



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cumberland Island National Seashore
101 Wheeler Street
St. Marys, GA 31558



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Edwardian Christmas Returns to Plum Orchard

By MAGGIE TYLER

With the help of several volunteers including resident caretakers and local volunteers, Christmas festivities returned to Plum Orchard this year. A small but dedicated group of staff members and local volunteers spent two days working to return the charm of yesteryear to the Grand Hall of Plum Orchard. The large Christmas tree with period ornaments, garland and gold ribbons adorning the banister, and the new addition of toys and a feather tree in the nursery helped spread Christmas cheer throughout the house. On December 11, 2011 a small but joyful group of visitors boarded the ferry for a rough ride as a bright, but windy day greeted all that made the trek to the 22,000 square foot house. During the celebration day, costumed staff members welcomed guests into Plum Orchard, interpreted the history of the Christmas holiday, played songs on the historic piano, and told stories and tales about life on Cumberland island both for the Carnegie family and the servants who worked for them. The final tour stop concluded with refreshments including freshly baked cookies by NPS Maintenance Worker Kelly Kennard.



Costumed NPS staff and visitors enjoy refreshments on the west wing porch of Plum Orchard mansion.

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Park News

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The Mullet Wrapper



The official newsletter of
Cumberland Island National Seashore
December through February 2012

A couple picnics on the grounds of Dungeness while filming the new show on the Oprah Winfrey Network entitled *Lovetown, USA*. (NPS Photo)

Letter From The Superintendent

By FRED BOYLES

Love Town, USA came to Cumberland Island on March 7th. In case you don't live in Camden County, you may need a little background on what Lovetown is all about. Lovetown USA is a new TV series being produced by the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) and BBC Worldwide Productions. The show did a nationwide search for a community to serve as host and Kingsland, Georgia was selected. With cameras rolling, the community has become a giant social experiment orchestrated by Oprah to see what can happen when a town focuses on love. The producers have picked six couples and helped pair them with the coaching from two expert match-makers. The show places the couples in different places and events or dates to see if the sparks fly. Over the course of a month, several episodes were filmed all over Camden County. The next to the last show was a visit to Cumberland Island.

After many meetings with the producers, dates, places and experiences were all worked out for the Island visit. There were permits, fees, agreements and logistics that all had to be nailed down. On Wednesday, March 7th, the cast (that's what they call the six couples) and crew came to the Island. They went on an abbreviated Lands and Legacies Tour, walked on the beach and visited Dungeness. It was a long day but all the cast had a fun time. Was the Island the perfect catalyst for romance? You'll have to tune in later this year to find out.

So why does the park do this kind of stuff? I have worked with many media production companies from radio, TV and movies for news stories, feature shows and even motion pictures. The most important result of these efforts is the positive publicity that comes from such productions. It's the advertising that money can't buy. I am especially happy when we can show a TV audience the great work that our staff does in protecting resources and serving visitors. I am excited about the prospect to share the great stories and resources of Cumberland Island with a larger audience.

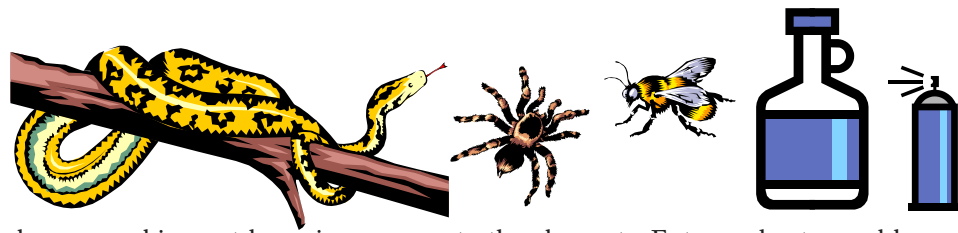
So, did Oprah come to Cumberland? Nope, but she came to St Marys twice. Next trip we'll get her to the Island!



Fred Boyles
Superintendent

Safety Corner

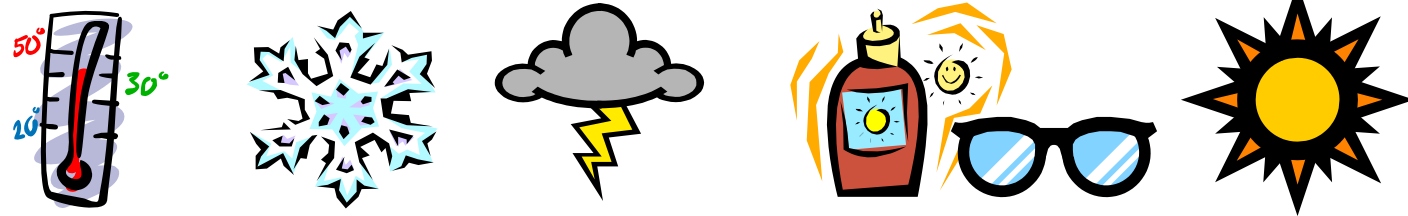
By JAMES OWENS



One of the biggest risks facing park employees working outdoors is exposure to the elements. Extreme heat or cold can cause illness. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun can lead to chronic illness like cancer. There are also risks associated with extreme weather disturbances like lightning strikes and flash floods. Workers should wear protective clothing, sunglasses, gloves, and sunscreen to protect themselves from the elements. They should seek shelter often and, if possible, do much of their work under shelter. Finally, they must discontinue work immediately with the threat of electrical storms, heavy rains, or snowfall.

Park employees must also be aware of biological threats when working in wilderness areas or with possible contagions. Insects and wild animals carry diseases. Domesticated animals also can pass illnesses on to humans. Spiders, snakes, and bees all provide a threat of illness through venomous or irritating bites. Even some plants can cause rashes or severe allergic reactions. An abundance of caution is advised. Finally, there are some park employees, depending on their field, who may be subject to contact with dangerous chemicals. Pesticides and other chemicals used are toxic to humans and can cause chronic illness even if they are not ingested. Employees and their supervisors should take measures to avoid exposure to these hazardous materials.

Supervisors should anticipate these risks to their employees that work outdoors. Encourage the use of protective clothing and materials by providing them to workers. Allow frequent breaks to give workers a chance to escape the causes of injury or illness.



2012 Tri-Agency Agreement

By FRED BOYLES



On March 15th, Cumberland Island staff participated in the annual Tri-Agency Fire Meeting in Jacksonville. The Tri-Agency group consists of representatives from Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Osceola National Forest and Cumberland Island National Seashore. The purpose of the group is to share resources in wildland fire programs. The photo above is of actual signing of the agreement. From left to right are Curt McCasland, Refuge Manager, Okefenokee NWR, Barbara Goodman, Superintendent, Timucuan E & HP, Fred Boyles, Superintendent Cumberland Island NS and Ivan Green, District Ranger, Osceola Ranger Dist.



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Hickory Hill Fire

By JOHN FRY

An unauthorized backcountry fire ignited the Hickory Hill Fire during the overnight hours of January 3-4. When Cumberland Island personnel arrived on scene the fire was advancing aggressively down the Pine Pond area, approximately 300 yards northeast of Hickory Hill Campsite. Working off of the Willow Pond Trail, Fire Management Officer Ody Anderson and crew put in a quick fireline and set a backfire that effectively checked the fire's advance at that point. A crew from the Georgia Forestry Commission and Camden County Fire & Rescue came in to help with initial attack and was followed-up by an agency contract crew that put firelines in for full containment. Monitoring and mop-up was completed by Ody and a small crew from Everglades National Park. The 43-acre fire burned primarily through wetland grasses and pine, with some smoldering through palmetto understory. Actions related to the fire were recently completed with rehabilitation of the fire line scars.



Hickory Hill Fire advances across Pine Pond.



Ody Anderson sets the backfire to hold the fire at Willow Pond Trail.

2012 Annual Shorebird Survey

By DOUG HOFFMAN

The park conducted its annual mid-winter shorebird survey on Cumberland on January 12th. A total of 30,958 birds were counted this year, with 37 species identified. The Island is an important stop-over point for numerous species of winter migrant shorebirds due to its long stretch of undeveloped beach and valuable food resources. The mid-winter count is coordinated annually by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and is conducted by a large group of wildlife agency personnel and experienced volunteer birders. Cumberland's survey team consists of 3 birders and 3 drivers/recorders. The statewide count is conducted on all beaches at the same time to get a good representative sample of birds present on our coast. Total numbers for the survey have not been compiled yet. Cumberland normally posts the largest count and species diversity of all areas each year.



American Oystercatcher incubating eggs on the south end of Cumberland Island.

Spring/Summer Night-time Beach Driving Regulations: In Effect

By DOUG HOFFMAN



May 1st marks the beginning of the spring/summer night beach driving regulations. The Georgia Shoreline Protection Act prohibits driving on the beach at night from May 1 through October 31st. Specifically stated: "Beach driving ... shall be restricted to daylight hours (1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset),..." The purpose of this regulation is to provide further protection to nesting sea turtles, shorebirds, and other marine life.

Housing Upgrades

By CARL DAVID

We have recently had some improvements done to the interior of two of our park housing units. Both the Dairy Manager's House and the White Cottage have had the interior walls, ceilings and cabinets repaired and painted. Some minor plumbing repairs were also done to the bathrooms. These improvements will provide the occupants with a more inviting living space and will make the homes a place that people won't mind occupying.



White Cottage has been painted and repaired.

Going Green

By LISA NIELSEN

We need your help! We'd like to go "green" with the Mullet Wrapper. And here is how you can participate. With an e-mail address, the park can electronically e-mail you the Mullet Wrapper or you can go to the park's website www.nps.gov/cuis and read the Mullet Wrapper under the Park News section. Either call Justin at 912-882-4336 extension 226 or e-mail Justin at justin_helton@nps.gov to add you to the electronic Mullet Wrapper mailing list and/or to have your name removed from the current mailing list. It's quite simple! And it saves time, money, and valuable resources by participating in the park's "going green" campaign. Of course, if you would still like to receive the Mullet Wrapper in its paper form, you will continue to do so. Thank you for your consideration!

Volunteers Descend on Backcountry Dump

By JOHN FRY

A small volunteer crew of five from Kentucky, Florida, and Alabama traveled to Cumberland Island the weekend of February 10-12. Their mission was to begin the clean-up of a large dump located in the forest approximately a half-mile north of Stafford, in an area formerly known as Benne Field. The site includes a dozen or more abandoned vehicles from the 60's and 70's, as well as ATV's, household appliances, and other refuse. Using sawz-alls and hand tools the crew was able to dismantle and/or remove over 25 cubic yards of material, with metals and tires separated out for recycling. About one-third of the dump has now been removed and the crew is committed to coming back to finish off the job and dive into other projects on the island.



Quote Corner

"Try not to become a person of success, but a person of value."

-Albert Einstein



"Lights, camera, ACTION" Cumberland Island was the setting on March 7th for filming of one episode for Lovetown USA, a joint venture of the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) and the BBC. As with all things, Cumberland, most of the effort was spent on logistics with transportation, hauling camera gear and feeding cast and crew. The filming allowed the park to highlight the Lands and Legacies Tours and the resources of the Island. The show is scheduled to air later in the Summer.

For more information, please visit <http://www.kingslandgeorgia.com/index.aspx?nid=328>.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2012 Horse Survey

By DOUG HOFFMAN

The park's annual horse count was conducted over the weekend of March 17th. Thirty (30) volunteers assisted the Resource Management Division with the survey. A total of 136 horses were counted during the 2-day event. This year's number falls within the range of count totals over the last 10 years, suggesting that the herd continues to function at a stable level. From 2003 to the present, count numbers have ranged between 120 and 148 horses. Evaluation of this year's age class data in comparison with the previous 9 years of data shows that the herd is experiencing relatively constant levels of recruitment (foal survival) and mortality each year, further confirming the stability of count results and the herd's condition. The count provides an index to abundance, and not an exact number. Given the fact that a few horses are not seen during the survey, it would be safe to say that Cumberland's horse herd currently numbers between 170 and 200 animals. The survey is conducted in March of each year utilizing the same volunteers and methodology to ensure consistent results.



2012 Horse Count Crew

Upcoming Research Projects

By DOUG HOFFMAN

Cumberland will be part of several shorebird research projects this summer. Gabrielle Robinson, University of Georgia, will be conducting the second year of her Master's project on the least tern colony on Long Point. She is using Cumberland's birds as a comparison for nesting colonies in Brunswick that may be affected by pollution from an EPA Superfund site. Lauren Deaner, Georgia Southern University, will be working on the first year of her Master's project studying Wilson's Plover nesting dynamics on the beach from Dungeness southward to below the river jetty. A third Master's project conducted by Abby Sterling, University of Georgia, will be evaluating nesting dynamics of American Oystercatchers and Wilson's Plovers on Little Cumberland and the north end of Cumberland Island along the area known as Long Point. There is little known about Wilson's Plovers in the scientific community. Cumberland normally has the largest nesting population of this species on the Georgia coast, thus providing an excellent opportunity to learn more about them.

Park-wide Bee Project

By DOUG HOFFMAN

Cumberland Island is taking part in a multi-park project to evaluate bee populations. The main objective of the project is to study bee species in "globally vulnerable" areas, that is, areas subject to global warming effects. On CUIS, this equates to habitats presumably lost to sea level rise in the future. Bee sampling is conducted at 3-week intervals during the spring and fall months on two sites, one considered vulnerable to global events (dunes at Willow Pond Trail) and the other more protected (Stafford Field). The results of Cumberland's late summer/fall sampling last year produced 1,471 specimens - 772 from the vulnerable site and 699 from the common site. Thirty-four (34) bee species were identified. While there is a relatively short distance between the two study sites, vegetation types are different and the bee collection data suggests that each site has a group of bee species that is largely restricted to that site/habitat type. Several of the species collected on Cumberland are very rare in museum collections in the southeastern U.S. With the early warm temperatures this year, the park's Resource Management Division has already begun the spring sampling effort.

Maintenance Division

By CARL DAVID

Plum Orchard

Mickey Bosworth has been diligently working to try and repair the roof leaks at the Plum Orchard Mansion. Due to the lack of rain, it has been a more time consuming task. It seems like we would get some rain and by the time we were notified that the roof was leaking, the water in the ceiling would have dried so it was hard to tell exactly where the water was entering, except for the fact that it was near a skylight. The skies opened up recently for two consecutive days of light and steady rain which allowed for a better inspection as to where the water was entering. The leaks were patched in the "Squash" court, one of the apartments and the skylight at the top of the stairs next to the apartments. Thanks for the persistence!

The park recently had an A/E Firm come in to begin designing a plan for the repair of the failing kitchen floor at Plum Orchard. We should have the final plans some time towards the end of the summer. We can then focus on having the repairs completed which will allow the park to provide the visitors with access to the kitchen and a more involved tour of the mansion.



Employee Mickey Bosworth working on the roof at Plum Orchard.



Failing kitchen floor at Plum Orchard.

First African Baptist Church

Fred Forbes and Mickey Bosworth have been working on replicating and replacing the pews at the church. We will then be able to preserve and store these "Historic" pews with our curatorial items. One or more of the pews may be put on display on the mainland to give the visitors that aren't able to go to the island the opportunity to see a part of the church. Great job to both of you and to anyone that may have assisted.



Original pew of First African Baptist Church.



Incomplete replica of First African Baptist Church pew.