



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway National Recreation Area

Gateway State of the Park 2009



Foreword



The accomplishments of the park this past year are impressive, reflecting the diversity of the resources that make up the park itself. A sampling of these accomplishments include breaking ground to rehabilitate the original airport terminal for the City of New York on Floyd Bennett Field, a collaborative effort to plant 1,000 new trees, establishing a new active

recreation program that introduced leisure kayaking to new audiences, completing several new miles of a multi-use trail at Sandy Hook and promoting innovative living history programs throughout the park. These and all the accomplishments chronicled in this report reflect the combined efforts that our staff and our partners made to preserve the significant cultural and natural features of Gateway, while continually working to provide environmental leadership and superior visitor services.

Looking forward, Gateway is preparing to meet the significant changes that are both current and anticipated over the next two decades. Reacting to the reality of demands on our budget that far exceed available funds, the park recently instituted a new organizational structure. This structure is designed to cut fixed expenses, while preserving our ability to protect important resources and meet our commitment to provide core visitor programs.

We are also proceeding with our multi-year effort to build a new General Management Plan that will guide

the way we manage the park for many years. A key step this year was engaging the public through a series of Open Houses that were held this past summer and fall in all three Units of the park. Thousands of visitors spoke with us and provided written comments that will help us to better understand the public's expectations. More opportunities to provide input will also be available when draft management alternatives are made available in 2010.

Our third and perhaps most daunting challenge is trying to comprehend the implications that global climate change will have on Gateway's resources. To better understand this question, Gateway partnered with researchers at Columbia University to develop options for an adaptive strategy that will help guide our decisions for protecting park resources from damage or loss. This, of course, is an ongoing effort that will span the efforts of both current and future generations, but hopefully the groundwork that is now being established will help to prepare us for the changes that many believe are inevitable.

Finally, I wish to thank the staff, our partners and our volunteers who have worked so hard to serve the millions of visitors who came to Gateway this past year. The range of our programs reflects the commitment each of you make to reach a diverse audience, to foster partnerships and to provide opportunities for visitor enjoyment. Faced with significant challenges you remain steadfast in your dedication to an urban National Park that is the pride of our region, and for that we are grateful.

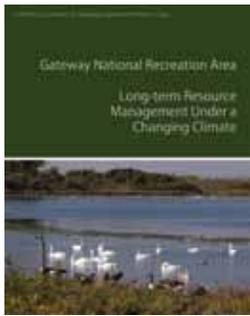
Barry T. Sullivan
Superintendent

IMPROVING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Roadmap for the Future

The General Management Plan (GMP) Public Open Houses were held throughout the park this past summer. Individuals were afforded the opportunity to look at displays on the GMP process and talk with the Civic Engagement Team members. Many suggestions were received and recorded for future analysis during the GMP process. These Open Houses were just a first step. There will be additional rounds of public involvement and meetings as the plan progresses. The GMP will take several years to complete and involve employee input and that of the general public, visitors, stakeholders and other agencies. This General Management Plan will be a roadmap to guide us for the next twenty years.

Climate Change Report Released



In coordination with the park, Columbia University released the *Gateway National Recreation Area, Long-term Resource Management Under a Changing Climate* report. Over the next century, climate change will significantly affect human and ecological systems. At Gateway, climate change adaptation means increasing ecosystem resilience and protecting cultural and recreational resources from damage or loss. The new General Management Plan

is the ideal opportunity to incorporate climate change considerations into planning and decision-making. The options for an adaptation strategy outlined in the report are an initial framework from which can build. Implementing an adaptation strategy can help Gateway fulfill its mandate to continue to preserve and protect the park's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Have Paddles, Will Travel

This past summer more than 800 visitors, aged 10 to 14, were introduced to kayaking, canoeing, and paddling by park rangers at Canarsie Pier in the Jamaica Bay Unit. Volunteers of the Sebago Canoe Club, Inc. and a \$50,000 grant provided through the National Parks of New York

Harbor Conservancy, by the National Park Foundation and Coca Cola Company, enabled this successful and popular pilot program. The grant allowed for the designation of a water trail, classroom instruction and the chance to test drive their skills. The new program brought new skills to youth in the area and provided opportunities to explore the plentiful water resources found at Jamaica Bay.



Hooping It Up at Miller Field



© Sung Won Kim

Teams “hooped it up” at Gateway’s second annual 5-on-5 Basketball Tournament, held this past summer at Miller Field. The tournament spanned four weekends over the course of the summer. Girls and boys ages 15 to 16 years old from both Staten Island and Long Island

participated in the NPS-sponsored basketball tournament. First, second, and third place prizes were awarded to the winning teams and basketball medals were given to all participants. Miller Field is a popular recreation area with 187 acres of open grounds, home to a variety of sports fields, a bocce court, playgrounds, and picnic area. Altogether, there are 80 leagues and 2,000 teams that utilize Miller Field’s sports facilities throughout the year.

Citizen Scientists



“Marine Invaders,” the citizen science program designed by the National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center, has passed from the pilot phase to a fully realized school program. At the Floyd Bennett Field seaplane ramp, students follow protocol

designed by National Park Service resource specialists to record what coastal organisms live on rocky shores. Students particularly look for Asian shore crabs, a recent invasive species now being studied by biologists at the Rutgers University Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. As “citizen scientists,” students record data which will be shared with scientists at these institutions. The program, now offered at various Gateway sites, could be adopted by National Park Service units along the eastern seaboard from Massachusetts to Maryland, which would increase the breadth of data collection.

Green and Eco-Conscious Travel

In partnership with the New York City Economic Development Corporation, ferry service to Gateway’s Riis Landing and eco cruises on Jamaica Bay continued this year. The ferry service offered a “green” transportation alternative from Manhattan to the beaches at Riis Park. The ranger-lead eco cruises allowed visitors the chance to experience Jamaica Bay wildlife up close. Tours were well received by visitors of all ages with almost 1,000 visitors enjoying both eco and sunset cruises.

Free Shuttle Bus Expands Visitor Experience

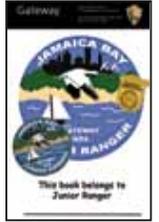


Visitors to the park who arrived by New York Water Taxi were offered an opportunity to see more sites via the new National Park Service Visitor Transport Shuttle Service. The free shuttle originated at Riis Landing on the Rockaway Peninsula with stops at the Jacob Riis Park Boardwalk, the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and at Floyd Bennett Field, including the Aviator Sports Center and the Historic Aircraft Restoration Hangar.

Junior Ranger Programs Expand

Children ages 7 to 12 were invited to join park rangers for a host of new Junior Ranger programs this summer. At Sandy Hook, options included the Junior Ranger Citizen Scientist, Firefighter and Coast Guard programs. In cooperation with the National Park Foundation, the Jamaica Bay Unit brought

its Junior Ranger program to 5,000 young visitors in 2009. The new updated Junior Ranger Program booklet includes self-guided activities geared toward children visiting the park, and highlights significant cultural and natural resources at four different sites in the Jamaica Bay Unit: Floyd Bennett Field, Fort Tilden, Jacob Riis Park, and the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Participants who completed the Junior Ranger Programs were awarded a site-specific patch and Junior Ranger Program completion certificate.



Digital Natives

The National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center hosted *Digital Natives and Analog Parks*, a one-day workshop on new media and new audiences. More than 30 NPS employees and partners attended from parks in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Boston. Dr. William Kornblum, professor of sociology at the City University of New York, presented a survey of CUNY undergraduate perceptions of the parks. Following the presentations, National Park Service employees brainstormed about ways to work together in developing new media and services to attract younger, more diverse audiences. A video of the workshop has been edited and is available on request.

Summer Teacher Institute

The National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center, in collaboration with African Burial Ground National Monument, received a “Parks as Classroom” grant to host the first Summer Teacher Institute for the new park. Held in late July 2009, the three-day institute attracted nearly



two dozen New York City-area teachers of grades 4 through 12. In the mornings, teachers listened to scholars present the latest archaeological and historic content. In the afternoons, educators took part

in brainstorming sessions about hands-on, participatory lesson plans that would complement field trips to the site. Participants submitted lesson plans, which were placed on the park website for all teachers to use. Feedback was very positive with one school librarian observing, “I will never look at Manhattan the same way again.”

Fellowship Program



The Jamaica Bay Institute, in cooperation with Eastern National, a non-profit cooperating association dedicated to the preservation and use of the parks, launched *The Jamaica Bay Research Fellowship Program*. This program encourages scientific and scholarly research within the Jamaica Bay ecosystem. The fellowship program supports field research in the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences.

Two projects were funded this season. One, led by a student from Hofstra University, focused on Norway rat predation on Diamondback Terrapins. The second student project with the College of Staten Island, studied the effects of chronic habitat degradation on juvenile oysters.

Tournaments Attract Top Competition



The intent of National Recreation Areas is to provide outdoor opportunities to visitors and residents of large metropolitan areas. They also provide a perfect arena for testing one's

recreational and professional abilities as well. With that in mind, the Sandy Hook Unit hosted three major recreational competitions this summer. The 25th annual All-Women Lifeguard Tournament was held on July 29 and attracted

more than 200 participants. The 26th annual Sandy Hook Lifeguard Tournament was held August 3 with the host Sandy Hook Team defeating seven other teams from Monmouth and Ocean Counties. On August 17, 15 surfboat teams competed in the 13th annual Sandy Hook Five Mile Row. These yearly competitions are part of Gateway's continuing effort to showcase the high level of fitness and skills required in all surf-guarding positions and to inspire others to become interested in this line of work.

Facelift for Park Entrance Continues

Improvements to the entrance of Sandy Hook continued this summer. First, a new fee plaza was built as a result of the Highlands Bridge construction project. The new plaza, funded by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), consists of three new toll booths and a new Entrance Station. NJDOT's project to replace the RT 36 Highlands drawbridge at the entrance to Sandy Hook with a fixed span bridge is in the second year of construction. Unfortunately, there were traffic delays because of this construction. However, next year's traffic configuration is expected to greatly improve the flow of inbound and outbound traffic. The project is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2011.



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Historic Forts- Occupied Naturally



New York City has always had a housing shortage, but prospects have never been better for cave nesting animals. Several notable wildlife sightings have recently been documented at historic Fort Wadsworth. The civil war batteries, forts, and bunkers provide a scenic background and the nearest thing to a cave to be found in the five boroughs. A small winter colony of big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) was discovered using the fort not only as a place for winter hibernation, but a day time roost. A pair of black vultures has become New York City's first nesting pair, continuing a northbound expansion of this bird's range documented by scientists over the last three decades. Footage was taken of the adult and juvenile birds to create a video podcast.

Let the Sun Shine In



The Sandy Hook Foundation provided funding to install solar panels on the roof of the North Beach Plaza comfort station. The nine panels were installed by Sea Bright Solar in late February, each providing 230 watts during peak conditions. The power generated supplemented power needs at the comfort station during the main visitor season and will feed back to the utility company for the duration of the closed season. A planned

interpretive panel near the installation will explain the solar power process and include a device to display actual power generated and subsequent carbon reduction.

Gateway Grows Green

In cooperation with 130 park volunteers from NYC Parks and Recreation's Natural Resource Group (NRG), New York Restoration Project, Toyota Motor Company, New York Cares, National Audubon Society and the Mayor's NYC Million Trees initiative, 1,000 trees were planted at the Ecology Village campgrounds on Floyd Bennett Field. This multi agency coordinated effort resulted in significant vegetation and fauna habitat restoration and massive greening of the urban landscape.



Jamaica Bay Institute Bio-Blitz



An eager crowd of scientists, amateur naturalists, students and volunteers gathered in September at Floyd Bennett Field for the start of the second Jamaica Bay Bioblitz. A Bioblitz is a field study in which a group of scientists and volunteers

conduct an intensive 24 or 48-hour biological inventory, to identify and record all species of living organisms in a given area. The event was held in partnership with City University of New York (CUNY). Approximately 100 students and volunteers participated and observed a total of 123 species of birds, fish, mammals, plants, and marine and terrestrial invertebrates.

Shorebird Protection Takes Flight



Recent efforts to control shorebird predators seem to have had a positive influence on shorebird productivity at Sandy Hook as 35 pairs of piping plover fledged (raised young birds to be capable of flight) 55 chicks. Last year, only 18%

of the nests lost were due to predation by gulls or red foxes. Most of the loss was caused by flooding or as nests were abandoned for unknown reasons. Least Terns and American Oystercatchers also had success in producing young. The Least Tern census counted 113 pairs along with 16 chicks. It was a productive year for other species as well as 12 pairs of American Oystercatchers fledged 15 chicks and 10 pairs of osprey produced 16 young.

What Lies Beneath?

The answer to that question was found in the seining program at the Sandy Hook Unit. Visitors came by the carload to Horseshoe Cove to find out how to use a seine net and learn about the creatures that live beneath the surface of Sandy Hook Bay. Young and old visitors alike delighted in dragging the net through the water and hauling up all sorts of treasures. They learned to identify the various life forms that were found and then released those flora and fauna back into their habitat. By investigating what species live in the bay, visitors were educated about the importance of salt marsh estuaries as “nature’s nurseries.”



Radiation Remediation

A flyover of Staten Island by the New York City Police Department in 2005 revealed the presence of low level radioactive materials at the Great Kills district of the park. Park staff worked in partnership with city, state, and Federal authorities to assess the condition of the site. The materials examined were determined to be of no significant danger to the public. However, the immediately effected park areas remains closed in order to remediate the situation. The materials that were first discovered have been removed, and funding has been secured in order to follow regulatory guidelines to further assess the site.

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

Commemoration of Henry Hudson's Historic Arrival



On Labor Day, almost 400 years to the day after explorer Henry Hudson's ship "Half Moon" passed through the Narrows of the Hudson River, a series of events highlighted the important anniversary. Renowned speakers, author Dr. Eric Sanderson and naturalist Professor Tom Lake, shared insights to the rich ecology and Native American history that Hudson and his crew encountered

at the entrance of the New York Harbor. Rangers provided guided walks and seining activities about plants and marine animals that were native to pre-colonial New York. A popular kayaking program provided dozens of visitors with a contemporary view of the shoreline that Hudson discovered so many 'half moons' ago.

90th Anniversary of "Navy Flying Boats" at Riis



The Jamaica Bay Unit celebrated the 90th anniversary of the first airplane to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. All three "Navy Flying Boats" that attempted the flight were highlighted in an exhibit; along with a large scale model of the airplane and with a ranger presentation about the significance of these aircraft. The first flying boats were a specialized form of aircraft designed to take off from and land on water, using their

fuselage as a floating hull. This particular historic flight began in May of 1919 at the Naval Air Station in Rockaway, N.Y., what is now the Riis Park parking lot. Of the three Navy Flying Boats that attempted the flight, only one completed the journey and became the first airplane to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. Descendants from three of the families of the flight pilots attended the celebration.

Living History



Visitors could see, smell and hear history come alive at Sandy Hook's living history programs at History House, Battery Gunnison, and Fort Hancock. At History House, a traditional victory garden was planted and rangers dressed as 1940s officers while their 'wives' cooked and baked period recipes to fully recreate the air of the WWII era. At Battery Gunnison, a historian from the 245th Coast Artillery regiment showed visitors the inner workings of the last coastal defense site of its type that maintains two 6-inch artillery guns.

Yesterday's Trash, Today's Treasures



Most of the Sandy Hook Multi-use Pathway is now complete, offering visitors a great way to experience the beauty of park on foot or by bicycle. A little-known part of the construction process entailed completing archeological surveys and during the course of the surveys a disturbed trash pit was discovered near the Sandy Hook Lighthouse. Built in 1764, the Lighthouse was occupied by British sympathizers during the American Revolution. Spikes were found in the trash pit that may have been used to build the stockade constructed by the British as a fort to protect the lighthouse structure from attack. A pipe stem and ceramics found at the site are

indicative of the domestic life of the soldiers and civilians that occupied the Lighthouse fort. Using one's imagination, it isn't hard to picture a British soldier standing guard duty with his pipe tucked into the ribbon of his hat. Though small, they are still important treasures in uncovering the stories of Sandy Hook's long military history.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Giving Monarchs a Break



With a wing span of only 3-4 inches across and a migratory journey hundreds of miles long, the Monarch Butterfly could use a break don't you think? For the last two years, the Protectors of the Pine Oak Woods (PPOW) have worked with staff at Great Kills to give them that break. PPOW and park staff planted a butterfly garden to attract and help conserve butterfly populations. In that time, 200 native plants were obtained from the Greenbelt Native Plant Center and added to this garden. The garden is adjacent to the Great Kills Education Field Station. The PPOW plantings were funded by grant money from the New York City Environmental Fund. Great Kills Park has done population studies and tagged monarch butterflies for Monarch Watch, a nonprofit educational outreach program based at the University of Kansas focusing on population, habitat and fall migration patterns.

Gateway Center for Science and Environmental Studies

Working in partnership with the New York City Department of Education, Gateway established in 2008-09 a park ranger/education specialist position at the Education Center to develop and present professional training workshops for Department of Education teachers from Brooklyn and Queens. These workshops utilize

the resources of Floyd Bennett Field, so teachers can experience activities and lessons such as *Project Wet*, *Project Wild*, *Aquatic Wild*, and *Flying Wild*. During the workshops, teachers viewed historic aircraft and compared human and avian flight. They also used Global Positioning units (GPS) to locate trees around the park, and field guides and digital microscopes to identify the species and understand their ecological roles. Another workshop allowed them an opportunity to investigate native and invasive aquatic species found along the park shorelines. Overall, the workshops enhanced the teachers' knowledge of these specific fields and science instruction techniques; all direct benefits to the students in their classrooms.



Rude Awakenings

Sandy Hook Unit law enforcement rangers and members of the Sandy Hook Fire Brigade once again participated in the Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST) Rude Awakenings Program. The program is an anti-drinking and drugged driving program targeted toward high school students prior to the prom and summer season. The program consists of interactive speaker presentations and field activities. The MAST program included approximately 1,200 students from several other area schools.

Beach Safety Campaigns

The National Park Service had a long standing relationship with the YMCA. The YMCA of Greater New York worked with park staff to produce a beach safety brochure that was distributed to all students after swimming instruction classes. Aquatic instructors from the YMCA of Greater New York were invited to Jacob Riis Park to participate in rip current and beach safety training lead by an on staff lifeguard. Instructors then shared that information with their students and educated them on safety practices at the beach.

Cardboard Meets Technology



The Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST) held its 11th annual Cardboard Boat Armada at Sandy Hook. Family and friends lined the banks of Plum Island to witness students put their cardboard boat designs to the test. Students were split into 10 teams to design cardboard boats to shuttle their seven to eight team members across to Plum Island. Each team selected an explorer to research and represent during the project. The design of the cardboard boat had to resemble the explorer's boat in some way. All boats were made from cardboard, contact cement and caulk. Next year's challenge will venture into new design projects where the students may be challenged to walk on or under water. MAST, a co-ed four-year high school, is located in the Fort Hancock Historic District.

New Blind Unveils Great View



The Sandy Hook Foundation provided funds and labor to reconstruct the wildlife viewing blind on Nike Pond. The blind, initially constructed in 2005, had been destroyed by fire in September of 2008. Ideally situated along the Atlantic Flyway, the blind faces the freshwater Nike Pond and provides a great place for bird watchers, wildlife photographers, and other visitors to enjoy viewing a variety of wildlife. Featured species include everything from black crowned night herons to painted turtles. The foundation worked with park staff and the New Jersey Audubon Society and insured the design is easily accessible and provides the best viewing opportunities.

Exceptional Park Projects by Exceptional People



Community Resources, a Human Service Agency serving special needs people, has been working with park staff at the Staten Island Unit since 2006. The non-profit program continued this past year and provided experiences that offered special needs people work opportunities that maximized their social, emotional and cognitive strengths. This past year the group worked on many maintenance beautification projects including cleanups at

historic Battery Weed, multiple use pathways at Great Kills, sites at Miller Field such as the White Swamp Trail, Veterans' Memorial Circle and sports fields, as well as the scenic overlooks at Fort Wadsworth.

Operation Clean Shores



Sandy Hook continued to benefit from the Clean Shores Program, part of the Division of Watershed Management of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The Clean Ocean Shores partnered with the New Jersey Department of Corrections and conducted ocean beach clean-ups in the spring and a bay side clean-up in late summer. Sandy Hook maintenance staff provided logistics for each 10-day operation. They supplied heavy equipment and operators for loading more than 20 large waste containers with debris. They also removed more than 200 tons of washed-up beach waste. The Sandy Hook Foundation generously provided funding for lunches for the clean-up crew.

Community Reading and Performances



Staten Island OutLOUD continued its partnership with the Staten Island Unit and held community readings and dialogs about historic works in the spectacular setting of Fort Wadsworth. Staten Island OutLOUD organizes public readings to share ideas and promote cross-cultural understanding. These grass-roots gatherings highlight the community's rich diversity. The readings this summer included the *Declaration of Independence*, *Bill of Rights* and the *Emancipation Proclamation*, *Moby Dick*; and excerpts from the journals of Henry Hudson's first mate, Robert Juet. The event brought literature and history together in profound and memorable ways.

FOSTERING OUR IMAGE AND IDENTITY AS PART OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

New York City Marathon



Willkommen, bienvenido and *bienvenue* echoed from speakers at Fort Wadsworth on November 1, welcoming more than 42,000 runners from across the globe and heralding another beginning of the New York City Marathon. Forty years after its start, it continues to grow in size and to be the leader among marathons around the world.

Volunteer Statistics Nothing to Fool Around About



The first Volunteer Coordinator Workshop was held in the spring at the National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center on Staten Island. The workshop allowed park staff to learn more about the resources the VIP program offers and provided training in how they can continue to effectively operate this program. Though the workshop started on April Fools' Day, Gateway's volunteer records are nothing to 'fool around' about. Three-thousand-four-hundred and twenty-nine dedicated volunteers donated more than 60,000 hours of service to the park last year. These dedicated and talented individuals not only enhanced the visitor experience by assisting with everything from beach cleanups to historic aircraft restoration, they also saved the park an estimated 1.2 million dollars last year alone.

Still *America's Best Idea*

Funded by a grant from the National Park Foundation, the park partnered with the City University of New York to open a dialogue between the Caribbean communities of Brooklyn and Queens and the National Park Service. Professors from Brooklyn College taught six interns visual sociology and interview techniques to prepare them for meeting with community members to get feedback on

their knowledge of Gateway and other national parks. The six interns visited neighborhoods such as Little Guyana and Jamaica during the project. The interns, who themselves are from immigrant communities, experienced the rich diversity of wildlife and activities within Gateway's Jamaica Bay; they kayaked, canoed, sailed and hiked the park with NPS staff. The 13-minute documentary film of the project, *Hear Every Voice: NYC and National Parks*, was presented at Brooklyn College to coincide with the release of the Ken Burns film series on National Parks, *America's Best Idea*, in September.



State of the Bay Symposium

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection, in partnership with the Jamaica Bay Institute, convened a two-day State of the Bay Symposium. The event highlighted emerging research on a range of issues impacting the ecology of Jamaica Bay, a unique and irreplaceable ecological resource for New York. Nearly 100 participants attended, including many Jamaica Bay environmental stakeholder groups, regulatory agencies, academic institutions and concerned citizens. The symposium presented information on a diverse range of scientific research topics that included: salt marsh dynamics, wetland trends, implementation of "keystone" habitat pilot projects and storm water best management practice pilot projects within the watershed of Jamaica Bay.



Lights, Camera, Action!

The National Parks of NY Harbor Education Center stepped into video production with two series of podcasts this summer. Video podcasts offer Gateway a new medium of interpretation with considerable appeal to new, younger audiences. *YCC in NYC* followed two dozen Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) interns at various New York Harbor national parks this summer, including each of the Gateway units. The podcast series highlights both the work YCC interns completed and the positive influence of national park staff on students, many of whom were working their first jobs.



Gateway...a special place



Dawn light captures the flight of a heron against a horizon of skyscrapers and warms massive gray walls that once protected the nation's great city of commerce; a large extended family of newly arrived immigrants picnic between dips in cool ocean waters while a hiker explores trails through a marine forest and a boater sets sail with a crew of inner city kids—this is Gateway National Recreation Area, one of America's preeminent National Parks.

Like every National Park, Gateway is a special place where visitors can experience the heritage of the United States on a first hand basis. Like every other National Park, Gateway is managed to protect the unique natural and cultural resources that make it a special place.

What makes this National Park different is that Gateway is readily accessible to 16 million people who live in the metropolitan area. Gateway was created to bring the “National Park Service experience” to these people, many who will never have the opportunity to travel outside the region. Gateway is not the only National Park in or around New York Harbor nor is it the best known, but at more than 26,000 acres it is by far the largest park in the area, serves the largest number of park visitors, and contains the most diverse array of natural and cultural features.

Gateway National Recreation Area fills a unique niche as a representative of the National Park System in the nation's most populous urban area. The challenges are great; the opportunities are many.

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