

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Cumberland Island National Seashore

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: CUIS

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Like the National Park Service itself, since its inception Cumberland Island National Seashore has had a dual mission of its own. Mandated in its enabling legislation, the Park is to provide for outdoor public recreation and use while at the same time preserving related scenic, scientific, and historic values. But in that statement is the key word, related. Because, while at the same time that the island provides an exceptional recreational experience, that experience is one of unique character in a barrier island of the world. The island is virtually undeveloped with 18 miles of pristine beach, a range of natural habitats, and a rich diverse history; all of which visitors find captivating and fall in love with. However, the future is a delicate balance to maintain this unspoiled nature and magnificent opportunity for all.

With these goals in mind, preservation and encounter, the Park will move forward on multiple fronts. We will maintain and restore the natural, functioning ecology of the island. This is to be accomplished by returning natural processes, such as wildland fire, to the ecosystem. At the same time, alien influences such as feral animals and exotic plants will be managed to the point that their threat is negligible. In addition, we will reverse the adverse conditions on the island that have been established by previous human activities. The human element is also vital and we will preserve and protect every element of the island's rich and varied cultural heritage.

While protecting the islands resources the Park will make them available in a new and exciting manner. Features that were previously distant to most of the general public will be accessible through a transportation system that is accommodating and environmentally compatible. Visitor understanding and recreational experiences will be enhanced through modern facilities as well as new trails that link the park to its neighbors and are accessible to all. The Park's educational outreach will be expanded through teacher workshops and onsite student experiences channeled through a new education center. Park programs, from interpretation through resource management, will be roundly supported through volunteers and citizen ownership in the park.

In summary, Cumberland Island National Seashore has a similar calling to its sister parks. However, it is a jewel of its own that will require careful management and exceptional skills to fulfill its unique place in the National Park system.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Jerre Brumbelow

Site: CUIS

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cumberland Island's resources, like all National Parks, are incredibly diverse. The key is to make these areas accessible for people to enjoy while maintaining the wild nature of the island. A comprehensive accessibility study of the island is scheduled for fiscal year 2008. The objective is to combine this study and the parks Transportation Plan so all visitors can experience the historic features on the north end, the historic south end, the maritime forests, the beaches and wilderness trails. Our standard by 2016 will be all visitors will have an unencumbered inspiring journey from the moment they arrive at the mainland visitor center, board the ferry, explore and experience the island, and then return.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

The Park will advance and maintain all applicable historic structures on the island to a good condition. This will be accomplished through the replacement of all wooden roofs on structures with such features. In addition, the Dungeness Carriage House will be restored and rehabbed in its entirety.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

Cumberland Island National Seashore will manage two potentially detrimental feral animal populations on the island, horses and hogs. Working in cooperation with stakeholders, the sensitive issue of feral horses will be addressed through development of a realistic and acceptable plan based on public input and management strategies used on other state and federal lands. Feral hog control will continue through efforts initiated in 2003 to keep the population at a small, acceptable level. Cumberland Island resource management staff will continue annual management efforts with occasional assistance from other Southeast Region parks. Full eradication, while unrealistic, will always be the ultimate goal with the hog population.

Cumberland Island resource management staff will also continue efforts to manage the 66 species of exotic/invasive plants known to exist on the island and monitor the potential for invasion of new species. Integrated pest management strategies will be used to safely eradicate and/or control the spread of high priority species with the goal of reclaiming and protecting the park's native plant communities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.

Cumberland Island National Seashore will ensure that two of the island's cultural landscapes are restored to an acceptable condition that enhances visitor understanding. The entire Dungeness Historic District will be restored to a manageable level that re-establishes spatial relationships among major buildings and structures, views and vistas, roads and pathways, and significant flora. With respect to the Plum Orchard Historic District, a Landscape Management Report will be completed. Using that framework restoration will begin at Plum to attain a good condition and which gives visitors a basic understanding of the landscape.

Site: CUIS

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cumberland Island National Seashore proposes to restore fire as a key component of the island's ecology and history. This objective will be accomplished through the completion and implementation of an approved fire management plan, which incorporates prescribed fire and wildland fire use. The Park's current plan calls for suppression of all fires. However, the reintroduction of fire is vitally needed in restoring critical wildlife habitat, sustaining key biological species and communities, maintaining historic landscapes, and reducing hazardous fuel loads around historic and non-historic structures.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: CUIS

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Cumberland Island National Seashore and its partners will implement a transportation management plan that is environmentally compatible, provides an enriched visitor experience, and respects Wilderness values. The plan is currently in development and upon its completion the park must take significant strides to make it effective. Embracing new technology, such as alternative fuel vehicles, will be carried out to reach environmental responsibilities. Operational changes will be made to improve current visitor mobility and provide appropriate opportunities in areas currently not accessible to the broader public, such as the historic sites on the North End. While implementing this program the Park will safeguard the island's pristine character and Wilderness from intrusion and abuse.

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Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

Cumberland Island NS will improve recreational opportunities and visitor services by replacing the decaying and antiquated Sea Camp Ranger Station with a state of the art visitor contact facility that incorporates accessibility, the latest technology, and sound environmental practices. Using the same initiatives, the Park will also replace obsolete and inefficient facilities at the Sea Camp Campground, such as the bath house/comfort station. When completed these new facilities will be models in energy efficiency and environmental design.

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Site: CUIS

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

The park will extend the boardwalk over the Dungeness dune crossing to allow for wheelchair accessibility and provide opportunity to enjoy the marsh and dune resource. In addition, the park will provide at least one wheelchair accessible trail in the designated Wilderness. Trails will also be established which will allow visitors to walk through the maritime forest, in lieu of the dirt road which supports vehicle traffic.

CUIS proposes to connect to a variety of local recreation groups such as kayaking clubs, bicycling groups, and garden clubs in linking water and hiking trails with state and federal coastal parks. Boaters and kayakers will have an opportunity to travel directly to the island from numerous routes. Proposed cycling paths will enable visitors to travel from the waterfront to local parks on designated bike trails. Linking a partnership with Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge will provide for a related yet entirely different visitor experience. Public awareness campaigns will be held to increase visitor awareness of the varieties of outdoor experiences, support healthy lifestyles through outdoor activities and link a network of coastal resources with the public.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

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Site: CUIS

RECREATION

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

Cumberland Island NS has a long history of dedicated volunteers who are committed and passionate. Increased volunteer opportunities will be provided by ensuring that a staff person is assigned that duty as a major job assignment in order to support better communications, provide for logistics and record keeping and most of all ensure that volunteers are assertively recruited, interviewed, trained, tasked, and recognized appropriately.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Currently the park has several partnerships with colleges and universities giving students a choice for "alternative spring breaks". The park's goal is to double the number of partnerships with universities and offer "alternative corporate retreats". These retreats will give businesses and civic groups the opportunity to come to the island volunteering on projects ranging from one day up to a week long.

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Site: CUIS

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The parks "hunt camp" is currently being rehabilitated and will be an excellent location for youth associations to camp for several days. During their stay they will work on park projects while simultaneously learning about the parks mission and its cultural and natural resources.

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Site: CUIS

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

CUIS will promote opportunities for more visitors of all ages to be engaged in park recreation activities through facilitating a wider range of interpretive programs, creating audio visual and other media, summer camp programs, outreach programs and volunteer programs. We are just scratching the surface with our current programming and with more staff we can facilitate programs which will meet a variety of visitor interests and enable visitors to make more meaningful connections with the resource.

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Site: CUIS

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The Park's education program will be a two prong program geared toward teachers and students. The workshop for teachers is the first prong and will be based on Georgia curriculum and will enable teachers to carry the parks mission back to the classrooms and reintroduce the National Parks to local students. Lessons in the education center will be enhanced by hands on projects and include environmental practices to increase teachers environmental awareness and how to apply these practices back in the classroom.

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Site: CUIS

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Increased number of web hits will be supported through substantial improvement to the web site. Web visitors will be able to access "virtual tours" of historic homes, watch a ranger guided natural history program, watch a sea turtle nest emerge, download audio tours to mp3 players or cell phones, print children's activities, curriculum based lesson plans, view historic collections, and link to partners and other resource related sources.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The second prong of the Park's education program will bring students to the island to experience the island's natural and cultural resources up close. These programs will take place in the parks proposed education center including interpretive media, wet labs, and audio visual equipment. Lessons learned in the education center will be enhanced by hands on projects and include environmental practices to increase students environmental awareness and how to apply them to their daily lives. Students will be encouraged to pass on what they learned to their parents and bring their parents back to the parks.

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Site: CUIS

EDUCATION

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The Junior Ranger will be enhanced by upgrading the existing booklet, hosting Junior Ranger days once a week and summer day camps. Outreach programs in which rangers go off-site to facilitate programs will ensure that those who do not have the opportunity to actually visit can also participate.

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Site: CUIS

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

CUIS will provide a broader base of interpretive programs by establishing an island education center, facilitating teacher workshops, and hiring additional staff to present a broad range of topics related to natural and cultural history. Centennial plans include utilizing a historic building to create an environmental education center which is conveniently located in the heart of the resource. This center will be used to educate local and regional children, facilitate teacher workshops, and provide a visitor interpretive center at the south end of the island.

Plum Orchard will be fully integrated into the Park's programs through development as a museum, a visitor contact center, and potential hub for visitor services on the island's north end.

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Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Cumberland Island National Seashore and its partners will implement a transportation management plan that is environmentally compatible, provides an enriched visitor experience, and respects Wilderness values. The plan is currently in development and upon its completion the park must take significant strides to make it effective. Embracing new technology, such as alternative fuel vehicles, will be carried out to reach environmental responsibilities. Operational changes will be made to improve current visitor mobility and provide appropriate opportunities in areas currently not accessible to the broader public, such as the historic sites on the North End. While implementing this program the Park will safeguard the island's pristine character and Wilderness from intrusion and abuse.

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Site: CUIS

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Cumberland Island National Seashore will recruit college interns from diverse demographics and degree programs to assist in all aspects of park operations. The park will also send park representative to job fairs, colleges, and volunteer venues to raise awareness of NPS mission and career opportunities.

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Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.

Managers and staff will ensure that every new employee that begins their National Park Service career at Cumberland Island National Seashore will complete basic NPS training, most notably the NPS Fundamentals Program. This is needed to restore understanding, pride, and commitment to the National Park Service mission and heritage. Every position and occupation will complete this training no matter what their prior professional, academic, and/or technical background may have been.

Park managers will support professional development by ensuring that every park employee has the opportunity to develop a personal plan for success and professional development through ongoing peer and supervisory career counseling. Employees will be encouraged to develop a training plan which makes good use of available NPS development opportunities and partner resources.

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