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NATIONAL PARK AND *Am*  
RECREATION AREA PLANNING *3228*

# FIRE ISLAND National Seashore



a p r o p o s a l

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DIVISION:

NATIONAL PARK AND

RECREATION AREA PLANNING

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON

PROPOSED FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

Suffolk County, New York

Prepared by

Northeast Regional Office and Eastern Office of Design  
and Construction

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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## INTRODUCTION

This is a supplementary report to the main report on the Proposed Fire Island National Seashore. Its primary point of departure concerns the recommended boundaries for the proposed Seashore and subsequent extent of land acquisition and development.

The Departmental Report on the proposed legislation recommends that the Fire Island National Seashore include all of the barrier beach from Fire Island Inlet on the west to Halsey Neck Lane in Southampton on the east for a total of 52 miles, and comprising a total area of approximately 8,000 acres of land. The Supplementary Report recommends a lesser area, generally extending from Moriches Inlet to Fire Island State Park, exclusive of the State Park and developed communities, and including, in addition the general undeveloped portions, a buffer area of ocean and bay waters, a total seashore area of approximately 17,200 acres (3,539 acres of land and 13,630 acres of water).

The foregoing boundary recommendation represents a major difference and is based first and primarily on the infeasibility of land acquisition and subsequent prohibitive costs of land and improvements, and secondly on the costs of beach erosion control and hurricane protection, as suggested by the Corps of Engineers, which would far exceed the total market value of the land and improvements involved.

The Supplementary Report, therefore, represents a revised boundary and development plan that is both suitable and feasible for this particular seashore in the light of present and foreseeable conditions of land use and recreation needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the boundary of this proposal be from 1.4 miles east of Moriches Inlet, west to the east end of Fire Island State Park and extending into the Great South Bay and into the Atlantic Ocean as indicated on the enclosed Boundary Map.
2. That a portion of Smith Point County Park, amounting to approximately 55 acres and sufficient to provide access and an entrance way, be included within the proposed seashore either by transfer or by a cooperative agreement with Suffolk County satisfactory to the Secretary.
3. That the Federal Government acquire in fee simple a strip of land in front of all communities (incorporated and unincorporated) which would include the beach and the protective dune zone and any publicly owned beaches located therein and would extend from the toe of the foredune, a maximum distance of 200' inland and no less than 150' where feasible.
4. That town beach land conveyed to the Federal Government be accepted subject to a reservation that such land may be used for approved recreational purposes free of charge by taxpayers and their families of the town conveying the land.
5. That consumation of arrangements relating to above lands in Smith County Park and town-owned beaches satisfactory to the Secretary, be made a condition for the rest of the Federal acquisition program.
6. That from the east end of Point-of-Woods to the eastern boundary line all the land from Ocean to Bay, except at the communities, towns and

county parks, as designated on the map, be part of the proposal.

7. That enough water area on the Great South Bay side to include islands as designated on Boundary Map be acquired to preserve and use the significant natural history values. The bay boundary to be measured from the inland boundary of the protective dune zone, north into the bay for approximately 4300'.

8. That the boundary extend into the Atlantic Ocean to a distance of 1000', measured generally from the inland boundary of the protective dune zone south, throughout the length of the proposal.

9. That lands within communities not be acquired except where it is necessary to restore the original protective dunes.

10. That standards be established jointly by the Secretary and the local towns on which zoning by-laws may be enacted to control developments on unimproved lands within communities involved in the proposal, and that after such standards and by-laws are agreed upon, no steps be taken to impede development on undeveloped lands within communities.

11. That emphasis should be placed on the day-use importance of the Seashore and that limited provision be made for overnight camping at designated locations on the Seashore.

12. That transportation in the form of shuttle ferries be developed with the cooperation of the Federal Government wherever necessary both from the mainland and to and from various points on the Seashore. Marinas, docking and service facilities be provided wherever necessary.

13. That beach buggies be restricted to certain designated areas on the Seashore.

14. That foot trails and bicycle trails be provided wherever feasible on the Seashore.

15. That further studies be made by representatives of the U.S.G.S. to determine the most feasible means of shore erosion control and protection of dunes.

16. That after a suitable shore erosion plan is agreed upon, the Secretary of the Interior authorize the Fish and Wildlife Service to study the bay areas of the proposal to determine suitable borrow areas in an effort to achieve a maximum overall project benefit, including those dependent upon fish and wildlife resources.

17. That within the comparatively undeveloped areas of the seashore boundary, where single residents occupy in excess of two acres, this excess balance should be acquired by the Federal Government.

18. That steps be taken to engage the services of a qualified planner, under the authority contained in the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act section 302 (c), for the purpose of doing an analysis of the zoning ordinance now in effect in the town and villages located wholly within the proposed seashore, in an effort to formulate recommendations for regulatory provisions that could be incorporated in zoning standards.

19. That consideration be given to including a provision for the acquisition

of not to exceed 100 acres on Long Island for parking facilities near ferry or bridge heads.

### LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Suggested Boundary and Development Plan

This plan, a copy of which is included herein, is primarily a suggested outline of foreseeable development needs and possibilities for the conservation and balanced use of the proposed National Seashore. As implied, the purpose of this plan is twofold--it outlines the boundary as suggested by Office of the Northeast Region and the land to be acquired, it points out the possibilities which exist for recreation use and development. Additionally, the plan indicates the location of the several publicly owned areas, the towns and communities on Fire Island and the adjacent mainland, and finally, the main access routes to the area.

#### Boundary Considerations

The suggested boundary would allow the villages and towns along the barrier beach to remain virtually undisturbed with modest provision for new construction on the undeveloped lands within the villages. Additionally, the boundary recognizes the shore erosion problem by including for acquisition a continuous beach protective dune zone in front of the villages and developed areas; it provides sufficient bay and ocean waters together with their submerged lands, to protect and preserve the natural history values of the area; and finally includes for major acquisition all of the undeveloped lands between the villages and towns from Point-of-Woods east to the Southampton-Brookhaven town line on West Hampton Beach. The suggested development plan recognizes the importance of the State and county parks with their important contribution to the total

recreational resource of the area and thus has not included them within the suggested boundary except for a small part of Smith County Park. These areas, by virtue of their type of development, complement the National Seashore, by providing facilities for mass beach recreation.

A detailed explanation of the boundaries is given in a separate section of this report under DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED BOUNDARIES.

### Access and Circulation

The only existing vehicular access to the major portion of the proposed National Seashore is at Smith Point County Park, via the bridge, which connects the William Floyd Parkway on the mainland with Great South Beach. Recommended for acquisition is the western undeveloped portion of this Park, amounting to approximately 55 acres. Here, then, adjacent to the bridge and Smith County Park, is an appropriate location for the major entrance and development of the National Seashore. Directly west of this area exists the largest undeveloped segment of the entire Seashore; while east of the Smith Point County Park is an area, almost equal in size, with virtually no development.

No road system is envisioned as a means of circulation at the Fire Island National Seashore. Further access to and from the various portions of the proposal would be accomplished by means of two devices. A ferry service, originating at the main developed area would accommodate the greatest portion of the expected visitation, by providing a water access to each of the nine designated areas. (Sunken Forest on the west, to east of Moriches Inlet). A ferry terminal and boat marina would be included as part of the main,

developed area, and would be designed to accommodate the ferries together with additional space for visitors wishing to see the National Seashore by private craft. Ferry docks and boat tie-up facilities would also be provided at each of the areas as indicated on the Development Plan.

Equally important as a form of visitor access to the various points of interest along the Seashore, would be the construction of a stabilized trail system, which would originate at the main developed area and extend westward, eventually to the Fire Island State Park. This trail would be designed to accommodate those wishing to see the various features of the Seashore on foot and by bicycle. This bicycle and hiking trail would in itself be an interpretive tour of the entire barrier beach, transporting the visitor to each of the designated areas and meandering, generally on the bayside, through the back-dunes, through the marshes and reeded areas, and, possibly through the use of elevated boardwalks, to an adjacent island. Self-guiding devices, such as trailside exhibits, would be needed to identify and explain the origin and meaning or significance of the natural history features that would occur along the way. Additionally, markers would give added meaning to other interesting features.

Bicycles could be rented from a concessioner at the main developed area and trips, varying in length from a few miles to the entire length of the Seashore, could be planned. Those planning bicycle and hiking trips would have the option of returning by this same method or by return passage on ferries from one of the five ferry stops west of the main developed area. East of Smith Point Park, a short section of road would connect the County Park road with

a small campground and parking area which would be located opposite Pattersquash Island. From this point the bicycle and hiking trail would continue to Moriches Inlet passing the various interesting features on this eastern segment of the proposal. Ferry stops are also planned at four locations, east of Smith Point Park.

### Swimming

Excellent beaches occur along the entire length of the proposed Seashore. It is suggested that provision for swimming be provided at eight of the developed areas. Facilities would be modest and consist of beach access, lifeguard protection, picnic area, together with a combination bathhouse and visitor contact station which would be located on the bayside.

### Fishing

Fishing, clamming and crabbing are also important recreational uses of the bays, inlets and ocean beaches of the proposed Seashore. A boat rental service, at the main developed area would accommodate those wishing to fish the bays adjacent to the proposed Seashore, while the interpretive walking and bicycle trail and ferry service would provide access to Moriches Inlet for jetty fishing, and the more remote stretches of the ocean beaches for surf fishing.

### Camping

It is the policy of the National Park Service to provide campgrounds when they are essential for the proper use of and enjoyment of the parks and where there is adequate space to accommodate them, without serious encroachment on

or damage to the preservation of the important natural or scenic values. Due to the limited area available on Fire Island, overnight camping is suggested initially at only two locations--near Pattersquash Island and Old Inlet. Individual campsites would be comparatively small and visitor use would be on a restricted time-use basis. In the future, however, small campground might also be provided on that portion of the proposal east of Moriches Inlet.

### Interpretation

To enable the visitor to recognize, understand and appreciate more fully the values of the proposed Fire Island National Seashore, an active educational program would be initiated. Included in the Visitor Center would be museum displays and exhibits and informative publications. Additionally, a Nature Center is recommended for the Sunken Forest area with conducted nature walks and self-guiding interpretive trails at two other locations along the Seashore as an adjunct to the hiking-bicycle trail. Orientation talks and audio-visual devices would comprise an important part of the personal services at the Visitor Center and at the Sunken Forest area.

### Developed Areas

Opportunities for development and visitor use exist at nine separate areas located within the proposed boundary. The following is a list of these areas together with the possibilities for their development. See map Suggested Boundary and Development Plan for the location of these areas.

1. Sunken Forest  
Visitor Contact Station and Nature Center  
Boat Docking and Ferry Stop

- Beach Access  
Picnic and Swimming Area  
Bicycle and Walking Trail
2. Water Island  
Ferry Stop  
Boat Docking  
Beach Access  
Picnic and Swimming Areas  
Bicycle and Walking Trail
3. Long Cove  
Visitor Contact Station  
Boat Docking  
Beach Access  
Picnic and Swimming Areas  
Bicycle and Walking Trail
4. Whalehouse Point  
Visitor Contact Station  
Boat Docking  
Beach Access  
Picnic and Swimming Areas  
Bicycle and Walking Trail
5. Old Inlet  
Visitor Contact Station  
Boat Docking  
Beach Access  
Picnic and Swimming Area  
Bicycle and Walking Trail  
Small Campground
6. Smith Point Bridge  
Visitor Center (main contact)  
Ferry Terminal  
Marina-Food Service  
Boat-Bicycle and Tent Rental  
Bicycle and Walking Trail
7. Point near Pattersquash Island  
Small Campground  
Ferry Stop and Boat Docking  
Beach Access  
Bicycle and Walking Trail  
Swimming (contact station)

8. East Lead  
Picnic and Swimming Area  
Beach Access  
Interpretive Trail (elevated)  
Wildlife Area  
Bicycle and Walking Trail
  
9. West Side Moriches Inlet  
Picnic Area  
Bicycle and Walking Trail  
Jetty Fishing  
Important Shore Bird Area
  
10. East Side Moriches Inlet  
Visitor Contact Station  
Fishing  
Beach Access  
Picnic and Possible Campground Site

SUGGESTED METHODS OF BEACH EROSION CONTROL AND  
HURRICANE PROTECTION

The following recommendations are the basic parts of a stabilization program which would be in the interest of and compatible with the establishment of a National Seashore at Fire Island. They reflect, in our opinion, the best recommendations and conclusions reached in the following reports: South Shore of Long Island from Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point, New York, Beach Erosion Control Study and Hurricane Survey by the Corps of Engineers (House Document No. 25), Erosion of Fire Island, New York by Clifford A. Kaye, U.S. Geological Survey, and Protection Plan for Proposed Fire Island National Seashore by Ross Sweeny, Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction, National Park Service.

A. Protection Measure

1. Artificial beach fill. When considered necessary as a protection measure, artificial beach fill would be used to fill breaches or other storm damage.
2. Beach nourishment. The reliance on beach nourishment would be almost entirely on natural recuperation. Artificial beach nourishment would not be used for the purpose of beach stabilization, but would be used only on the basis of a specific and determined need and might be used under two conditions--placed to repair storm damage; placed to nourish starved beaches downdrift from Moriches Inlet.

3. Other measures to counter beach erosion. A sand by-pass plant at Moriches Inlet--only when the absolute need for it is determined.

B. Hurricane Protection Measures

1. Measures to build-up the height of the foredune. Build-up of the foredune to a minimum height would be determined after further study, using artificial fill selectively placed along the entire shoreline--when and where it is determined a need exists. Fill would be gotten from selected areas on the bayside and hydraulically placed along the dune line. Mechanical means would be used to shape this dune to a minimum height. Sand fencing and grass plantings would be introduced to attain a maximum dune height along the entire seashore.

2. Measures to maintain the height and stability of the foredune. Grass plantings would be used initially and on a continuing basis, along the entire shoreline. Sand fencing would be placed and maintained on a continuing program basis along the entire shoreline until the maximum dune height is attained. Placement of artificial fill would be undertaken to repair storm damage only, along the entire shoreline. Tracking of the sand on the beach berm by mechanical means to break the friable crust so as to allow the sand to be wind-drifted onto the foredune might be another method of maintaining the foredune.

3. Artificial beach fill to widen the beach so as to prevent wave run-up and overtopping the foredune. No artificial beach fill

would be used to widen the beach.

4. Location of the foredune. Maintain the location of the foredune along the present dune line for the entire shoreline.

5. Dune Protection Zone. A dune protection zone would be established and maintained with a minimum width of 200 feet along the entire shoreline of the proposal, which would be measured from the toe of the foredune inland, and no less than 150 feet minimum where feasible.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

The proposed National Seashore boundary would include approximately 25.6 miles of barrier beach, ocean, and bay, beginning at the eastern boundary of Fire Island State Park on Great South Beach and extending eastward to the Brookhaven-Southampton Town line, 1.4 miles east of Moriches Inlet. This boundary generally includes the undeveloped portions of the Island with a continuous beach strip and protective dune zone in front of all existing communities. The dune line would coincide with the natural dune line and a protective dune zone would be established from the toe of the natural foredune line and extend inland for a minimum width of 200'. This dune zone is necessary to form a catchment area for natural storm spillovers and permit the natural dune defense line of the island to form.

From the eastern boundary of Fire Island State Park, approximately 24,000 feet of this protective dune zone and beach would extend eastward to the eastern boundary of Division Street, at the eastern extremity of Point O' Woods, thence generally northward to the Great South Bay. The suggested boundary then includes all of the land from bay to ocean for approximately 8,108 lineal feet to the west boundary of West Walk at Cedar Grove Park. From this point the line then includes 2,860 lineal feet of protective dune zone and beach in front of Cherry Grove to the east boundary of Ivy Walk, then northerly to the Great South Bay. The boundary then includes all the land from bay to ocean for approximately 1,610 lineal feet to the western

~~boundary of the property known as Frank Carrington.~~ The boundary then includes approximately 6,460 lineal feet of protective dune zone and beach in front of Fire Island Pines to the eastern boundary of Lot No. 27 in Fire Island Pines, then generally northward to the Great South Bay. The suggested boundary then includes all of the land between bay and ocean for approximately 7,569 lineal feet to the west boundary of West Walk at Water Island. The boundary then includes all the land from bay to ocean for approximately 6,180 lineal feet to the eastern boundary of the property known as Joseph P. Grace. The boundary then includes 4,135 lineal feet of protective dune zone and beach in front of Davis Park to the east boundary of Ocean Ridge, Section 3, then generally north to the Great South Bay. The boundary then includes all the land between bay and ocean for approximately 7.2 miles to the western boundary of Smith Point County Park. The suggested boundary would also include the western 2,200 lineal feet of Smith Point County Park which would be acquired to provide access and facilitate as an entrance way to the proposal.

Starting from the eastern boundary of Smith Point County Park, the proposed National Seashore boundary would then include all the lands between bay and ocean, for approximately 6.5 miles, to the Brookhaven-Southampton Town line which is 1.4 miles east of Moriches Inlet.

The water boundary on the ocean side of the proposed National Seashore is a random line generally paralleling the proposed northern boundary line of the protective dune zone. This water boundary is 1,000 feet south of the northern boundary line of the protective dune zone and extends along the entire length of the proposed National Seashore.

The water boundary on the bay side of the proposal is a random line generally paralleling the proposed northern boundary line of the protective dune zone. This water boundary extends 4,280 lineal feet north of the northern boundary line of the protective dune zone.

This bay boundary has been extended further north to include a number of important islands and their adjacent waters at the following locations.

- A. East Fire Island, Penny Island, Money Island.
- B. Ridge Island and unnamed small island just west of Ridge Island.
- C. John Boyle Island.

From John Boyle Island eastward to the Brookhaven-Southampton Town line the bay boundary generally follows the south side of the Long Island Intra-Coastal Waterway.

### LAND OWNERSHIP AND ACREAGE

There are 17,475 acres included within the proposed National Seashore of which 13,630 acres are water and submerged lands and 3,845 acres are land. The bulk of the land in the proposal lies between the developed communities on the Great South Beach (Fire Island), in the Town of Brookhaven, with a small acreage (also in Brookhaven) east of Moriches Inlet. The parcels of undeveloped lands are connected by a beach strip (of undetermined ownership) and a protective dune zone in front of the developed communities, which in combination have an average width of approximately 350 feet. Most of the land area suggested for acquisition is east of Point-of-Woods, and has an average width of 1300 feet, reaching a maximum width of 3200 feet at East Lead and a minimum width of 500 feet at Old Inlet.

Of the total of 3,845 acres of land proposed for acquisition, or approximately 70% of the total land area from Fire Island Inlet to the Brookhaven-Southampton townline on Westhampton Beach, 3539 acres are included in the undeveloped portions of the proposal. Of the total acreage included in the undeveloped portions--594 acres are owned and administered by Suffolk County; 23 acres are owned by the Towns of Brookhaven and Islip and the village of Bellport; 2028 acres are in private vacant land; 386 acres are in the beach strip; and 298 acres are in the 27 islands included in the proposal. Within the developed portions, a total of 307 acres are recommended for acquisition--151 acres of which are within the Protective Dune Zone and 156 acres in the beach strip.

The proposed Seashore also includes 13,630 acres of water and submerged lands of which 2180 acres are ocean water and 11,450 acres are bay water. Of the total of 11,450 acres of bay water and submerged lands, approximately 2840 acres are in private ownership, with the remaining 8610 acres owned and administered by Suffolk County, and the Towns of Brookhaven and Islip.

The following is a summary of the acreages included in the proposed National Seashore--

SUMMARY OF ACREAGE

WATER (submerged lands)

	<u>Acreage</u>
A. Bay Side	
1. Publicly owned	8,610
2. Privately owned	2,840
B. Ocean Side	<u>2,180</u>
Total, submerged lands---	13,630 acres

LAND

	<u>Acreage</u>
A. <u>Undeveloped Portions</u>	
1. Public Land (does not include Smith Point County Park)	562
2. Public Land (west 2200' of Smith Point County Park)	55
3. Private, vacant land	2,028
4. Ten Islands (public)	15
5. Seventeen Islands (private)	283
6. Beach Strip (175' wide)*	386

\*The acreage of the beach strip (the area between the high water mark and the barrier dune) is not given in the town property records. Consequently, this acreage was planimetered from property maps, and is shown as a separate item in the above tables.

The present ownership of the beach strip in front of the undeveloped portions is known. However, the ownership of the beach strip in front of the communities is not clear because the filed property maps do not show any lots beyond the barrier dune line.

	<u>Acreage</u>
7. Land to be acquired from residential properties where each property exceeds 2 acres in area	183
8. Private properties, with residences located within Protective Dune Zone	10
9. Land to be acquired from Commercial Property exceeding 10 acres in area	<u>17</u>
TOTAL, LAND, UNDEVELOPED PORTIONS	3,539

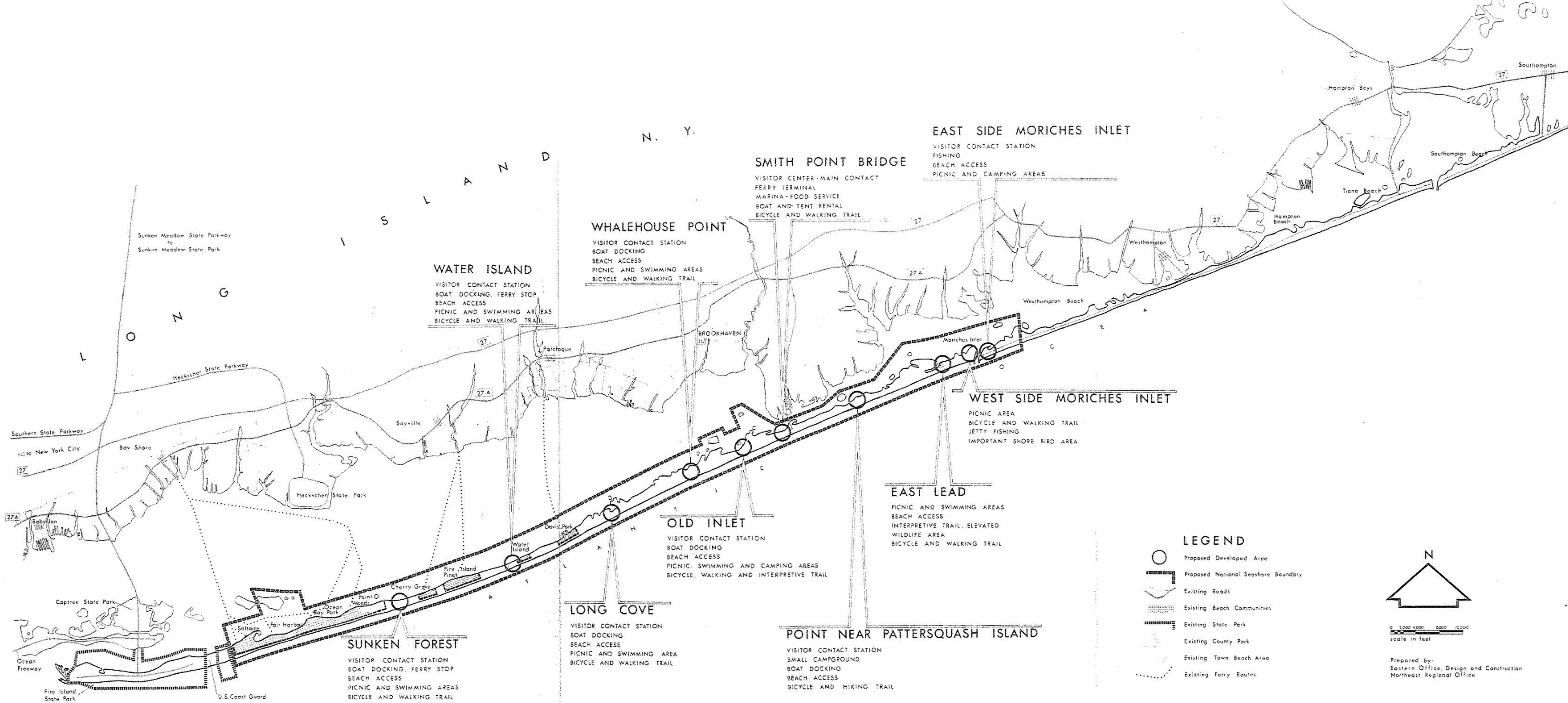
	<u>Acreage</u>
B. <u>Developed Portions (villages)</u>	
1. Properties within Protective Dune Zone	151
2. Beach Strip (175' wide)	<u>156</u>
TOTAL, LAND, DEVELOPED PORTIONS	307 acres

GRAND TOTALS

WATER	13,630 acres
LAND	<u>3,845 "</u>
GRAND TOTAL	17,475 acres

Buildings to be Removed (within Protective Dune Zone)

<u>Undeveloped Portions</u>		<u>NO.</u>
Residential Homes		8
Commercial Buildings		0
 <u>Developed Portions (villages)</u>		
Residential Homes		272
Commercial Buildings		<u>2</u>
GRAND TOTAL		282 Buildings



# PROPOSED FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

SUGGESTED BOUNDARY AND DEVELOPMENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE