



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway National Recreation Area

Gateway State of the Park 2010



Foreword



This State of the Park report details the progress Gateway National Recreation Area has made in the last year. The park has expanded recreational kayaking, developed mentoring programs with youth and collaborated with local organizations to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Staten Island. It is satisfying to look back at our accomplishments. However, we are more excited about what comes next.

Gateway National Recreation Area is currently drafting a new General Management Plan, or GMP. This visionary document will outline the road ahead for the next twenty years. The plan is a collaborative process, where employees and visitors engage in a dialog about the park's future.

In creating a vision for Gateway, park employees, partners and visitors can learn a lot from visual artists.

Artists see their subjects not just with their eyes, but with their

hearts. They make choices with colors and lines—some strong and bold, some feathery and impressionistic. Together, they help us to see the potential within.

That's how creative vision works. Like an artist mixing paints, creative vision mixes optimism with realism. The process helps us to focus on large and small details.

The GMP process helps a park sketch out its fundamental purpose. What is Gateway all about? What should visitors be able to enjoy here? What historic buildings and natural spaces are most important to tell the stories and protect critical plants and animals? What services should be provided by us? By others?

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As this report goes to press, nine GMP open houses are taking place in four New York City boroughs and three locations in New Jersey. Three different concepts are under review. Each concept has a different focus and each would require us to make challenging decisions. Once we have heard your comments, the park will take another look and come up with draft alternatives. Once again, the public will have a chance to comment and help us refine the plan.

Finally, we begin to add color to the vision we have sketched out together. Buildings like Floyd Bennett Field's Ryan Center, where Amelia Earhart and Wiley Post once visited, receiving the restoration they deserve. Endangered species like the piping plover repopulate protected coastal habitats. Students have fun learning history and science through hands-on programs. Visitors enjoy clean beaches and green hiking trails.

Optimistic? Sure. Realistic? We think so. What we plan together will help make Gateway a better park for years to come.

Making this vision come true will be a shared responsibility, a shared labor of love and pride and a shared success story.

Linda Canzanelli
Acting Superintendent

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Ambassadors for Riis



This past April, a bust of Jacob Riis “returned” to its pedestal almost 50 years after the original bust disappeared, thanks to a dedicated teacher and class of students from Immaculate Conception School in Jamaica Estates, Queens.

Journalist Jacob Riis, best known for authoring the book *How the Other Half Lives*, immigrated to America in 1870. Riis spent much of his life documenting the living conditions of some of New York City's poorest residents. His essays and photographs led to the Small Parks Act of 1887. In the 1940s, to commemorate his support and passion for parks, a bronze bust in his likeness was placed near Bay 9 at Jacob Riis Park. Sadly, the bust was stolen from its pedestal in the 1960s.

Fast forward to a few years ago and the students of teacher Carl Balenas. While studying the rich history of their neighborhood, these Aquinas Honor Society students learned that Jacob Riis spent much of his life there. They were so impressed with his life's

accomplishments that they chose him as their class “hero.” Once they learned that his bust was missing from Riis Park, they sprang into action.

They first contacted Gateway to find out how to donate a new bust. Then they convinced artist David Ostro to create a new bust of their hero. In addition to the unveiling, the event included readings from the Honor Society students' book about Riis' life as well as songs and dances that celebrated Riis' native Denmark.

Coca Cola Grant Launches Kayak and Biking Programs

One of the most exciting ways to see Jamaica Bay is sitting in a kayak right in the middle of the bay.

This summer, Gateway received a \$50,000 donation from Coca Cola through the NPS mutual partner, the National Park Foundation (NPF). This donation allowed Gateway's Jamaica Bay Unit to expand its kayaking program and to purchase bicycle racks. The check donation ceremony took place at Riis Landing, where a new kayak landing will be open in 2011. Since 2009, Jamaica Bay Unit has offered free summer kayaking at Canarsie Pier and hopes to expand to other sites in addition to Riis Landing. Currently, kayakers have acres of Jamaica Bay to explore, from the inlet to the eastern edge at Grassy Bay. Gateway is one of eight national parks that received a donation through Coca-Cola's new initiative, “America is Your Park.” This new initiative encourages Americans to “come out and play” at their national parks.



Rude Awakenings

For the sixth year, the Sandy Hook Unit Law Enforcement (LE) Rangers and members of the Sandy Hook Structural Engine Company participated in the Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST) Rude Awakenings program. The program, which encourages safe driving among high school students, takes place prior to prom



nights and summer vacations. Personal testimonies, presentations, and interactive field activities show students the tragic consequences of driving under the influence. Rude Awakenings is administered by the Middletown Township Police Department GATE's Sandy Hook Unit LE rangers assist with the administration of the program at other area high schools throughout the year. Approximately 1,200 students take the program, not only from MAST (a magnet high school located within the park) but from several area schools as well.

“Kids Don’t Float”



Kids don't float—unless they wear lifejackets. A new lifejacket station was unveiled to the public this past summer at Nichols Marina, located at Gateway National Recreation Area's Great Kills Park. The “Kids Don't Float” kiosk allows boaters to borrow the jackets simply by taking them off the hook, without having to check them out or leave a deposit. Eight jackets in three different sizes—infant, child and youth—are available. The lifejackets were donated by the United States Coast

Guard, with Nichols Marina donating the construction of the station. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, a not-for-profit volunteer organization, seeks partners to build more stations on Staten Island. While the concept is new to the East Coast, more than 400 such sites can be found across Alaska, where the program originated.

Treasure Your Island

The second annual “Treasure Your Island” Staten Island Community Awareness Day was held at the Joan & Alan Berikow Jewish Community Center. Gateway National Recreation Area participated with the Jewish Community Center, the Greenbelt, and Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve. Treasure Your Island showcases nearly two dozen organizations that celebrate the sights and treasures found on Staten Island. The program agenda incorporated music and dance performed by students from P.S. 36 and 69, the band STOUT and the Jewish Community Center Israeli Dancers.

Taking Our Beaches Back on Staten Island and Sandy Hook



Volunteers and partnerships with organizations help remove detritus that washes up on Gateway's beaches. At the Staten Island Unit, 150 volunteers from the New York Police Department (NYPD) Law Enforcement Explorers program worked with park staff to clean beaches

at Great Kills and Fort Wadsworth. The Explorers came from I.S. 72 on Staten Island and work through NYPD Community Affairs Bureau –Youth Services Section. The Explorers program is designed to instill a sense of leadership and community involvement in youth ages 14—20. Nearly 200 bags of shoreline debris were removed.

At Sandy Hook, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Clean Shores program has conducted ocean sweeps in the early spring and bay sweeps in late summer for several years. Clean Shores partners with the New Jersey Department of Corrections to provide the labor for the beach sweeps, while the Sandy Hook Foundation provides meals for the beach cleaners. This year's ocean and bay sweeps removed a combined total of more than 150 tons of debris.

“Hooping” It Up at Miller Field

Teams from Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Long Island “hooped it up” at Gateway's third annual 5-on-5 Basketball Tournament held this past summer at Miller Field. The tournament spanned five weekends over the course of the summer and it remains the field's most popular event that is not part of organized league athletics.



YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

The Long and Winding “Road”



Visitors celebrated the ribbon-cutting for the latest extension of the Sandy Hook Multiple-use Pathway (MUP) by bringing their bikes, roller blades and in-line skates out to the park for a spin. The scenic asphalt pathway adds two more miles to the existing MUP and completes the loop connecting North Beach Plaza, Gunnison Beach Plaza and the Mortar Battery at Fort Hancock. The pathway travels past dunes, maritime forests, salt marshes, ocean beaches, bayside waters and historic sites associated with America's military past.

The MUP allows pedestrians, cyclists, in-line skaters, people who use wheelchairs to safely enjoy the park without competing with motorists. The project provides safe and easy access to the trails for park visitors traveling between the various beach areas, the ferry dock and historic sites and gun batteries. The Sandy Hook MUP begins at the entrance of the park and extends five miles to the ferry landing at historic Fort Hancock and now to the Gunnison.

The NPS has received \$4.7 million dollars to construct the MUP system over the past six years. The funding for Phase 1 and 2 came from a combination of appropriations,

including Line Item Construction, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highways Funds, Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), and the Federal Highways Public Lands Grant Program. Through the efforts of U.S. Congressman Frank Pallone of New Jersey, Gateway received an additional \$810,000 secured in the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act to begin the planning and future construction of the final phase of the Sandy Hook MUP system. It is anticipated the final phase of construction will commence in 2011-2012.

Historic Jet Fuel Pipeline Removed

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) supervised the removal of a jet fuel pipeline from Floyd Bennett Field, located in Gateway's Jamaica Bay Unit. Through the efforts of U.S. Congressman Anthony Weiner of New York, Congress appropriated \$2.4 million to investigate and remediate possible jet fuel contamination. It took two weeks to remove the length of jet fuel pipeline that led to the shoreline, where Navy seaplanes used to refuel during the years when Floyd Bennett served as a Naval Air Station.



Solar Powered Trash and Recycling

The park procured six solar powered trash compactors to be pilot tested in several areas of the park as part of a pilot program. This type of compactor holds four times the amount of a standard park trash can therefore reducing the number of collections needed saving fuel, time and money. Each trash compactor will be paired with a recycling container for bottle/can collection. Other parks have reported great success with these units including; drastic improvement in recycling collection, eliminating overflow trash problems, and savings in time and gas.

Charting a New Course

Gateway's General Management Plan



Gateway National Recreation Area is in the middle of revising its General Management Plan (GMP). The GMP is the roadmap that lays out a vision for what the park wants to be in the next 20 years and helps the park to get there. Gateway started the process in late 2007. GMPs usually take three to five years to complete.

GMPs offer an open-ended, yet structured, decision-making process. The first step in a park's GMP effort is creating the Foundation Statement which includes the park purpose, its significance, and the fundamental resources and values.

Next, planners come up with several alternative concepts. The second GMP newsletter was released in October 2010. Highlighted in the newsletter were the Preliminary Alternative Concepts, which present different directions or management options for the park.

In November 2010, nine public open houses took place in four New York City boroughs and at three locations in New Jersey. The public was invited to provide suggestions and comments on the GMP and in particular the Preliminary Alternative Concepts. Public input is critical at this time and will assist the GMP planning team in the process of refining the Preliminary Alternative Concepts.

Parks are created by Acts of Congress, but they are owned by the American people. You, the owners of the park, will have several chances to add your voice to the process. Several public open houses have taken place and more will come. Recent public comments, along with the latest GMP newsletter and updates, can be found online at www.nps.gov/gate/parkmngt/gmp.htm

As this report goes to print, Gateway is still accepting comments on the alternative concepts. Visit <http://www.nps> to fill out a comment form or call the park office at **718-354-4628** to request a comment form. We look forward to hearing from you.

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