated with Fire Island National Seashore including the Fire Island Light Station and the William Floyd Estate.

Fire Island National Seashore preserves the primitive and natural character of the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness and protects its wilderness values of solitude and isolation.

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Fire Island is a dynamic place where natural and human forces have interwoven to create a diverse landscape.

As spelled out by Congress in the park's enabling legislation, the primary purpose of the National Seashore is to protect and preserve natural resources for future generations.

Natural change is an integral part of the functioning of a barrier island. Within this context, the human needs of today and tomorrow must be mutually under-

stood and addressed in a manner that supports long term resource protection.

Fire Island National Seashore fosters a relationship between people and the natural and cultural environment that is healthy and sustainable.

Activities and practices within the 17 preexisting communities affect National Seashore resources, just as park management activities can affect the communities.

For these reasons, a collaborative approach to stewardship among the National Park Service, the island communities, government agencies, and all Seashore partners is essential.

DRAFT PARK GOALS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. Partner with the public, island communities, and others in the stewardship and preservation of Fire Island's natural and cultural resources and its distinctive character.
2. Manage Fire Island National Seashore holistically as part of a greater ecological, social, economic, and cultural system.
3. Provide for the preservation of the maritime environment and its cultural and natural systems.
4. Identify and evaluate, and where appropriate, manage and protect cultural and natural resources parkwide with consideration of their broader context.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Partner with others to ensure that land use development practices undertaken on Fire Island promote ecological health, environmental quality in this dynamic environment.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE, INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

1. Foster the public's understanding and appreciation of the purpose and significance of the national seashore and its natural and cultural resources, as well as the public's vital stewardship role in protecting the seashore through vigorous outreach and education.
2. Provide a wide variety of quality and interpretive experiences for a broad range of audiences, including underserved populations emphasizing man's relationship with the environment and the historical and cultural values of the seashore.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

1. Preserve the "roadless" character of Fire Island and ensure that water-based transportation is the primary form of access to park resources on Fire Island whenever and wherever feasible.
2. Ensure that the ways to and from park resources on Fire Island and the mainland are well known, well marked, and easy and safe to navigate.
3. Enable broad access to park resources by all members of the public regardless of income.

PARK OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE AND FACILITIES

1. Provide a safe and healthy environment for visitors, residents, and NPS employees.
2. Develop facilities that are environmentally sensitive and sustainable and are able to adapt to the changing environment.
3. Assume a leadership role in implementing sustainable design and management practices.



STATUS OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

WORKSHOPS

During the course of the planning process, a series of topical workshops have been held to address key planning questions. These workshops were organized around particular questions or issues that emerged during the scoping phase of the project and the workshop results informed the development of management alternatives for the park. Each workshop involved participants representing park staff; NPS technical specialists; state, county, and local agencies and organizations; Fire Island communities; and relevant subject matter experts. The workshops are described below. Links to the complete workshop reports may be found at the park's website – www.nps.gov/fiis.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES (DECEMBER 2007)

This workshop focused on the development of interpretive themes that would capture the essence of the park's significance and highlight the most critical stories and messages that the park should convey to the public.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE/ TRANSPORTATION (JANUARY 2008)

This session offered the opportunity to generate ideas and recommendations on how to offer rewarding and relevant experiences for a diversity of publics, and broaden our audiences while building future stewardship for Fire Island and the William Floyd Estate. Workshop participants also worked to identify the best and most appropriate methods to move people to, from, and along Fire Island and improve access to and from the Floyd Estate.

SUSTAINABILITY (JANUARY 2008)

During this workshop participants explored the principles of sustainability through a series of presentations and case studies followed by a discussion of actions and strategies that should be considered to make Fire Island and the William Floyd Estate more sustainable in an ecological sense, while allowing for continued public enjoyment.

MARINE RESOURCES (MARCH 2008)

This session focused on the management of the seashore's marine based resources and identified key management objectives for protecting this resource.

PHOTO ©DIANE ABELL



WILLIAM FLOYD ESTATE (JUNE 2009)

This workshop provided community stakeholders and NPS staff with the opportunity to consider the Floyd Estate's importance to and its place in the Mastic community. Further work was completed by NPS staff and technical specialists to identify management alternatives for the Floyd Estate.

NATURAL RESOURCES (OCTOBER 2009)

This session considered alternatives for natural resource management on Fire Island and at the William Floyd Estate.

CULTURAL RESOURCES (JANUARY 2010)

This workshop focused on identifying cultural resources across both federal and non-federal areas of the island. State and local preservation agencies and organizations were represented and provided descriptions of the roles they play in local preservation. Finally, needs related to cultural resources and some possible solutions were discussed.

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES

Community Character Analysis and Visioning (Commenced January 2009; Status: On-going)

This project is being undertaken by an independent consultant, A. Nelessen Associates of New Jersey. The goal of this project is to define both the unifying and the distinctive characteristics of Fire Island. The results of the study will be used to better understand the existing physical character of all the Fire Island communities and define what the residents and visitors feel makes the Fire Island communities unique and what issues they feel are important to address so those character related qualities are not degraded or lost. This information will enable NPS planners to more effectively evaluate the potential impacts that proposed management alternatives may have on these resources.

Water Based Transportation – Opportunities Analysis (Commenced October 2009; Status: On-going)

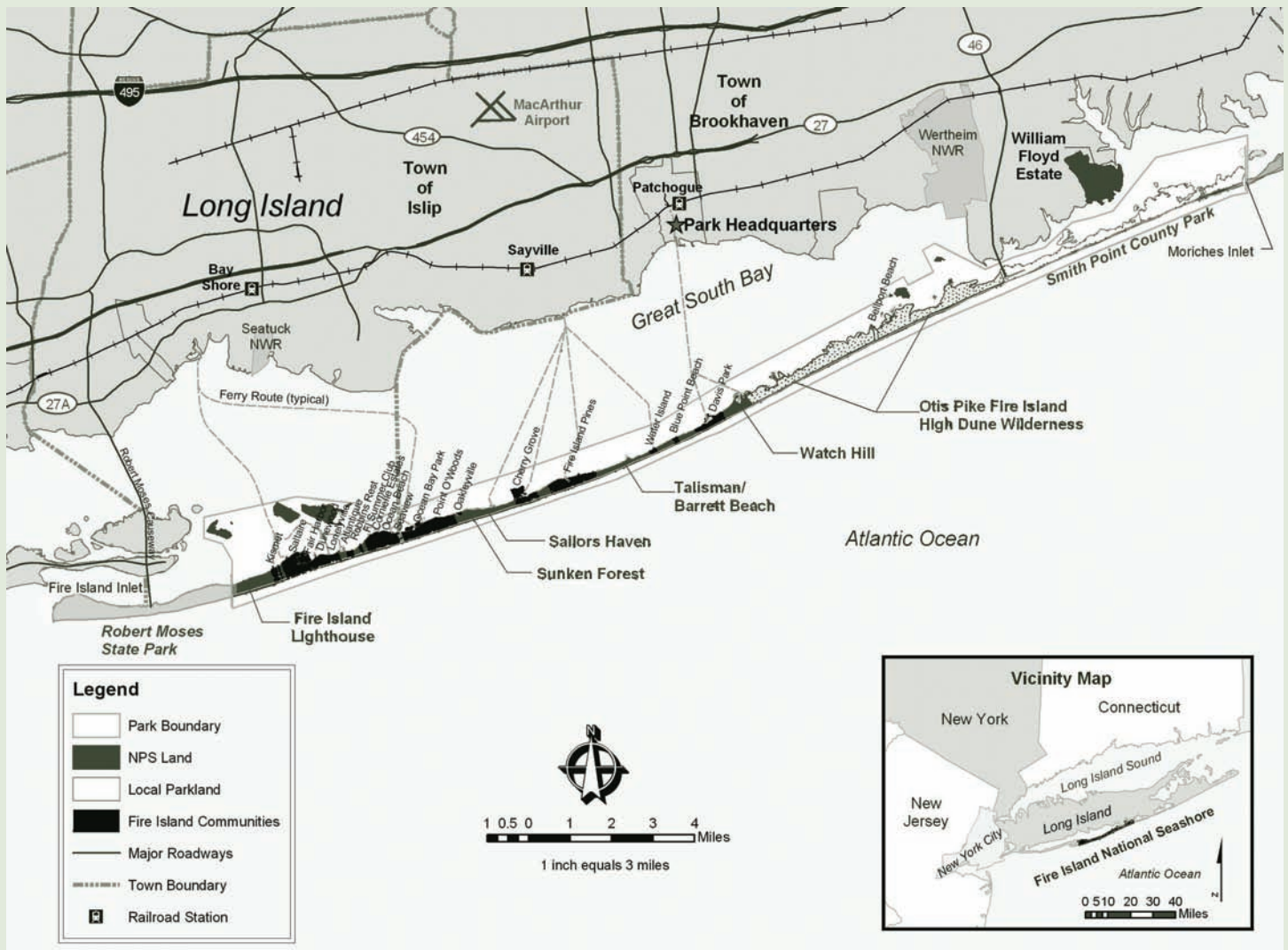
This project is being undertaken by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Volpe Center. This project involves an analysis of opportunities for expanding and/or enhancing water based transportation to Fire Island for the wide range of constituent groups that require access to the Island. The primary focus of this analysis is on groups engaged in operating the park and communities, and on those providing regular services to them (e.g. contractors, emergency services, town offices, public utilities, and other service providers).

PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives were developed by the NPS planning team taking into consideration the park's enabling legislation, the park purpose and significance, extensive public input, the condition of park resources, and the park's goals and planning issues. These alternatives represent preliminary ideas and concepts being considered. They are not intended to describe the full content of the alternative but to provide just enough detail to enable the reader to understand how one alternative differs from another.

Public input is critical at this time and will assist the NPS in the process of refining the alternatives for presentation in a formal draft document. The NPS is interested in learning about the ideas you support and those with which you have concerns, and most importantly, please let us know why you support or are concerned about them. As part of preparing the draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS), the NPS will identify its "preferred alternative". The selection of the preferred alternative is based on several factors including the results of the environmental impact analysis, public input, and how well the proposals meet the park's purpose and goals. The preferred alternative can be one of the alternatives as they are presented in this newsletter or can be some combination thereof. Public input in the process at this time will play a role in the selection of the preferred alternative.

Once complete, implementation of the final GMP will be dependent upon the availability of funds. Proposed construction projects would have to compete for funds through the NPS' normal priority setting processes for funding. In order to effectively pursue a cooperative stewardship strategy, the park and its partners may have to consider creating a formal, organizational structure to move implementation of the plan forward in a collaborative way. This structure may take any one or more of several forms including something as basic as an ad-hoc working group like the present Fire Island Law Enforcement Council or as complex as a multilateral commission having some planning and land use authorities similar to the Long Island Pine Barrens Commission.



COMMON TO ALL ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Regardless of which alternative is ultimately chosen and implemented, numerous objectives for management will be applicable to the park as a whole. Some of the elements considered common to all action alternatives are presented below:

COOPERATIVE STEWARDSHIP

The NPS would work with others to engage in cooperative stewardship. The NPS, communities and other entities, within the Seashore, would work together to improve land use planning and regulations and make positive change related to the management of the Seashore and related areas and entities. This would include encouraging, supporting, and cooperating with the incorporated villages, towns, and other island communities to identify and preserve their own distinctive character. Under all action alternatives, a proactive, collaborative approach to island stewardship among existing and new partners would be considered fundamental to success of the plan. The Seashore and its partners would consider a new organizational model that will enhance communication, coordination, and oversight and will better enable them to provide for the stewardship and enjoyment of Fire Island.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Educational outreach is an important tool for enhancing public enjoyment of the park, fostering stewardship of National Seashore resources, and encouraging sustainable practices. The Seashore would enhance its public outreach program through a variety of means, including the use of up-to-date technology and would expand educational outreach through an array of activities including in-school programming, educating the educators, opportunities for field experiences, and programs for life-long learners. Educational programs would be integrated into the Seashore's resource stewardship program and would provide information on resource management practices and strategies as well as offer opportunities for hands-on

involvement in research and stewardship activities. The concept of sustainability would be an important tenet of the Seashore's educational outreach.

SUBMERGED MARINE RESOURCES

A Marine Resource Management Plan would be developed to address both natural and cultural marine-based resources. The Seashore would coordinate with other agencies to ensure that natural and cultural resources are retained in good condition, coordinate inventory and mapping efforts; identify an appropriate repository for submerged marine resource information; and engage in educational programming and outreach to communicate the values of these resources and foster their protection.

CLIMATE CHANGE & SEA LEVEL RISE

Climate change refers to changes occurring in the earth's atmospheric, hydrologic, and oceanic systems, which could alter the landscape, natural and cultural resources, and facilities of the National Seashore. Changes, including increased global air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level, provide evidence that the earth's climate system is warming.

The Seashore would establish programs to assess, interpret, and respond to the impacts of climate change and work to:

- » reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- » educate NPS staff, its partners, and the public on the topic;
- » improve energy efficiency;
- » undertake research and monitoring to expand understanding of climate change and how systems respond; and
- » proactively plan for and adapt to the effects that may be realized from climate change, including the loss of shoreline, altered ecosystems, cultural resources, loss of recreation sites and park facilities, and disruptions in visitor use.

The Seashore would implement sustainable strategies for adapting human activities to dynamic coastal processes and climate change and sea-level rise.

ROADLESS ISLAND

The Seashore would work with the communities, county, state and others to manage the island's transportation system in a manner that supports a roadless environment where driving is kept to a minimum, except at designated areas on Fire Island's east and west ends. The Seashore would work with others to manage ferry transportation to ensure that it provides a quality visitor experience and remains the primary form of transportation to and from Fire Island. The Seashore would encourage ferry operators going to park destinations to be more sustainable and ask Fire Island communities to do the same with their ferry operators.

PUBLIC INFORMATION, ORIENTATION AND WAYFINDING

The Seashore, in conjunction with others would improve wayfinding to and throughout the Seashore, including signs, maps and other information at such places as connecting train stations; ferry terminals in Patchogue, Sayville, and Bay Shore; Island communities; National Seashore destinations on Fire Island and the William Floyd Estate. The Seashore would take advantage of new and developing technologies (e.g. iPod, cell phone, GPS) for visitor information and orientation.

STATUS QUO / CURRENT MANAGEMENT

The status quo alternative is required under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and serves as the baseline for evaluating and comparing the other proposed alternatives. Although there are current management actions associated with it, this alternative is not considered to be an “action alternative.” Under this alternative, current management practices and the use of approved and interim plans would continue. NPS would continue to collaborate with local, county, and state officials on an as needed basis to address common regulatory, policy, and management issues. The Seashore would continue to meet day-to-day operations, management, legal, and regulatory requirements based on existing plans and the availability of funds.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Seashore would continue to work to preserve the natural environment and take actions to retain and enhance natural processes. A number of on-going projects and programs would continue including the Mosquito Management Plan, Vegetation Management Plan; and inventory and monitoring of the park’s natural resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Seashore’s management emphasis would continue to be exclusively on cultural resources that occur on federal lands, particularly at the Fire Island Light Station Tract and the William Floyd Estate. The Seashore would rehabilitate or restore cultural resources based on a highest priorities and would continue efforts to identify, manage, and protect submerged and other archeological resources. Park collections would continue to be housed in the curatorial facility located at the William Floyd Estate.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The relationship between the communities and the Seashore would continue to revolve around the existing federal zoning standards, driving regulations, and other federal regulations with which the NPS must comply. The Seashore would continue to use the existing federal zoning standards for land protection and would continue notification to property owners and applicants, and local zoning officials of the Seashore’s position on proposed building and zoning applications. The Seashore would continue to apply for the funds for land acquisition and would consider the use of condemnation consistent with the current law to meet resource protection goals. The Seashore would continue to rely on the NYS Coastal Erosion Hazard Area (CEHA) law as implemented by state and local authorities. Within the communities, properties damaged or destroyed by overwash and storm surges would continue to be allowed to be repaired or rebuilt, consistent with existing zoning standards.

Sunken Forest earned its name because it appears lower than the surrounding water. The forest is not actually below sea level – the high surrounding sand dunes that protect this environment create the illusion of being lower than sea level.





The Ethnographic Overview and Assessment sponsored by NPS in 2004 identified cultural and historical values in each of the Fire Island communities. Under this alternative, island communities would continue to study, recognize, and manage their own cultural resources as desired.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Under this alternative, the visitor experience would remain somewhat segmented with visitors to Seashore facilities largely staying within those facilities and visitors and local residents of communities largely staying within their individual communities. Current efforts to make more people aware of the presence of the national seashore would continue. The Seashore would continue to offer a broad slate of visitor programs at selected locations on a limited schedule as funding and staffing permit. The Seashore's informational website, exhibits, brochures, and other publications would continue to be available.

FACILITIES

The existing Seashore facilities at Fire Island Light Station, Sailors Haven and Sunken Forest, Barrett Beach, Watch Hill, the Wilderness Visitor Center, and the William Floyd Estate would remain largely unchanged and would be staffed at current levels. The Seashore would continue to provide snack bar, restrooms, life-guards, and ferry operations, where those services currently exist. As funding allows, the Seashore would rehabilitate facilities, and provide new construction where deemed appropriate under existing management guidelines (e.g. a new structure will be developed at the Fire Island Light Station to house the lighthouse's original Fresnel lens). The Seashore's administrative headquarters and maintenance shop would continue in their present locations on the Patchogue River in the Village of Patchogue. Construction of a new Ferry Terminal with a visitor orientation exhibit and meeting space, located at the existing terminal site would continue and would be scheduled to open for the 2010 visitor season. The Seashore would continue to incorporate the concepts of sustainability when possible in its interpretive program and as feasible in new development and the rehabilitation of existing structures.

WILDERNESS

The Seashore would continue to maintain the wilderness character of Otis Pike High Dunes Wilderness Area. Wilderness camping would continue to be permitted. The Wilderness Visitor Center would remain and would continue to function as a gateway to the Wilderness Area. Existing boardwalks, signage and the concrete pads would be retained, as would any historic relics and remnant structures. The old Burma Road would continue to be minimally maintained where it remains to allow for passage as a footpath. The facilities at Old Inlet would remain and would continue to be maintained in a manner that minimizes its effect on the wilderness experience. NPS would continue to work with the Village of Bellport to maintain their village-owned beach facility that bisects the Wilderness Area in a manner that is consistent with the Wilderness Management Plan.

ENHANCING NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES

Under this alternative, the protection and restoration of natural, ecological systems, patterns and resources would be emphasized over the built, human environment. A nature-based visitor experience would be emphasized with the number of structures and the overall development footprint of the National Seashore being reduced. Visitor use and activity would be carefully distributed and accommodated in a manner that protects the environment.



Dune vegetation is very important for the formation and stabilization of dune complexes on barrier islands. Both the root system and exposed vegetation restrict sand movement around plants, helping to secure the dune.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Under this alternative the Seashore would seek a very high degree of natural resource protection. The Seashore would work with park partners to pursue a proactive program of natural resource restoration within the park and would seek to restore degraded or damaged ecosystems. Public use of the park would be managed more intensively to reduce resource impacts.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The treatment of cultural resources is similar to what is described under Alternative 1. An appropriate location for an additional curatorial storage facility would be identified off-site. The Seashore would expand its natural resource/ natural history collection for interpretive and research purposes. Park collections stored on the Island would be relocated to mainland visitor facilities or the off-site collection storage facility.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Under this alternative the Seashore would emphasize the protection of natural resources over human use and development. NPS would work with others to undertake a comprehensive land management program that may include acquisition of high priority lands (e.g. dune line) that would foster land protection. The Seashore would work with state and local authorities to enforce CEHA. No reconstruction would be allowed after a major storm event within the communities or in the Seashore district. Reconstruction would be discouraged at Smith Point County Park. NPS would work with others to arrive at a meaningful strategy for compensating affected property owners.



Program participants use a seine net to explore marine life in Great South Bay.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

While visitors would continue to enjoy access to and interpretation of cultural resources at the William Floyd Estate and the Fire Island Light Station, under this alternative the visitor experience in the Seashore would center on close contact with and immersion in the natural landscape. Clearly organized access routes would minimize the disturbance of natural resources with access to some areas being restricted and some different types of uses that are “lighter on the land” being encouraged. Physical connections between Seashore sites and the communities would continue to be limited or even diminished. Personal media (e.g. web info/download, cell phones, iPods, brochures) and services rather than physical exhibits, museums, and waysides would be emphasized in providing visitor information and programming. Outreach to schools and community groups and meeting them where they live would also be a fundamental interpretive strategy.

FACILITIES

Under this alternative, the Seashore would reduce the number of park facilities where deemed appropriate, and would provide a “green” upgrade to the remaining park facilities as they are scheduled for rehabilitation, depending on park and operational needs. The Seashore would also explore the use of temporary/ removable structures that would be used during the visitor season and dismantled and stored during the off-season. In Patchogue, an expanded visitor orientation facility would be developed at the ferry terminal site. Administrative, maintenance and transportation functions would be concentrated in a single location, and where practical would be sited on higher ground and out of the floodplain. The Seashore’s Sailors Haven marina would be removed and the Watch Hill marina would be reduced in size, but ferry docks would be retained and off-shore moorings would be formalized. The current system of boardwalks and trails would be retained and maintained to insure preservation of the park’s natural resources, while still providing opportunities for visitors to experience a more natural barrier island environment. Minimal services, including lifeguards and restrooms would be provided for visitor safety.



WILDERNESS

Under this alternative, the Seashore would maximize resource protection and wilderness character by minimizing development within or at the edges of the wilderness and aggressively act to remove all traces of human-constructed facilities/activities and restore those areas to a natural state. Cultural elements (e.g. the Burma Road and Old Inlet structures) would be documented prior to their removal. If supported by science, the Seashore would act to fill in the mosquito ditches in the Wilderness Area. Camping would continue to be permitted in the Wilderness Area. The existing Wilderness Visitor Center would be removed and replaced with a small outdoor information plaza with a kiosk and restrooms.

RECOGNIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN USE AND NATURE

This alternative would recognize Fire Island as an ecological landscape with a long history of human habitation and use. It would acknowledge the strong connection between resource protection and human use and foster an appropriate relationship between them. The focus of the visitor experience and interpretation would be on “life on the barrier island – an ever changing landscape” and would emphasize a more integrated experience that links the natural and cultural environments. Existing facilities would be improved, redeveloped and/or reoriented to be greener and more efficient.



A system of dirt roads and paths was developed early in the history of the William Floyd Estate. Today 8.5 miles of these roads and paths are maintained as wooded trails.

NATURAL RESOURCES

This alternative would emphasize the dynamic relationship between the natural processes and human use. The Seashore would ensure that management actions are environmentally compatible with an emphasis on adaptive management to address change in a dynamic environment. A moderate level of intervention in natural systems would be permitted to address conditions that affect human health and safety.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Based on research reports completed for historic structures and the cultural landscape on both the Island and at the William Floyd Estate, the Seashore would make a concerted effort to rehabilitate and interpret the park’s primary cultural resources and stories throughout the Seashore (e.g., Light Station complex, submerged resources, cultural traditions, evolution of island development/uses over time) and would make technical assistance available to island communities who wish to inventory, protect and interpret their historic and cultural assets.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

NPS would seek an approach to protect natural resources and community character, while recognizing that the communities will continue to evolve in a responsible and sustainable manner. The Seashore would work closely with island communities/towns using a variety of means (e.g., community design initiatives, town regulations, community infrastructure, selective land acquisition or transfers) to help the communities attain protection of natural resources and community character. Land management strategies would provide for a transition to a more natural (landward) dune alignment. Rebuilding would be permitted consistent with adopted plans, land use regulations, and/or design guidelines. NPS would work with state and local governments to ensure that no new development occurs in the CEHA. NPS would work with others to arrive at a meaningful strategy for compensating affected property owners. A moderate level of intervention in natural systems would be permitted including limited beach nourishment.

NPS would work to strengthen partnerships on the island toward creating a more integrated park/community experience. The Seashore would support communities in their efforts to identify, document, and preserve their cultural resources and heritage and to be good stewards of the island’s natural environment. The Seashore could provide technical assistance upon request in support of these efforts.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Seashore's interpretive and educational programming would stress connections between the natural and cultural environment and a more integrated visitor experience on Fire Island and at the William Floyd Estate. Human interaction with the environment – past, present, and future – would be stressed. The Seashore would encourage the distribution and dispersion of park visitors across the island with a more linked visitor experience between the communities and the Seashore.

Sandals line the boardwalk to the beach in a Fire Island community. Enjoying a day at the beach is one of the most common activities on Fire Island.

FACILITIES

Under this alternative, the Seashore would improve or redevelop much of its existing infrastructure and refocus, rebuild and re-orient the park's facilities to make them greener and more efficient. Visitor facilities could be expanded, while maintaining their green and sustainable nature, to the largest extent feasible. Maintenance facilities would be upgraded, as well. In Patchogue, the administration and maintenance facilities would be enlarged and/or refurbished to improve operational efficiency. Park facilities on Fire Island would be improved. For example, the Sailors Haven marina could be redesigned to minimize erosion; an educational camp and lodge could be developed on a previously disturbed site like Talisman or Sailors Haven. The Seashore would also work with Fire Island communities to consider creating a bike/hike trail that would cross much of the Island (e.g. from the west entrance to the edge of Point O'Woods). Marinas would be redesigned to meet the "green marina" criteria.

WILDERNESS

While continuing to protect the area's wilderness character, this alternative would provide a few new or updated amenities and the Seashore would take steps to improve the sense of entry into the Wilderness. The Seashore would re-establish a sand trail along the old Burma Road, where feasible. Dune crossings that connect to the through trail would be designated. Wilderness camping would continue to be permitted. Mosquito ditches would remain as would historic relics and remnant structures. At Old Inlet and at Bellport Beach, existing facilities would remain. The Seashore would work with the Village of Bellport to expand their role as stewards in the Wilderness Area. The existing Wilderness Visitor Center would be rehabilitated to meet ADA compliance requirements and guidelines for LEED certification.



EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC USE

This alternative is very similar to Alternative 3 in terms of the proposed approach to resource management and community relations. It differs in that it proposes a broadening of the diversity and geographic scope of the visitor experience based on the Seashore's primary themes, while ensuring that new types of activities or greater levels of use do not have a negative effect on resource protection efforts. Visitors would be encouraged to visit other regional attractions (e.g. Wertheim NWR, LI Maritime Museum) to gain a greater appreciation Fire Island's larger context and meaning. This alternative seeks to broaden and expand public use of the Island and proposes the expansion of some existing facilities as well as the development of some new facilities.



Sailing and boating are very popular activities on Great South Bay with many marinas and yacht clubs lining its shores.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Similar to Alternative 3, the Seashore would emphasize the dynamic relationship between the natural processes and human use. The Seashore would ensure that management actions are environmentally compatible with an emphasis on adaptive management to address change in a dynamic environment. A moderate level of intervention in natural systems would be permitted to address conditions that affected human health and safety, and comfort.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

As described under Alternative 3, the Seashore would make a concerted effort to rehabilitate and interpret the park's primary cultural resources and stories throughout the Seashore (e.g., Light Station complex, submerged resources, cultural traditions, evolution of island development/uses over time) and would make technical assistance available to island communities who wish to inventory, protect and interpret their historic and cultural assets. The curatorial storage facility at the William Floyd Estate would be expanded to accommodate larger collection as well as some exhibit space.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

As in Alternative 3, NPS would seek an approach to protecting natural resources and community character, while recognizing that the communities will continue to evolve in a responsible and sustainable manner. The Seashore would work closely with island communities/towns using a variety of means (e.g., community design initiatives, town regulations, community infrastructure, selective land acquisition or transfers) to help the communities attain protection of natural resources and community character. Land management strategies would provide for a transition to a more natural (landward) dune alignment. Rebuilding would be permitted consistent with adopted plans, land use regulations, and/or design guidelines. NPS would work with state and local governments to ensure that no new development occurs in the CEHA. NPS would work with others to arrive at a meaningful strategy for compensating affected property owners. A moderate level of intervention in natural systems would be permitted including limited beach nourishment.

NPS would work to strengthen partnerships on the island toward creating a more integrated Park/community experience. The Seashore would support communities in their efforts to identify, document, and preserve their cultural resources and heritage and to be good stewards of the island's natural environment. The Seashore could provide technical assistance upon request in support of these efforts.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Under this alternative, the Seashore would provide the broadest diversity of visitor experiences and partner with other communities, Patchogue, and others throughout the region to significantly expand and integrate complementary experiences throughout the region. The interpretive focus would be on the significance of Fire Island to the region and the interconnectedness of regional stories and themes to Fire Island. Fire Island themes would guide the focus of programs on the Island and broaden them to encompass regional resources that relate to and enhance Fire Island's story. A broad diversity of interpretive media, from digital to museums, signs and exhibits, would be used to express the various messages. Visiting educational vessels could be incorporated as resources for interpretive programming.

FACILITIES

This alternative would see the greatest number of facilities, both new and redeveloped, to accommodate more public use opportunities. Visitor facilities would be expanded and diversified to offer distinctly different and complementary activities. Because of the increase in visitor facilities, there would likely be a greater number of

maintenance facilities, though some may be removable. An interagency orientation center could be developed on the mainland. The park's administrative maintenance functions would all be consolidated on a single mainland site. On Fire Island, visitor facilities would be enlarged and enhanced. Examples of proposed new facility developments include a science camp/eco lodge at Talisman/Barrett Beach; and at Watch Hill there could be a new eco-camping resort. Marinas would be rehabilitated and trails would remain in their current configurations. As in Alternative 3, the Seashore's marinas would be redesigned to meet the "green marina" criteria, and eroding bay shorelines would be reestablished where necessary. Strong partnerships involving the NPS, Fire Island and South Shore communities, and other regional organizations would lead to coordinated conservation and sustainable efforts and programs. The entire region would become a model for working together to achieve regional sustainability with an emphasis on making Fire Island a sustainable model. The Seashore would work with communities to create a lateral bike/hike trail from the west entry to Sailors Haven.

WILDERNESS:

While continuing to protect the area's wilderness character, this alternative would encourage more visitation, enhancing the access to the Wilderness Area by providing more amenities and other improvements than in Alternative 3. The Seashore would restore the bay side boardwalk configuration and would develop a through trail using the old Burma Road as feasible. Specific dune crossings that connect to the trail would be defined. Some trail markers would be installed and spur trails would be developed. The Seashore would increase the number of Wilderness camping permits with a system of designated campsites (locations would be rotated to limit resource degradation) and would establish a reservation system.

As in Alternative 3, the mosquito ditches would remain as would historic relics and remnant structures. At Old Inlet and at Bellport Beach, existing facilities would remain. The Seashore would work with the Village of Bellport to expand their role as stewards in the Wilderness Area. The existing Wilderness Visitor Center would be replaced with a larger, LEED certifiable facility that offers a large flexible space for day and evening programming.

THE WILLIAM FLOYD ESTATE

As a separate and distinct unit of Fire Island National Seashore, the William Floyd Estate was the subject of specific visioning and alternative development workshops during June 2009. Alternatives for the Floyd Estate are being developed on a slightly different track than those being considered park-wide. Alternatives being proposed for the Floyd Estate will be distributed in a separate newsletter in late spring/early summer 2010. Just as we hope that you will share your thoughts and opinions on the ideas presented in this newsletter, we will look forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions with regards to the Floyd Estate later this year.



Two hundred and fifty years of history are preserved at the William Floyd Estate. Between 1718 and 1976, eight generations of Floyd's managed the property and adapted it to their changing needs; and so the 25-room Old House, the 12 outbuildings, the graveyard, and the 613 acres of forest, field, and marsh illuminate the many layers of the site's history.

NEXT STEPS/ PROJECT SCHEDULE

Next, the planning team will review the comments received from the publication of this newsletter, collect and analyze resource information, and refine the preliminary alternatives. The team will present the revised management alternatives in a draft plan that will be on public review in fall 2010.

FISCAL YEAR	TASKS/MILESTONES
2006	Project Scoping Research, Data Collection & Analysis
2007	Foundation for Planning (Purpose, Significance, Fundamental Resources) Define Park Goals
2008	Framework for Alternatives Develop Preliminary Alternatives (internal)
2009	Internal & Public Review of Planning Alternatives
2010	Preliminary Alternatives available for public comment Draft GMP/EIS for agency review Draft GMP/EIS for public review (Fall 2010)
2011	Final GMP/EIS for public review Approve GMP/EIS with Record of Decision (ROD) (Fall 2011)



FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

MAIL BACK COMMENT FORM

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Or mail this Comment Form to:
Fire Island National Seashore GMP
15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109
Attn: Ellen Carlson, Project Manager

To share your thoughts by mail, cut this page out, fold it up, tape it closed, and drop it in the mail with first class postage.

PLACE
STAMP
HERE



Fire Island National Seashore
General Management Plan
15 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
Attn: Ellen Carlson, Project Manager



Fire Island National Seashore General Management Plan
National Park Service
15 State Street, 10th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH US

We have included a pre-addressed mail back comment card for your convenience. Please take a moment to consider the content of this newsletter ("progress report") and let us know what you think. Visit the park's website at www.nps.gov/fiis for links to the planning project web page, where you can also share your comments electronically. For more information, please contact the planning team at fire_island_gmp@nps.gov or Superintendent Chris Soller at (631) 687-4751.

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