

# FIRE ISLAND

## NATURAL HISTORY

One by one, most of the barrier beaches off the south shore of Long Island have been joined with the mainland. Fire Island, the largest remaining reach of barrier beach, extends 32 miles from Robert Moses State Park on the west to Moriches Inlet on the east, protecting Babylon, Bayshore, Islip, Sayville, Patchogue, and other communities from the full impact of the ocean. On the Atlantic shore the beach is wide, with fine quartz sand mottled with swirls of dark red garnet and black magnetite, and it stretches as far as the eye can see.

The plant communities of the barrier beach are especially important, since they alone hold the sand in place against wind and moving water. Poison ivy, wild rose, and beach plum are rather prominent throughout the island. High thickets and forests are most common in the western portions. The finest woodland is Sunken Forest—immediately east of Point O' Woods—with unusually large serviceberry, black gum, and picturesque gnarled holly.

Marsh vegetation and that of the bay serve as valuable habitat for birds and mammals. Rose mallow, blooming in August, is one of the most striking marsh flowers, and pure stands of reed grow taller than a man.

Wildlife is abundant in this National Seashore. On the ocean side, you can catch striped bass, bluefish, mackerel, weakfish, and fluke. In the shallow bay are bluefish, fluke, winter flounder, and blowfish. And it is famous for its crabs, clams, oysters, and scallops.

The protected waters are alive with waterfowl from October to March, and small populations of ducks and geese remain and breed. Common and least terns nest on islands in the bay; black-crowned night herons nest in the pitch pine and other bayside forests.

Whitetail deer roam along the island to the west. You may see raccoons and opossums foraging over the dunes; or, sometimes, a red fox looking for a meal of cottontail or white-footed mouse.

**PLEASE LEAVE THE FLOWERS FOR OTHERS TO ENJOY. Do not disturb, remove, or destroy any plants, animals, or other natural objects—and please stay off the dunes.**



## WHAT IS A NATIONAL SEASHORE?

As a unit of the National Park System, a National Seashore possesses outstanding qualities of natural history and opportunity for recreation. In the case of Fire Island, Congress has passed a bill, signed into law by the President, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to purchase lands so that these outstanding natural features, scenery, and recreational values will be preserved.

The National Park Service, under the U.S. Department of the Interior, is charged with the responsibility of balancing preservation and use, and to reconcile these two objectives to provide for maximum enjoyment by present and future generations.

A superintendent, whose address is Box 229, Patchogue, Long Island, N.Y. 11772, is in immediate charge of the area.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—bears a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**THE SEA AND THE LAND GAVE BIRTH TO THIS ISLAND, AND THE WAVES SHAPED THE SAND INTO BEACH AND DUNES. THEN THE WILD THINGS—PLANTS AND ANIMALS—CAME TO LIVE. TODAY, OUT OF ALL THE COASTLINE AROUND NEW YORK CITY, FIRE ISLAND ALONE REMAINS RELATIVELY WILD, ROADLESS, AND ISOLATED.**

Some say that many years ago islanders built huge fires here, either to warn ships or lure them aground for looting. Others say whalers built fires to signal Long Island that the blubber was ready. However, the favorite story of how Fire Island got its name is of a myopic clerk in a tax office who copied in error the original name of "Five Islands."

## THE ISLAND SCENE

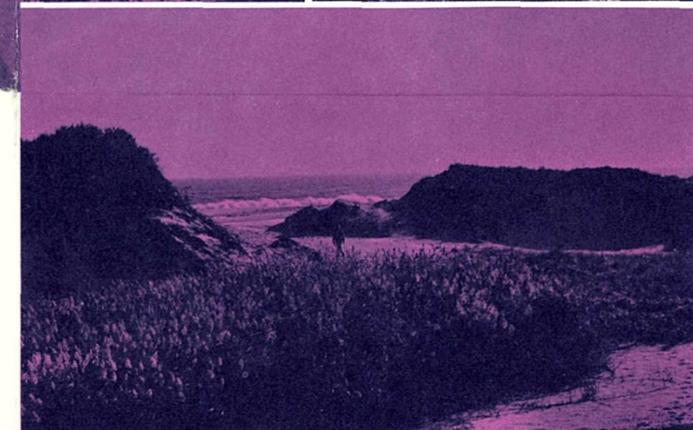
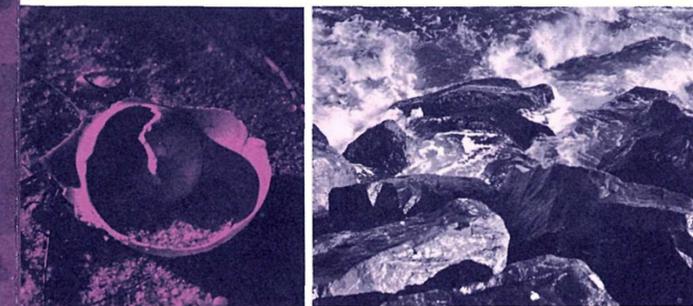
Here are miles of beach, wind-twisted pines, and a patchwork of seaside plant communities spread over the rolling swales and knolls of the inter-dune lands. Hidden hardwood groves take visitors by surprise. Long-legged herons stiffly stalk in grassy wetlands; wild geese and brant fly over the salt marsh; and occasionally a startled deer dashes off through tangled thickets.

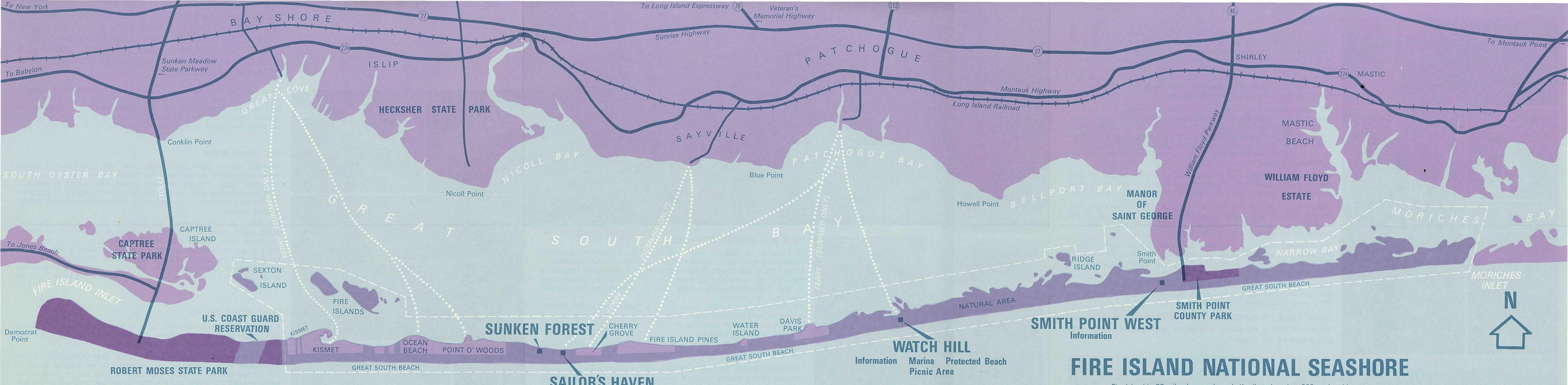
Fire Island National Seashore will be something more than the usual public beach. Here you will have the chance to explore a scene formed by nature, rather than by men. The undeveloped portions of the island will give your children the opportunity to see a remnant of the unspoiled seashore that our fathers saw. To help preserve this valuable resource for all to enjoy forever, please do not disturb, remove, or destroy any plants, protected animals, or other natural objects. Above all, stay off the dunes.

## WHAT TO SEE AND DO

A program of nature walks and talks is conducted in summer. Ask a park ranger about these activities. Ranger services are offered at Smith Point West, the Sunken Forest, Sailor's Haven, and Watch Hill.

Fire Island National Seashore is in an initial stage of development. An information office, bathhouse, marina, and trail are planned at Watch Hill for the summer of 1967. Eventually 12 sites will be developed at intervals along the island; and a number of campgrounds will be laid out. Camp shelter units will be available later at most of the individual development sites. Protected bathing beaches and bathhouses will be provided, and bicycle and hiking trails will run the length of the seashore. All proposed activities at the seashore are being specifically designed to offer rewarding outdoor experiences to visitors.





# FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

Fire Island is 32 miles long and one-half mile to less than 200 yards wide.  
Map is not to scale.

By automobile you can reach the island near its eastern end at Smith Point County Park. Several mainland ferry boat lines, operating from Bayshore, Sayville, and Patchogue, dock on the island. All of these Long Island villages are serviced by the Long Island Railroad. Plans include a number of additional ferry stops, a lateral ferry line,

and water taxi transportation between Fire Island ports. Most of the land within the authorized boundaries of the National Seashore is still privately owned. Also, the established communities on the island are not to be included in the National Seashore. We urge you to PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY.

**SAILOR'S HAVEN**  
Information Marina Protected Beach Picnic Area

**WATCH HILL**  
Information Marina Protected Beach Picnic Area

**SMITH POINT WEST**  
Information

**SMITH POINT COUNTY PARK**