
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2026



Sand Beach
Acadia National Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Sand Beach
Resource Level:	Cultural Landscape
CRIS-CL Resource ID:	650070
Inventory Status:	Complete

Park Information

Park Name:	Acadia National Park
Alpha Code:	ACAD
Park Organization Code:	1700
Region:	Northeast
Restricted:	Yes

Landscape Description:

Sand Beach is a National Park Service (NPS) developed area in Acadia National Park, located in Hancock County, Maine. Acadia was the first national park established east of the Mississippi River and today encompasses over 50,000 acres across Mount Desert Island, the Schoodic Peninsula, and other smaller islands. Sand Beach is located in Newport Cove, in the southeastern section of Mount Desert Island, one half mile south of the entrance station on the Park Loop Road. Sand Beach itself is the only sandy Atlantic beach within the park and is one of the few beaches on Mount Desert Island that is accessible to the public. Much of the sand surface is actually composed of pulverized seashells. Swimming is allowed at the site all year, though only monitored by park lifeguards between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

The core area of the Sand Beach development is located on a gently sloped bluff, situated below the Ocean Drive segment of the Park Loop Road and above the beach and an adjacent pond/wetland named Beehive Lagoon. The site is accessed from Ocean Drive by way of a curving access road that leads to a 100-car, three-tiered (lower) parking lot. Walkways and steps convey visitors to a three-paneled lawn area that fronts a historic comfort station, which features a hipped, bellcast roof and brown-stained board and batten siding that reflects the Rustic Design style used throughout the park. Flanking the comfort station are two long, rectangular structures that house changing rooms and a lifeguard storage/office/vault toilet. Of more recent construction, they replaced earlier changing rooms built in 1955. Paved walkways, stone retaining walls and steps, and accessible ramps link the three buildings to the parking lot and trail that connects a smaller (upper) parking lot to the beach (also accessed from Ocean Drive). Historic small-scale features include a historic stone water fountain and a memorial dedicated to the donors of the land, the Satterlee family. Other contemporary features include a shelter for riders of the Island Explorer bus, a stainless-steel drinking fountain, informational kiosks with wood awnings and steel interpretive waysides, split rail fencing along paths, a steel bicycle rack, and numerous covered trash cans.

Successional woodlands, along with select NPS plantings of trees and shrubs, provide substantial shading throughout the site, except at the more open parking lots. The vegetation that reinforces the bluff edges also frames views to the beach, especially from an overlook at the top of a concrete staircase that accesses the beach. At almost 1,000 feet long, Sand Beach offering expansive 360-degree vistas that highlight the impressive landscape and seascape.

Sand Beach is one of Acadia National Park's most popular coastal destinations, regularly attracting several thousand sunbathers, walkers, and picnickers per day during peak season and serving as the gateway to the Ocean Path corridor, the Beehive, and the Great Head Trail. Its sandy shoreline, dramatic geology, and ease of access make it one of the most photographed and visited sites in the park.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Sand Beach project area is significant at the local level under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation as a long-popular scenic destination for early artists and explorers to contemporary park visitors. Sand Beach is also significant at the local level under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture for its overall plan and design, which adheres to the principles of the NPS Rustic Design style developed during the New Deal era.

The period of significance for Sand Beach is 1844-1955. The period begins with the artist Thomas Cole's first documented impressions of the island's landscapes, including his frequent visits to Sand Beach. This extended period highlights the increasing allure of the beach as a picturesque destination for artists and painters who came after Cole, as well as for the island's permanent and seasonal residents and visitors to Acadia National Park. The period ends when the NPS finished planning and constructing the Rustic-style visitor facilities at Sand Beach.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The historic integrity of Sand Beach project area is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1844-1955 with the existing conditions as assessed in 2024-2026. Many landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today. The rugged landforms that embrace Sand Beach and Newport Cove remain untouched, presenting visitors one of Acadia National Park's most scenic destinations. Swimmers, picnickers, hikers, and cyclists who witness the dramatic views of this seaside landscape are supported by park facilities designed in a rustic style that visually harmonize with the surrounding wooded terrain. The centerpiece of the development is a comfort station built in 1952, featuring board and batten siding and a hipped, bellcast roof that demonstrates the distinctive Acadia design used throughout the park. Historic circulation features include two parking lots, trails, and walkways. One walk accesses a (non-working) historic stone drinking fountain, which stands in front of the comfort station and adjacent to three lawn panels. The site's stone-constructed retaining walls, guardwalls, and steps reflect sound site planning that responds to local site conditions. A memorial plaque, dedicated in 1949, marks the occasion when the Satterlee family donated the site to the park.

Since 1955, some landscape characteristics and features at Sand Beach have changed. The most notable is the growth of vegetation since the development was completed in 1955, when the site was mostly open due to the 1947 fire. In 2003-2004 the park replaced the two original changing room structures with a new changing room building and a new lifeguard building. Both structures preserved the site's original layout and generally maintained the size and scale of the previous structures. Other changes include construction of accessible ramps, a stainless-steel drinking fountain, a bus shelter, and a concrete staircase to the beach.

Condition:

The overall condition of the Sand Beach project area is evaluated as "fair." Storm damage and erosion have damaged the beach staircase and made the bluff edge unstable. Heavy visitor uses around the Sand Beach visitor facilities have created social trails that compact soil and inhibit the growth of grass and other groundcovers.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Acadia National Park currently includes 16 landscapes (and eight component landscapes): Baker Island, Bass Harbor Head Light Station, Blackwoods Campground, Cadillac Mountain Summit, Carroll Farmstead, Historic Carriage Road System (four component landscapes), Historic Hiking Trail System (four component landscapes), Historic Motor Road System, Isle au Haut, Jordan Pond House, Picnic Areas, Sand Beach, Schoodic Peninsula, Seawall Campground, Sieur de Monts Spring, and Thunder Hole.

Landscape Type:

Historic Designed Landscape

Other Names:

Other Name: Newport Beach

Other Name Type: Historic

Other Name: Newport Cove

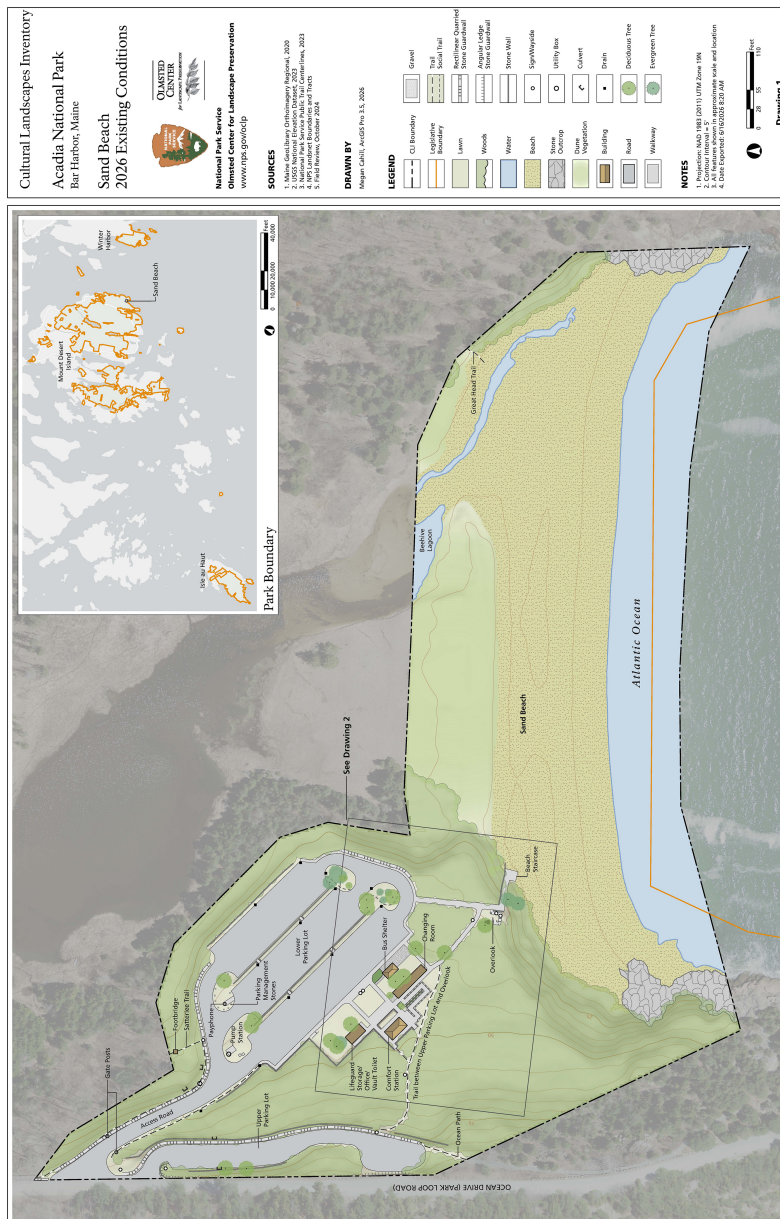
Other Name Type: Historic

Other Name: Stag Cove

Other Name Type: Historic

Site Plan

Site map, 2026, 1 of 2.



Site map, 2026, 2 of 2.



Concurrence Information

Superintendent Acknowledgment:

Park Superintendent Acknowledgment:	Yes
Park Superintendent Acknowledgment Date:	06/22/2026

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

In October 2024, existing conditions at the Sand Beach developed area were mapped and evaluated. Field work was completed by Jeff Killion, Eliot Foulds, James Mealey, and Bob Page, Historical Landscape Architects with the National Park Service's Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston. Jeff Killion completed text and graphics and Megan Cahill completed the maps in March 2026. The park contact for cultural resources is Gail Gladstone, Cultural Resource Program Manager (gail_gladstone@nps.gov).

Concurrence Graphic Information:

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Certification Form
2026**

Sand Beach
Acadia National Park

Acadia National Park certifies the CLI for Sand Beach, including:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Category B, Medium NPS Priority for Preservation and Maintenance” (formerly “Should be Preserved and Maintained”)

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Sand Beach

Good: indicates the property shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit’s cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the property shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the property to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the property shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI for Sand Beach at Acadia National Park is hereby approved and accepted.

KEVIN SCHNEIDER Digitally signed by KEVIN SCHNEIDER
Date: 2026.06.22 16:45:22 -04'00'

Superintendent, Acadia National Park

Date

Park concurrence form, July 22, 2026.

Sand Beach
Acadia National Park



PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
55 CAPITOL STREET
65 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333

KIRK F. MOHNEY
DIRECTOR

July 30, 2026

Mr. Kevin B. Schneider
Superintendent
Acadia National Park
P.O. Box 177
Bar Harbor, ME 04609

Project: MHPC# 0967-26 Acadia National Park
1.A.2 (ACAD)
Sand Beach Cultural Landscape Inventory
Town: Bar Harbor, ME

Dear Mr. Schneider:

Thank you for providing the Commission with a copy of the "National Park Service, Cultural Landscapes Inventory" (SHPO Review Draft dated 6/30/2026) for Sand Beach at Acadia National Park. Our reviewers found the document to be thorough and well written. We agree with the Analysis and Evaluation that begins on page 57, as well as the status of the inventory items.

The CLI does not assign a status of "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the five archaeological sites mentioned on page 70 as being in the Sand Beach Project Area. In addition, at least three of these sites appear to be outside the boundary of the identified cultural landscape, and one has significance that predates the period of significance. The Commission requests further clarification about the status of these sites relative to the CLI document.

We look forward to continuing consultation with you on this project. Please contact Megan Rideout at (207) 287-2992 or megan.m.rideout@maine.gov if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,


Kirk F. Mohney
State Historic Preservation Officer

PHONE: (207) 287-2132

FAX: (207) 287-2335

SHPO concurrence letter, page 1 of 8.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Interior Region 1
North Atlantic-Appalachian
1234 Market Street, 20th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

1.A.2.(IR1-RSS)

Kirk F. Mohney
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
55 Capitol Street
65 State House Station
Augusta, Maine, 04333-0065

Dear Mr. Mohney:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) for Sand Beach at Acadia National Park. We seek to reconfirm our agreement on a previously evaluated resource and your concurrence on the status of previously unevaluated resources identified in this CLI for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The report has been prepared by a team of historical landscape architects with the National Park Service (NPS) Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation and staff at Acadia National Park. The CLI program and the enclosed report continue the NPS efforts to update our cultural resource inventories.

Through the CLI program, the NPS is currently undertaking a nationwide effort to inventory its cultural landscapes. The CLI is conducted in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). It is an inventory of baseline information for all historically significant cultural landscapes within the national park system, and it examines multiple landscape features that contribute to the significance of historic properties. The CLI process includes gathering information from existing secondary sources and conducting on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the property's overall significance. For landscapes found potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the evaluation describes their character-defining features and assesses the landscape's overall historical integrity. It also raises questions about the landscape that need further study.

It is important to note that the CLI reports are not intended as comprehensive inventory reports for any one property, although for some properties they provide fuller documentation than for others. For example, the reports do not include a full architectural description of structures, but document structures as elements of the overall landscape, and similarly documents other characteristics such as vegetation, spatial organization, and views and vistas. The CLI is one

SHPO concurrence letter, page 2 of 8.

component of the NPS inventory effort that also includes cultural resource inventories for historic structures, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, and museum objects. For example, the NPS Historic Structures Inventory (formerly List of Classified Structures) includes structural features of cultural landscapes, but the CLI takes a more encompassing approach to the properties, inventorying all above-ground features in each park in which the NPS has a legal or mandated interest.

Previous Historic Property Evaluation:

The origins of Acadia National Park date to July 18, 1916, when it was proclaimed Sieur de Monts National Monument. On February 29, 1919, it was established as Lafayette National Park, and on January 19, 1929, the name was changed to Acadia National Park. The Sand Beach area was added to the park in 1949.

Two resources within the Sand Beach developed area have been previously evaluated by the NPS and your office. On May 5, 2003, your office concurred with the NPS that the first feature, the Sand Beach Comfort Station, was not significant. (Note: The park has since managed this feature as a cultural resource). On October 31, 2007, your office disagreed with the NPS that the second feature, the Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque, was non-contributing. Your office noted that "Parking lots are referenced in the MPDF under the description of Developed Areas within the property type Visitor Facilities and Developed Areas, and the Sand Beach area is specifically referenced as being potentially eligible." Your office acknowledged that while the date of the plaque's placement near the parking lot is outside the period of significance of the New Deal programs, the registration requirements do recognize that "Buildings or other site features constructed after 1942 that clearly follow the Rustic Design vocabulary may also be significant." As such, the "design and materials of the Satterlee plaque are consistent with other contributing memorials in the park."

On June 29, 2007, the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) titled, "Historic Resources of Acadia National Park" was approved by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places. The MPDF identified historic contexts, property types, and registration requirements with which to evaluate park resources. The three contexts were "Community Development and the Origins of Acadia National Park (1890-1937)," "John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and the Development of the National Park System (1913-1958)," and "Rustic Design (1890-1958)" and its subthemes, "Picturesque Style (1890-1950)" and "Rustic Design of the National Park Service (1916-1958)." The three property types were: Circulation Systems, Visitor Facilities and Developed Areas, and Park Administration and Support. Sand Beach was identified under Visitor Facilities and Developed Areas, with potential significance in the areas of Architecture, Recreation, and Landscape Architecture under the NPS Rustic Design context.

SHPO concurrence letter, page 3 of 8.

Several amendments and an update have expanded the scope of the MPDF. On June 5, 2013, the Keeper accepted an amendment that added Buildings and Structures as a property type to the existing historic context, “John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and the Development of the National Park System (1913-1958).” On June 26, 2017, the Keeper approved a comprehensive update, which incorporated the 2013 amendment and added two new historic contexts: “The Rusticator Period (1835-1890)” and “National Park Service Development of Acadia National Park (1916-1958).” On April 7, 2022, the Keeper accepted an amendment that added Art as an area of significance for the Circulation Systems (Hiking Trails) property type, under the context “The Rusticator Period (1835-1890).”

Resources adjacent to the Sand Beach project area associated with the historic hiking trail system and the historic motor road system have been listed, or determined eligible for listing, on the National Register. On April 8, 2022, the Keeper accepted documentation for the “Mount Desert Island Hiking Trail System.” National-level significance was identified under Criteria A and C in the areas of Art, Community Development, Conservation, Entertainment/Recreation, Landscape Architecture, and Social History. The period of significance was listed as 1844–1942, beginning with the artist Thomas Cole’s first documented impressions of the island’s landscapes from viewpoints that influenced the trail system’s development, and ending when the CCC work at Acadia National Park concluded. Great Head Trail (trail #2, 1867) and Ocean Path (trail #3, 1874) are contributing trails and located just east and west, respectively, of the Sandy Beach developed area. One of contributing viewpoints associated with the Great Head Trail – the Bricher Sand Beach Viewpoint – is located at the east end of the beach. On September 18, 2008, the Maine SHPO concurred with the findings of the “Historic Motor Road System CLI.” National-level significance was identified under Criteria A, B, and C in the areas of Architecture, Conservation, Engineering Entertainment/Recreation, Landscape Architecture, Philanthropy, Transportation, and association with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The period of significance was listed as 1922-1958, beginning with the planning and construction of the first segment, Mountain Road and later known as Jordan Pond/Eagle Lake Road, and ending with the construction of last segment, Bureau of Public Roads Project 4A2. Ocean Drive (reconstructed 1929, 1933-1934) is a contributing segment of the system, as are its associated angular guardwall stones, dry-laid stone retaining walls, culverts, paved parking areas, and gravel trails adjacent to motor roads.

Current Findings:

The enclosed CLI for the 11.80-acre Sand Beach developed area fully evaluates the cultural landscape, particularly the associated landscape characteristics and features, and finds that the site’s landscape retains integrity to the areas of Architecture, Entertainment/Recreation, and Landscape Architecture. As noted previously, one of the property’s features compiled on the attached list has been evaluated through your office’s concurrence. The CLI identifies 17 resources related to buildings and structures, vegetation, circulation, views and vistas, and small-scale features that contribute to the significance and historic character of the property. An additional 19 features are evaluated as noncontributing because they are not historically significant.

SHPO concurrence letter, page 4 of 8.

We call your particular attention to the Landscape Description, Boundary Description, National Register Information and the Statement of Significance, and Analysis and Evaluation Summary in the enclosed CLI.

Based on the CLI, we seek to reconfirm our agreement on previously evaluated resources and your concurrence on the status of resources and features identified in this CLI:

- Sand Beach is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its association with two historic contexts identified in the 2017 MPDF, “The Rusticator Period (1835–1890)” and “National Park Service Development of Acadia National Park (1916–1958).” The property has been a long-popular scenic destination for early artists and explorers to contemporary park visitors.
- Sand Beach is locally significant under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture for its association with the historic context identified in the 2017 MPDF, “Rustic Design (1890-1958),” and its associated subtheme, “The Rustic Design of the National Park Service (1916-1958).” The site’s overall plan and design reflects the principles of the NPS Rustic Design style developed during the New Deal era.
- The period of significance for Sand Beach is 1844-1955. The period begins with the artist Thomas Cole’s first documented impressions of the island’s landscapes, including his frequent visits to Sand Beach. This extended period highlights the increasing allure of the beach as a picturesque destination for artists and painters who came after Cole, as well as for the island’s permanent and seasonal residents and visitors to Acadia National Park. The period ends when the NPS finished planning and constructing the Rustic-style visitor facilities at Sand Beach.
- The categorization of contributing and non-contributing landscape characteristics and features (see attached list).

If you concur with these findings, we ask that you please sign on the space provided and return this letter to Jeff Killion, Interior Region 1 CLI Coordinator, by email: jeff_killion@nps.gov. We would appreciate your response in **30 days**, if possible. Thank you for your attention to this inventory. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Killion at 508-455-8540 (cell).

Sincerely,

JENNIFER MAVER  Digitally signed by JENNIFER MAVER
Date: 2026.06.29 14:58:57 -04'00'

Jennifer Maver
Associate Regional Director (Acting)
Resource Stewardship and Science

Enclosure/Attachment

cc: Superintendent, Acadia National Park

SHPO concurrence letter, page 5 of 8.

I concur with the National Park Service categorizations of the landscape resources and features for Sand Beach, as contributing and non-contributing.

Maine State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

SHPO concurrence letter, page 6 of 8.

NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory – Sand Beach

Acadia National Park

List of Contributing and Non-Contributing Features

June 2026

Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

The following landscape characteristics and associated features contribute to the property's historic character, though not all are considered countable resources according to the National Register of Historic Places. The feature marked with a (*) was evaluated by the Maine SHPO on October 31, 2007.

Buildings and Structures

- Sand Beach Comfort Station
- Stone Headwall Culverts and Stone Waterway
- Stone Guardwalls
- Stone Retaining Walls and Stone Steps – Lower Parking Lot and Walkways
- Stone Retaining Wall – Upper Parking Lot

Vegetation

- Woodlands
- NPS Trees and Shrubs
- Lawn Areas

Circulation

- Access Road
- Lower Parking Lot (1955)
- Trail and Steps between Upper Parking Lot and Overlook
- Upper Parking Lot (1934)
- Walkways

Views and Vistas

- View from Overlook to the Beach
- 360 Degree Views from Sand Beach

Small Scale Features

- * Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque
- Stone Water Fountain

Non-Contributing Landscape Characteristics & Associated Features

Buildings and Structures

- Changing Room
- Lifeguard Storage/Office

SHPO concurrence letter, page 7 of 8.

Sand Beach
Acadia National Park

Parking Management Stones
Stone Walls-Accessible Ramp

Circulation

Beach Staircase
Overlook
Social Paths

Small Scale Features

Bicycle Racks
Bus Shelter
Bus Shelter Seat Blocks
Gate
Post and Rail Fences
Pay Phone
Stainless Steel Water Fountain
Trail Directional Sign
Trash Can Bins
Utility and Septic System Equipment
Wayside Kiosks
Wayside Signs

bcc:

Jennifer Hanna, Acting Director, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
Dennis Montagna, Region 1 History Program
Stephen Pisani, Region 1 Historic Architecture Program
Bethany Serafine, Region 1 History Program

SHPO concurrence letter, page 8 of 8.

Seq. No.	File Name	Caption
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Geographic Information

State and County:

State/Territory	County
Maine	Hancock County

Area (Acres): 11.8

Land Tract Number(s)

13-104, portion of 100-acre tract

Boundary Description:

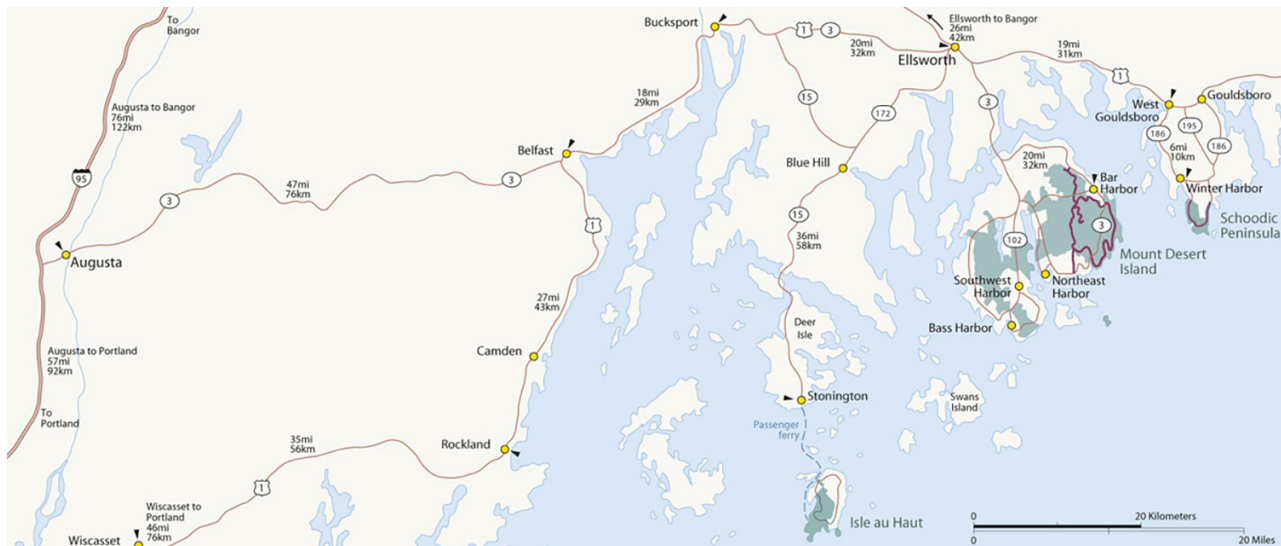
The Sand Beach project area encompasses the entirety of the beach, which is around 1,000 feet in length and 120-150 feet wide, depending on the tides. The area also includes portions of the rocky outcrops, dunes, and Beehive Lagoon abutting the beach, and a partially wooded bluff to the north and west of the beach whereupon the Sand Beach developed area is located. The project area does not include remnants of the former Satterlee Estate north and east of the beach (at Great Head) due the loss of physical integrity and historic character.

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.331247	-68.185006	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.330624	-68.184464	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.33067	-68.18424	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.330612	-68.183973	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.330156	-68.183327	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.32999	-68.183298	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.329752	-68.183345	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.329771	-68.183139	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.329714	-68.181339	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.329482	-68.180673	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.329192	-68.18037	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.328827	-68.180226	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.32888	-68.180502	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.328852	-68.183545	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.328696	-68.184401	
Aerial Photograph	Polygon	44.329672	-68.185081	

Sand Beach
Acadia National Park

Location Map:



Map of central Maine and Acadia National Park. (Acadia NP files)

Sand Beach
Acadia National Park



Map of Acadia National Park lands on Mount Desert Island. Sand Beach is on the island's east coast, on the right side of the map. (Acadia NP website)

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Physiographic context is the large-scale physical forms and patterns of the landscape such as hill, plateau, ravine, drumlin, etc. Acadia's landscape is the product of great expanses of time. Massive geologic forces—mountain building, molten magmas, and huge ice sheets—formed the landscape, while the persistent forces of erosion—water, wind, and waves—slowly continue to shape the landscape. Along the coast, the sweep of tides and waves continually shapes the shoreline. Rocky headlands bear the full brunt of the wind and waves of the open ocean. Salt marshes, rich with life, grow in protected tidal valleys, while beaches occupy sheltered coves. (Acadia NP website, "Acadia's Geologic Story")

Many different types of beaches are found on Acadia's shores. Beaches facing the open ocean and only minimally sheltered by rocky headlands consist of pebbles, cobbles, and even boulders. Coves protected from strong wave action are made up of fine-grained material, such as Sand Beach, which is composed primarily of bits and pieces of the shells and hard parts of marine life, such as mussels and sea urchins. (Acadia NP website, "Acadia's Geologic Story")

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Cultural context is the general human overlay on the physical form of the landscape. Before being settled by Europeans, Mount Desert Island was the site of seasonal Native American encampments. The island offered seasonal access to food, supplies for traditional craft making, and a source for spiritual and family connections. This connection to the island landscape still exists and continues today. Contact with Europeans occurred when Samuel de Champlain arrived in 1604. This first encounter with Mount Desert Island Indians may have taken place at Newport Cove (historically known as Stag Cove), an ideal location for beaching a fleet of bark canoes on Sand Beach

Sand Beach became a scenic destination soon after artist Thomas Cole explored the island in 1844. Cole's sketches and paintings and writings inspired other artists such as Frederic Church, Thomas Birch, and William Morris Hunt to visit. Their works inspired an annual summertime influx of visitors, called the "rusticators," as well as wealthy seasonal residents to see the dramatic scenery told by these artists. The transfer of Sand Beach from the Satterlee family to Acadia National Park has ensured visitor access to the beach, which is one of the most visited sites in the park.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Political context is the overlay imposed on the landscape through general land use, zoning, legal restrictions, transportation, utilities, population, and political jurisdiction (e.g., state, county, city, borough, or village). Sand Beach is south of the Town of Bar Harbor and east of the Village of Otter Creek in the Town of Mount Desert, both in Hancock County, Maine. As of the 2020 census, Bar Harbor's population was 5,089 and Mount Desert's was 2,146. (Wikipedia: "Bar Harbor, Maine" and "Mount Desert, Maine")

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Category B (Medium NPS Priority for Preservation & Maintenance)

Management Category Date: 06/22/2026

Management Category Narrative:

Sand Beach meets the criteria for “Management Category B, Medium NPS Priority for Preservation and Maintenance” (formerly “Should be Preserved and Maintained”) because the property meets National Register of Historic Preservation Criteria A and C and possesses a local level of significance.

Management Agreements:

Type of Agreement: None

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Narrative:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Legal Interest Narrative: Tract 13-104, Donation 372

Located in managed wilderness?: No

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands are lands outside the cultural landscape boundary, including lands inside or outside the park. Lands surrounding the Sand Beach CLI boundary are contributing because they are critical components of the site's scenic characteristics and setting. The rugged, wooded hillsides of Great Head and the Beehive provide a striking backdrop in many historic and contemporary paintings, sketches, and photographs created at the site. In addition to these hillsides, the tidal Beehive Lagoon frequently appears in panoramic views, further enriching the visual experience. Conversely, when viewed from Great Head and the Beehive, the beach becomes a central feature of the landscape. Moreover, the scenic vistas from Sand Beach toward Newport Cove, Old Soaker, and beyond to Otter Cliffs and the horizon line of the Atlantic Ocean are an important part of the visitor experience. These captivating views have helped make Sand Beach one of the most popular destinations in the park.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Eligibility: Eligible - SHPO/THPO Consensus Determination

Eligibility Date: 7/30/2026 12:00:00 AM

Significance Level: Local

Contributing: Individual

Classification: Site

Documentation Narrative Description:

The origins of Acadia National Park date to July 18, 1916, when it was proclaimed Sieur de Monts National Monument. On February 29, 1919, it was established as Lafayette National Park, and on January 19, 1929, the name was changed to Acadia National Park. The Sand Beach area was added to the park in 1949.

Two resources within the Sand Beach developed area have been previously evaluated by the National Park Service and the Maine State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). On May 5, 2003, the SHPO concurred with the NPS that the first feature, the Sand Beach Comfort Station, was not significant. (Note: The park has since managed this feature as a cultural resource). On October 31, 2007, the SHPO disagreed with the NPS that the second feature, the Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque, was non-contributing. The SHPO noted that "Parking lots are referenced in the MPDF under the description of Developed Areas within the property type Visitor Facilities and Developed Areas, and the Sand Beach area is specifically referenced as being potentially eligible." The SHPO acknowledged that while the date of the plaque's placement near the parking lot is outside the period of significance of the New Deal programs, the registration requirements do recognize that "Buildings or other site features constructed after 1942 that clearly follow the Rustic Design vocabulary may also be significant." As such, the "design and materials of the Satterlee plaque are consistent with other contributing memorials in the park."

On June 29, 2007, the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) titled, "Historic Resources of Acadia National Park" was approved by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places. The MPDF identified historic contexts, property types, and registration requirements with which to evaluate park resources. The three contexts were "Community Development and the Origins of Acadia National Park (1890-1937)," "John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and the Development of the National Park System (1913-1958)," and "Rustic Design (1890-1958)" and its subthemes, "Picturesque Style (1890-1950)" and "Rustic Design of the National Park Service (1916-1958)." The three property types were: Circulation Systems, Visitor Facilities and Developed Areas, and Park Administration and Support. Sand Beach was identified under Visitor Facilities and Developed Areas, with potential significance in the areas of Architecture, Recreation, and Landscape Architecture under the NPS Rustic Design context.

Several amendments and an update have expanded the scope of the MPDF. On June 5, 2013, the Keeper accepted an amendment that added Buildings and Structures as a property type to the existing historic context, "John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and the Development of the National Park System (1913-1958)." On June 26, 2017, the Keeper approved a comprehensive update, which incorporated the 2013 amendment and added two new historic contexts: "The Rusticator Period (1835-1890)" and "National Park

Service Development of Acadia National Park (1916-1958).” On April 7, 2022, the Keeper accepted an amendment that added Art as an area of significance for the Circulation Systems (Hiking Trails) property type, under the context “The Rusticator Period (1835-1890).”

Resources adjacent to the Sand Beach project area associated with the historic hiking trail system and the historic motor road system have been listed, or determined eligible for listing, on the National Register. On April 8, 2022, the Keeper accepted documentation for the “Mount Desert Island Hiking Trail System.” National-level significance was identified under Criteria A and C in the areas of Art, Community Development, Conservation, Entertainment/Recreation, Landscape Architecture, and Social History. The period of significance was listed as 1844–1942, beginning with the artist Thomas Cole’s first documented impressions of the island’s landscapes from viewpoints that influenced the trail system’s development, and ending when the CCC work at Acadia National Park concluded. Great Head Trail (trail #2, 1867) and Ocean Path (trail #3, 1874) are contributing trails and located just east and west, respectively, of the Sandy Beach developed area. One of contributing viewpoints associated with the Great Head Trail – the Bricher Sand Beach Viewpoint – is located at the east end of the beach. On September 18, 2008, the Maine SHPO concurred with the findings of the “Historic Motor Road System CLI”. National-level significance was identified under Criteria A, B, and C in the areas of Architecture, Conservation, Engineering Entertainment/Recreation, Landscape Architecture, Philanthropy, Transportation, and association with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The period of significance was listed as 1922-1958, beginning with the planning and construction of the first segment, Mountain Road and later known as Jordan Pond/Eagle Lake Road, and ending with the construction of last segment, Bureau of Public Roads Project 4A2. Ocean Drive (reconstructed 1929, 1933-1934) is a contributing segment of the system, as are its associated angular guardwall stones, dry-laid stone retaining walls, culverts, paved parking areas, and gravel trails adjacent to motor roads.

According to research conducted for the Sand Beach CLI, and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the “CLI Professional Procedures Guide,” the areas and periods of significance of this developed area, and major resources that contribute its significance, have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, Sand Beach is considered “SHPO–Inadequately Documented.”

Pre-CLI Documentation Status: SHPO/THPO - Inadequately Documented

CLI SHPO/THPO Concurrence Date: 7/30/2026 12:00:00 AM

CLI Concurrence Narrative:

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

The Sand Beach project area is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation and under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. The period of significance for Sand Beach is 1844-1955. The period begins with the artist Thomas Cole’s first documented impressions of the island’s landscapes, including his frequent visits to Sand Beach. This extended period highlights the increasing allure of the beach as a picturesque destination for artists and painters who came after Cole, as well as for the island’s permanent and seasonal residents, and the visitors to Acadia National Park. The period ends when the NPS finished planning and constructing the Rustic-style visitor facilities at Sand Beach.

CRITERION A

Entertainment/Recreation:

Sand Beach is significant under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its association with

two historic contexts identified in the 2017 MPDF, “The Rusticator Period (1835–1890)” and “National Park Service Development of Acadia National Park (1916–1958).” Sand Beach has long been a destination on Mount Desert Island’s eastern shore, and its popularity can be traced to the arrival of Thomas Cole, a leading artist of the Hudson River School, in 1844. Cole painted scenes of the rough ocean, colorful cliffs, and rugged mountains, and frequently visited Sand Beach and adjacent Great Head, writing, “The beaches of this region are remarkably fine. Sand beach is the grandest coast scenery we have yet found. Sand Beach Head [Great Head], the eastern extremity of Mount Desert Island, is a tremendous overhanging precipice, rising from the ocean, with the surf dashing against it in a frightful manner.” (CLR 2006: 20-21, from Noble 1964: 270)

Cole’s paintings and writings inspired other artists such as Frederic Church, Thomas Birch, and William Morris Hunt to visit. Although transportation to this part of Maine was difficult, an annual summertime influx of visitors, called the “rusticators,” began to descend on the area throughout the 1860s and 1870s to see the dramatic scenery told by these artists. Visitors traveled to scenic vistas on old roads and footpaths, including Schooner Head Road that led to the Great Head Trail (1840s-1850) and later the Ocean Path (1875), both of which abutted, and gave access to, Sand Beach.

The many paintings and writings produced by the rusticators introduced Mount Desert Island to the larger public, and by 1880 the island was being hailed as one of the most beautiful vacation spots in the country. Wealthy visitors seeking relief from hot summers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were among the tourists, and many built massive summer homes, euphemistically known as “cottages,” in and around Bar Harbor, Seal Harbor, and other towns. At the same time year-round residents began to improve the local roads to serve the growing number of tourists and to encourage them to visit the island’s natural wonders. This included the Town of Bar Harbor’s construction of Ocean Drive along the shoreline from Schooner Head Road to Otter Point, which greatly improved access to the Sand Beach area.

Around this time, there was a growing movement throughout the northeast United States to improve the physical and cultural qualities of villages and towns. To this end, several village improvement groups were established in the 1890s on Mount Desert Island, and in addition to focusing on their town centers, worked cooperatively across the island to map, improve, and maintain the existing trails and construct new trails. In 1901 the Hancock County Trustees for Public Reservations (HCTPR) was established to acquire and control land for public use, which included the protection of walking paths and scenic vistas. The HCTPR received their first parcels of land in 1908, and by 1913 it controlled over 5,000 acres of land on the island. However, many year-round residents, and especially local merchants, were opposed to the increasing limits on places for development. This prompted the HCTPR to seek long-term protection of the lands from the federal government and, with the financial support of summer resident John D. Rockefeller, Jr., successfully established Sieur de Monts National Monument in 1916. At this time, over 6,000 acres of HCTPR lands became part of the monument, which later expanded and became Lafayette National Park (1919) and then Acadia National Park (1929).

The lands comprised of Sand Beach and Great Head were not within the park boundaries. In 1900 Herbert Satterlee and his wife Louisa, the daughter of financier J.P. Morgan, acquired the beach and Great Head for their summer home and gardens. Concentrating their estate on the hillside northeast of the beach, the Satterlees allowed the public to access the beach. In the 1930s Rockefeller acquired lands surrounding the Satterlee property and rebuilt Ocean Drive, which would become part of his comprehensive motor road system, as well as the Ocean Path. According to a 1936 drawing there was a path and stairs from the drive’s old alignment to the beach. This may have been a proposed feature on the map or possibly an existing one built at an earlier date. It is also possible that the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), one of President Roosevelt’s make-work programs that contributed to the Ocean Drive and Ocean Path projects, may have worked on the path.

The completed Ocean Drive and Ocean Path projects were integrated into the park’s 1941 Master Plan, which illustrated existing and proposed facilities. Notably, Sand Beach was indicated on the plan as a proposed developed area even though it was privately owned. Regardless, the advent of World War II paused design and construction work at Acadia. CCC projects in the park were redirected to support the war effort and civil defense, until the camps closed in 1942. A post-war setback occurred in October 1947 when wildfires burned 17,128 acres on Mount Desert Island, of which approximately 8,750 acres were within park boundaries. The fire destroyed many year-round residences and summer cottages, including

several of the Satterlee buildings and the gardens. For the Satterlees, the combination of fire damage and the death of Herbert and Louisa prompted their children to donate the Sand Beach and Great Head property to the park in 1949. The transfer was memorialized with a plaque mounted to a boulder overlooking the beach.

The acquisition coincided with an enormous increase in visits at Acadia after the war, especially from tourists in vehicles. By this time, enough segments of Rockefeller's comprehensive motor road system had been completed to allow motorists to loop through the park by driving on a combination of federal roads and local roads, making the Ocean Drive area even more accessible. Sand Beach had long been a favorite destination for its saltwater beach, scenic views, and convenient location on Ocean Drive and adjacent trails, but at this time the only visitor facilities were a small parking lot off of the drive and a path to the beach. In 1951 the park began planning for amenities at Sand Beach, similar to those at the park's other popular destinations, and from 1952-1955 construction was completed on an access road, second parking lot, comfort station, two changing rooms, walkways, drinking fountain, and a scenic overlook of the beach and Great Head. Although facility updates have been implemented since 1955, the Sand Beach developed area still provides access to recreational amenities for visitors while maintaining the panoramic scenic relationship among Sand Beach, Great Head, the Beehive, Beehive Lagoon, Newport Cove, Otter Cliffs, and the Atlantic horizon.

CRITERION C

Architecture and Landscape Architecture:

Sand Beach is significant under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture for its association with the historic context identified in the 2017 MPDF, "Rustic Design (1890-1958)," and its associated subtheme, "The Rustic Design of the National Park Service (1916-1958)." The origin of Rustic Design can be traced back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century social movements to protect and preserve natural scenery for the public's benefit. In 1916 Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. articulated this philosophy in the enabling legislation of the NPS, which sought to conserve natural scenery in parks while providing public access to them. In the early years of the NPS, landscape architects, architects, and engineers recognized the need to develop unified design principles and standards that would guide the development of park facilities and simultaneously protect a park's natural, cultural, and scenic resources. The new style came to be known as Rustic Design of the National Park Service. It drew heavily from the Picturesque style, which incorporated natural features and materials with rustic constructed features to create an effect that was naturalistic and romantic rather than artificial and contrived. It was also influenced by the Prairie Style that emphasized the use of native plants. In the NPS Rustic Design style, constructed features utilized labor-intensive methods that created a rugged, frontierlike quality appropriate to a wilderness setting. Though general design standards—such as those presented in Albert Good's "Park and Recreation Structures" and published by the NPS—remained the same throughout the national parks, site features were typically customized with local materials, such as stone or wood, to fit the local environment in which they were constructed. By the end of the 1920s, the NPS Rustic Design style guided plans and specifications for site features and structures, techniques for the location of roads and trails in relation to natural scenery, methods to repair construction damage to natural conditions, and construction of park facilities. (MPDF 2017: E63)

In 1927 the park's first master plan articulated the integration of the park's existing facilities with new federally funded projects, continuing the traditions already established on Mount Desert Island while also embracing the NPS Rustic Design style. Fortunately, this style was appropriate for the scenery of Mount Desert Island that had attracted tourists and summer residents since the mid- to late-nineteenth centuries and had encouraged the land preservation and conservation efforts that ultimately established Acadia National Park. The NPS Rustic Design style complemented the Picturesque style of the existing hiking trails built and maintained by the various village improvement groups, as well as summer resident John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s construction of the carriage roads and reconstruction of Ocean Drive, which were designed to highlight views, retain mature vegetation, and blend in with the surrounding landscape by using local stone in bridges, guardwalls, and culverts.

Acadia National Park applied the NPS Rustic Design style at new developed areas in the 1930s and early 1940s, carefully siting them to harmonize with the surrounding topography, geology, and vegetation. The park's new buildings and structures featured generally low-profile designs with dark colored vertical board

and batten siding and hipped bellcast roofs, which rendered them inconspicuous and unobtrusive within the landscape, similar to earlier structures in the park and along the carriage roads. Rough-cut granite locally-quarried comprised curbs, steps, walls, fireplaces, and drinking fountains. Much of this construction was undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) under the supervision of NPS landscape architects and engineers.

In the 1930s the park and CCC developed two recreation areas at Echo Lake and Lakewood to provide public access to freshwater beaches. Each development promoted the principles of NPS Rustic Design with their winding access roads and paths, parking lots sited within the local topography, wood and stone bathhouse and restroom structures, as well as stone curbs, steps, and walls. Both facilities were included in the 1941 master plan that provided detailed documentation of the design and construction projects completed at the park up to that point. The plan identified Sand Beach, but not the existing parking lot (on the former Ocean Drive alignment) nor the stone steps and path to the beach. The plan did not propose new facilities because at the time it was privately-owned, but after acquiring the site in 1949, drawings were made to develop the park's third swimming area and its only saltwater beach. Constructed in 1951-1955, Sand Beach included an access road, parking lot and walkways, a comfort station, two changing room structures, water fountain, and a view of the beach backed by Great Head.

Sand Beach clearly followed the NPS Rustic Design style practiced during the height of the New Deal programs between 1933 and 1942. The park placed the development below Ocean Drive, on a northeasterly sloped bluff edged by scattered trees, overlooking Sand Beach and the adjacent Beehive Lagoon. The site layout responded to the sloping topography with a curved access road, a three-tiered parking lot, and retaining walls. Stone chip walks and stone steps linked the parking lot and beach, and the comfort station and changing room structures clustered at the edge of the woods. Vegetation on the edge of the bluff was retained to stabilize the sandy slope, and native plantings and groundcovers were installed to hide construction scars. This overall site plan is intact today.

The NPS Rustic Design vocabulary is also legible at Sand Beach. The Comfort Station (1951-1952) remains in its original location and maintains its historic relationships with other site features. The building features board and batten siding, wood casement windows and louvers, and a hipped bellcast roof. It is almost identical to the restroom at Sieur de Monts Spring (1949) and similar to the Thunder Hole Ranger Station (1934). The two original changing stations have been replaced since the historic period, but both new buildings retain their rectangular footprints and feature board and batten siding. The north structure is shorter than the original, but the south structure is the same, and shares design elements of the former 1949 bathhouse at Lakewood. The original drinking fountain, gutters, and guardwalls throughout the site feature native stone construction.

National Register Significance Criteria:

Significance Criterion A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Significance Criterion C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1844 - CE 1955

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Recreation	General Recreation	
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Recreation	Spectator Pastimes (Passive)	
Creating Social Institutions and Movements	Recreation	Tourism	
Expressing Cultural Values	Painting and Sculpture	Romanticism	
Expressing Cultural Values	Landscape Architecture	The 1930's: Era Of Public Works	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Rustic; WPA Rustic	
Developing the American Economy	Transportation by Land and Air	Carriage Roads, Touring Roads and Parkways	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	Scenic Preservation	
Transforming the Environment	Conservation of Natural Resources	The Great Depression And Conservation	

National Register Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Entertainment/Recreation

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Landscape Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS Name: Historic Resources of Acadia National Park MPS
NRIS ID: 64500982
Primary Certification Date: 06/27/2017

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number: MHPC 0967-26
Name: Sand Beach
Listed Date: 07/30/2026

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
BCE 5000	Inhabited	After the Ice Age, the earliest Indian hunting bands move into Maine's tundras in pursuit of caribou, musk ox, mammoth, and other wildlife. (Prins and McBride 2007: xv)
BCE 5000 - 1604	Inhabited	Indian families seasonally fish and hunt sea mammals in Mount Desert Island's coastal waters and collect shellfish on mudflats. Over many generations, shells accumulate at coastal camping sites, forming shellheaps. These sites also contain stone and bone tools, including harpoons, fishhooks, projectile points, awls, and (later) small native copper beads and thin copper blades. (Prins and McBride 2007: xv)
CE 1604	Explored	French explorer Samuel de Champlain names "Isle des Monts Deserts" for its high barren peaks. The Etchemin (later called Wabanaki) Indians guiding him know the island as Pemetic, meaning "range of mountains." (Prins and McBride 2007: i-ii; CLR 2006: 12)
CE 1620 - 1625	Settled	By the early 1620s epidemics and warfare have nearly annihilated the indigenous communities occupying the coastal territories from Mount Desert Island to Cape Cod, leading to European land claims and settlement. (Prins and McBride 2007: ii)
CE 1688	Settled	Private ownership begins when Mount Desert Island is given as a feudal fief by Louis XIV to Antoine de Lamothe, the self-proclaimed Sieur de la Mothe Cadillac.
CE 1713	Settled	Louis XIV is defeated and all of the Acadia region lands (except Cape Breton) are ceded to England.
CE 1763	Settled	English begin settling area after Treaty of Paris is signed.
CE 1777	Built	A road between Cromwell Cove in Bar Harbor and Sand Beach is in use by 1777. Today it is called Schooner Head Road.
CE 1827	Built	By 1827, a toll bridge is built across the Mount Desert Narrows to connect the island and the mainland.
CE 1840 - 1859	Built	In the 1840s-1850s the Great Head Trail (trail #2) is established.
CE 1844	Explored	Thomas Cole, a leading artist of the Hudson River School, arrives on the island, sketching and painting places like Sand Beach and its surrounds.
CE 1850	Explored	In the mid-1800s, an annual summertime influx of visitors, called the "rusticators," make use of lumber roads and old Wabanaki trails to explore the island. This marks the beginning of the island's tourist economy as other artists, writers, scientists, and travelers begin to flock to the area.
CE 1874	Built	The Ocean Path (trail #3) is established by this time.
CE 1880	Built	By 1880 numerous wealthy families seeking relief from hot summers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia build massive homes, euphemistically known as "cottages," in and around Bar Harbor and other towns.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1887	Built	The Town of Bar Harbor builds Ocean Drive between Schooner Head Road and Otter Creek Road.
CE 1901	Established	George Dorr and Charles W. Eliot organize the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations to acquire land parcels on Mount Desert Island to protect water supply and preserve walking paths and scenic vistas. It receives tax exempt status in 1903.
CE 1903	Established	Maine legislature permits towns to ban automobiles. Some of the roads near Bar Harbor are affected.
CE 1907	Established	Automobiles banned throughout Mount Desert Island.
CE 1910	Land Transfer	Tract 13-104 (100 acres) conveyed from Thomas W. and Esther P. Joyce to Eleanor Morgan Satterlee on September 14.
CE 1913	Built	John D. Rockefeller, Jr. begins construction of his first carriage road on his Seal Harbor estate.
CE 1913	Established	Automobile ban is lifted.
CE 1916	Established	National Park Service (NPS) established.
CE 1916	Established	On July 8, Sieur de Monts National Monument is established. The park is comprised of around 6,000 acres that were under the stewardship of the Trustees.
CE 1919	Established	On February 16, Sieur de Monts National Monument becomes Lafayette National Park.
CE 1927	Planned	The park's first master plan in 1927 supports the development of motor roads to improve access and the existing trail system.
CE 1929	Built	Ocean Drive Demonstration Section completed.
CE 1929	Established	On January 19, Lafayette National Park is renamed Acadia National Park.
CE 1930 - 1933	Planned	In association with Rockefeller, the Olmsted firm reveals a 14-mile comprehensive motor road plan from Jordan Pond/Eagle Lake Road to Hunter's Beach and Route 3. NPS and year-round residents support the plan but summer residents oppose it. Rockefeller pledges \$4 million for the project but then briefly withdraws offer in mid-1931 due to the opposition. The project resumes in 1933.
CE 1930	Land Transfer	Rockefeller acquires lands surrounding Satterlee's Sand Beach/Great Head.
CE 1931	Land Transfer	Town of Bar Harbor transfers their interest in Ocean Drive to the park.
CE 1933	Planned	Rockefeller again makes the offer to fund the motor road project and construction resumes. Controversial route through the Tarn valley and around Gorham Mountain is abandoned in favor of a route across the north and east slopes of Champlain Mountain.
CE 1933	Established	Two Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps are established as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal program. CCC contributes to fabricating some of the site details along the motor road system as well as revegetation projects.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1933	Built	Ocean Drive is reconstructed, from Thunder Hole to Otter Cliffs Road. CCC assists.
CE 1933 - 1934	Built	Ocean Drive is reconstructed, from Thunder Hole to Sand Beach. CCC assists.
CE 1934	Built	CCC reconstructs Ocean Path (trail #3)
CE 1934	Built	A parking lot is laid out on the old roadbed of the 1887 Ocean Drive at Sand Beach.
CE 1936	Built	A park drawing indicates a trail from the Sand Beach parking lot to the beach.
CE 1941	Built	A gate and fence are erected at the parking lot trailhead.
CE 1941	Planned	Master plan in 1941 documents existing conditions and proposed facilities in the park. Sand Beach is indicated as a proposed area for development.
CE 1942	Abandoned	CCC camps closed in Acadia due to World War II.
CE 1947	Destroyed	Devastating fire burns over 17,128 acres of land on Mount Desert Island (around 11,753 acres of which are currently in the park). It reaches the Sand Beach/Great Head area on October 23. Three of five buildings at the Satterlee Estate are saved but the Farrand gardens are destroyed and the teahouse is damaged.
CE 1949	Land Transfer	Tract 13-104 (100 acres) conveyed from Eleanor Morgan Satterlee to US Government on May 25.
CE 1949	Memorialized	The 100-acre donation in memory of Louisa Satterlee is memorialized with a bronze plaque mounted on a large boulder overlooking Sand Beach.
CE 1951	Land Transfer	Tract 13-105 (4.94 acres) conveyed from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to the US Government on October 22.
CE 1951 - 1952	Built	A comfort station is constructed at Sand Beach.
CE 1951	Altered	The park repurposes two surviving Satterlee buildings into park housing – the estate workers cottage and the guest log cabin (Camp Gramlee).
CE 1953 - 1955	Built	The Bureau of Public Roads builds a new, terraced parking lot and access road at Sand Beach, north of the old parking lot. Other work includes concrete curbs, bituminous walkways, dry rubble stone masonry walls, stone steps, rock-paved gutters, stone headwall culverts, rectilinear guardwall stones, and a stone water fountain.
CE 1954 - 1956	Removed	The surviving Satterlee carriage house is removed between 1954-1956,
CE 1954 - 1956	Built	The park builds a three-vehicle garage to replace the carriage house.
CE 1955	Built	Two changing room structures are completed.
CE 1958	Built	By 1958 a 7-foot by 8-inch redwood timber “Sand Beach Swimming” sign is erected at the intersection of Ocean Drive and the access road.
CE 1958	Built	Bureau of Public Roads Project 4A2 is completed in 1958. This represents the final segment of the motor road system.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1960 - 1969	Removed	In the 1960s, ruins of the Satterlee teahouse are demolished down to the foundation for safety reasons.
CE 1969	Altered	Two-way traffic pattern changed to a one-way flow from north to south along a twelve-mile stretch of the historic motor system, from Sieur de Monts Spring to the intersection of Day Mountain Road, Day Mountain Road Extension, and Stanley Brook Road. This opens up the right lane for parking.
CE 1970 - 1979	Built	In the 1970s the park begins the practice of installing parking management stones at congested areas of the historic motor road system to discourage parking on the grass road shoulders. (CLR 2007: 171)
CE 1970	Memorialized	In ca.1970 a bronze plaque is placed above the sea cave at Great Head, in memory of David Phillips McKinney, who was washed out to sea from the cave in 1969. The marker is not associated with the trail. (CLR 2006: 217)
CE 1972	Built	Around 1972 the park replaces the stone steps to the beach with a staircase of alternating steps and landings. At the top of this staircase, a level area defined by rectilinear stones and the Satterlee monument connects to existing paths to the old parking lot (1934) and the new parking lot (1955).
CE 1978 - 1981	Rehabilitated	The park rehabilitates the failing sewer system that was contaminating the tidal Beehive Lagoon and adjacent Sand Beach. Its leach field is built at the former Satterlee Estate.
CE 1980 - 1989	Altered	In the 1980s more of the Park Loop Road is converted to one-way traffic, from Kebo Mountain Road to Day Mountain Road.
CE 1985 - 1989	Built	In the late 1980s the park builds a parking lot at the intersection of Schooner Head Road and the old Satterlee Road for visitors hiking the Great Head Trail (trail #2).
CE 1987	Rehabilitated	The 10,000 gallon water storage tank uphill and west of Ocean Drive is replaced.
CE 1990 - 1995	Altered	Around 1990 the short section of Schooner Head Road, from the Satterlee Estate to Ocean Drive is designated as the Sand Beach–Great Head Trail (trail #9, now the Satterlee Trail).
CE 1994	Built	The park installs accessible ramps at the 1955 parking lot as well as a pay telephone.
CE 1996	Built	By 1996 a unisex pit toilet is installed in the south lawn area.
CE 2001	Built	A bus shelter is constructed adjacent to the new parking lot (1955).
CE 2003 - 2004	Removed	The north and south changing rooms, and the vault toilet at the bus shelter, are removed.
CE 2003 - 2004	Built	South changing room is rebuilt, while a smaller building housing office and storage for lifeguards and a vault toilet is built at the site of the north changing room.
CE 2003 - 2004	Rehabilitated	The comfort station is rehabilitated.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 2003 - 2004	Built	A universally accessible ramp is built at the comfort station.
CE 2011	Built	Storm damage to the beach staircase prompts the park to build a new staircase that featured five sets of poured bituminous concrete steps and four landings, as well as post and board fencing and stainless-steel railings.
CE 2015 - 2017	Rehabilitated	The Ocean Path (trail #3) is rehabilitated. (PEPC 29590, PMIS 160803)
CE 2017	Rehabilitated	Western end of the Satterlee Trail (trail #9), was relocated to a new crushed stone causeway with wooden cribs and handrails alongside Ocean Drive.
CE 2024	Damaged	Two severe storms damage the beach staircase and erode the bluff. Flooding and high tides also expose the wreck of the Tay.

Physical History:

INTRODUCTION

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. The Sand Beach developed area is located on the southeastern shoreline of Mount Desert Island, between Great Head and The Beehive. Sand Beach, also known as Newport Beach, defines the north end of Newport Cove, also known as Stag Cove. Near the cove entrance is a rock outcrop named Old Soaker.

NATIVE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT, to 1688

Acadia's geologic history spans 500 million years during which mountain ranges have come and gone, seashores have risen and fallen repeatedly, and glaciers have carved the landscape 20 to 30 times. Evidence of continental glacial action, including glacial lakes and U-shaped valleys, abounds; Somes Sound, the inlet bisecting Mount Desert Island, is the only fjord on the east coast of the United States. The islands and mainland peninsula of the park are major coastal features of the Gulf of Maine. (GMP 1992: 8)

Native American peoples have inhabited the land now called Maine for 12,000 years. The ancestors of today's Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes were collectively known as the Wabanaki, or "People of the Dawnland." For thousands of years, Mount Desert Island has been the center of Wabanaki traditional homelands. Long before Europeans arrived, the Wabanaki traveled to the island in seaworthy birchbark canoes, setting up temporary camps near places like Somes Sound to hunt, fish, gather berries, harvest clams, and trade with other Wabanaki. Some duration of Native American use occurred at Sand Beach, as evidenced in the discovery of a shell midden its west end. The beach, at the head of the sheltered Newport Cove (historically known as Stag Cove) was an ideal location for beaching a fleet of bark canoes and was adjacent to panoramic ocean views atop Great Head. (Acadia NP website; Prins and McBride 2007: i,xv,67-68; AOA 1998: 148-149; CLR 2006: 12)

When Europeans first visited the area just over four centuries ago, Mount Desert Island was seasonally inhabited by no more than a few hundred people. The Etchemin (later called Wabanaki) Indians guiding French explorer Samuel de Champlain in 1604 called the island Pemetit, meaning "range of mountains." Because of its high barren peaks, a prominent coastal landmark for seafarers, Champlain named it "Isle des Monts Deserts," or "Island of Barren Mountains." Champlain's first encounter with the island's inhabitants may have taken place at Newport Cove:

"We sailed two leagues [six miles], and perceived a smoke in a cove at the foot of the mountains. We saw two canoes rowed by [Indians], which came within musket shot to observe us. I sent our two [guides] in a boat to assure them of our friendship. Their fear of us made them turn back. On the morning of the next day, they came alongside of our barque, and held converse with our [Etchemin guides]. I ordered some biscuit, tobacco, and other trifles be given them. [They] had come to hunt beaver, and to catch fish, some of which they gave us. (Prins and McBride 2007: 69, citing Champlain 1922: 284)

By the early 1620s the indigenous communities occupying the coastal territories from Mount Desert Island to Cape Cod were nearly annulated with epidemics and warfare, after which much of the land was largely cleared for European settlement. Having lost most of their relatives and neighbors, Wabanaki survivors joined other decimated groups and restructured their social lives. Their existence was further complicated because of fur trade competition and the French and English claims for land. The Wabanaki's enduring interrelationships and close ties to familiar places in a common ancestral homeland are traceable in the well-known multi-ethnic Indian encampments that occurred on Mount Desert Island from the mid-1800s through the early-1900s. (Prins and McBride 2007: ii)

EARLY PATHS AND SCENIC DESTINATIONS, 1688-1870s

In 1688 King Louis XIV granted Mount Desert Island to Sieur Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac to establish an outpost of French feudalism, but the continual threat of war between England and France discouraged widespread settlement. After the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the English began to dominate the area and gradually displaced the earlier inhabitants. Like the Wabanaki the new settlers hunted and fished, but also supplemented their livelihood through farming, logging, and especially shipbuilding. This yielded surpluses of fish, lumber, ice, and granite that were traded locally and to distant ports. Goods and supplies were transported on old footpaths and over time some were widened for use as horse roads and for logging carriages. New roads were also built, ranging from rudimentary tracks cut by loggers to public roads built to improve trade, such as a road from Cromwell Cove in Bar Harbor to Sand Beach, which was in use by 1777, likely the route of today's Schooner Head Road. (CLR 2007: 15-16)

After the Revolutionary War, the island came under the jurisdiction of the Court of Massachusetts. Ownership of the island was divided in 1785. The east side was retained by Cadillac's granddaughter, Marie Theresa de Gregoire, while the west side was granted to John Bernard, the son of Sir Francis Bernard, but neither was able to retain much land and it was quickly divided by settlers. With the incorporation of the town of Mount Desert in 1789, state and county taxes were levied and applied primarily to the construction of roads and bridges, making some of the earlier roads obsolete. Six years later, to alleviate the difficulty of communicating and traveling across the island for town meetings, the island was divided into two towns, Mount Desert and Eden (now Bar Harbor) (Figure 1). By 1827 a toll bridge was built across the Mount Desert Narrows to connect the island and the mainland. (CLR 2006: 15; CLR 2007: 16)

The Artists, Rusticators, and Cottagers:

A flourishing economy in the northeastern United States in the early 1800s led to a rise in tourism and a conscious effort to define a national identity. American artists and writers, influenced by the aesthetics of the eighteenth-century English tradition of landscape gardening, traveled throughout the country in search of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque. They discovered that America offered a uniquely unbounded wilderness—fresh, bold, brilliant, and grand. Their paintings and travel articles, in combination with hotel advertisements, encouraged the burgeoning tourist industry of the 1820s and 1830s. Mount Desert Island's picturesque landscapes became a destination, for explorers such as Thomas Doughty, Frederic Church, and Thomas Cole. (CLR 2006: 17)

Thomas Cole, the leading artist of the Hudson River School, arrived on Mount Desert Island in 1844 and lodged at the Lynam Homestead at Schooner Head (around one mile north of Sand Beach) (see Figure 1). Describing Schooner Head Road as "exceedingly bad, stoney, and overhung with the beech and spruce, and, for miles, without inhabitant," Cole encountered many untouched settings that he captured through writings, and more significantly, through scenic landscape paintings. Schooner Head, Great Head, and Otter Cliffs were among the places where he painted the rough ocean, colorful cliffs, and steep mountains (Figure 2). Sand Beach was a frequent destination: "The beaches of this region are remarkably fine. Sand beach is the grandest coast scenery we have yet found. Sand Beach Head [Great Head], the eastern extremity of Mount Desert Island, is a tremendous overhanging precipice, rising from the ocean, with the surf dashing against it in a frightful manner. The whole coast here is iron bound—threatening crags, and dark caverns in which the sea thunders." (CLR 2006: 20-21, from Noble 1964: 270)

By the mid-nineteenth century, tourism was beginning to displace the extraction of natural resources as the driving force in the area's economy. Although transportation to coastal Maine was difficult, an annual summertime influx of explorers, surveyors, and scientists, collectively called the "rusticators," descended on the area in the mid-1800s. Visitors lodged at private homes or inns, such as the Jordan Pond House, and began using the old lumber roads as walking paths to scenic vistas, particularly those situated above the tree lines of the mountains. Paintings by the rusticators introduced the island to the larger public, and by 1880 Mount Desert Island was being hailed as one of the most beautiful vacation spots in the country (Figure 3). Wealthy families seeking relief from hot summers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were among the tourists, and many built massive

homes, euphemistically known as “cottages,” in and around Bar Harbor and other towns. (CLR 2007: 16-17; from St. Germaine and Saunders 1993: 24, as cited in HAER ME-11:9)

Great Head Trail and the Ocean Path:

Pedestrian excursions and mountain climbs were essential components of every stay on Mount Desert Island. In time routes to popular destinations such as Schooner Head, the summits of Green [Cadillac] and Sargent Mountains, and Great Head were marked. One of the earliest paths was blazed at Great Head (today's trail #2) in 1840s and 1850s. It was first described in a guidebook by Clara Barnes Martin in 1867. An update to Martin's guide in 1874 described the route of today's Ocean Path (trail #3) along the shoreline. Both trails likely originated near the south end of Schooner Head Road (Figure 4). As they tracked just east and west of Sand Beach, respectively, they likely provided access to the beach itself. (CLR 2006: 217)

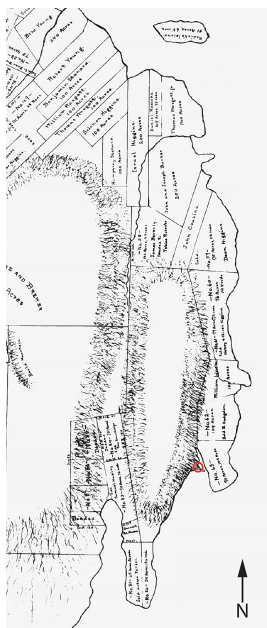


Figure 1. Portion of a traced 1807 plan of eastern half of Mount Desert Island, including the Linam [sic] Homestead. Sand Beach is indicated with a red circle at image lower right. (CLR 2006: 19, courtesy Bar Harbor Historical Society)

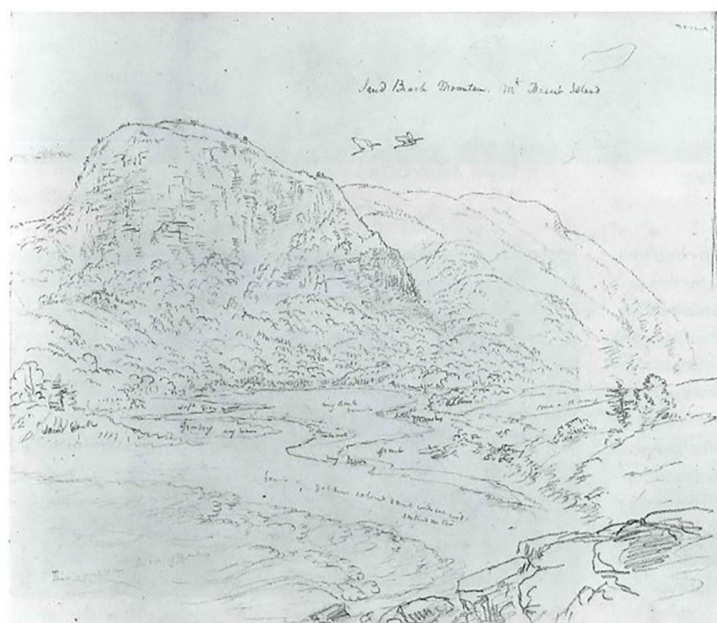


Figure 2. Thomas Cole, Sand Beach Mountain, Mt. Desert Island, 1844. (National Register 2022, Sec.9: 101, from The Art Museum, Princeton University)



Figure 3. Alfred Thompson Bricher, *Cloudy Day, Great Head*, 1870s. (*National Register*, Sec.9: 108, reproduced in Wilmerding 1994:143)

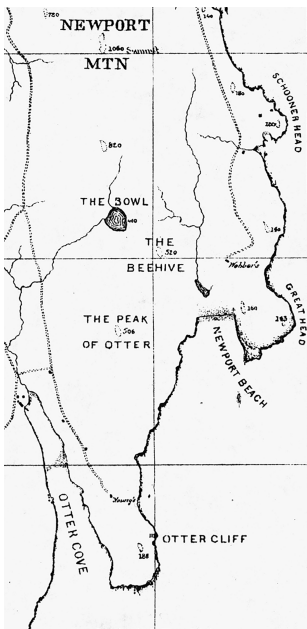


Figure 4. Portion of an 1874 map showing roads, including Schooner Head Road, and possibly a farm or inn at the south end, labeled as "Webber's." (CLR 2006: 31, from Martin 1874)

EARLY ROAD BUILDING AND LAND PRESERVATION, 1887-1919

Year-round residents began to improve the local roads to serve the growing number of tourists and to encourage them to visit the island's natural wonders. In 1887, the Town of Bar Harbor constructed Ocean Drive, a scenic road that traced the island's eastern shoreline from Schooner Head Road to Otter Creek. On an 1887 map by Colby and Stewart it was depicted as a primary road that shared,

and perhaps displaced, the Ocean Path (#3) (Figure 5). The road was still unnamed on an 1893 map but was shown as a primary road and was named on an 1896 map (Figure 6). One of the earliest photographs of Ocean Drive is also one of the earliest of Sand Beach (Figure 7). Dating to 1888, this section of the drive appears as a well-graded roadbed on steep terrain supported by a wall, possibly in the vicinity of the 1936 parking lot at the Sand Beach developed area. (CLR 2007: 17-18; CLI 2012: 43-44)

When completed, Ocean Drive created a convenient loop from Bar Harbor that connected to Otter Creek Road (now State Route 3) that passed through the Tarn valley. It would not be the end of road building on the island. "A road shall be built along the shore of Eagle Lake," wrote a local reporter in 1888, "and thence through dense forests, across picturesque streams and brooks, and under overhanging crags and cliffs with mountains looming up on either side." The purpose of the road was to "at once call the attention of the public to it, so that before many months the nucleus of a fall resort will be established." As historian Neil Maher writes, "where roads had once been built to access and extract natural resources, now they were built to make the beauty of natural resources accessible to tourists; both were a means to achieve these economic ends." (CLR 2007: 17-18; from "A Grand Boheme," 25 October 1888, as cited in HAER ME-11:12)

Village Improvement Groups and the Trustees for Public Reservations:

Increases in tourism and land development for homes, hotels, and roads on Mount Desert Island were paralleled by organized actions aimed at bettering public amenities and preserving the area's natural beauty. This effort began in earnest in the 1880s with the establishment of local village improvement groups that improved the appearance of public areas in and around the towns. New walking paths linking towns to shorelines and mountain vistas were constructed, eventually expanding into a network of scenic and well-crafted trails. (CLR 2007: 18)

Throughout the country, the acquisition of land for preservation rather than development was also deemed a worthwhile goal of village improvement groups. On Mount Desert Island, there was a growing concern among the summer residents that the island's natural resources were being squandered not only by the developers buying up huge tracts of land but also from lumbering, which had been made increasingly profitable through the introduction of the portable saw mill. In 1895, the Roads and Paths Committee of the Bar Harbor Village Improvement Association (VIA) recommended its members donate or purchase parcels so that the trails and scenic vistas could be protected and preserved from developers and loggers. (CLR 2007: 18)

Such calls to action did not have a great impact until 1901 when two summer residents, George Bucknam Dorr, founding member of the Bar Harbor VIA, and Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University, gathered a group of residents to form the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations. The Trust's mission was to acquire land parcels on the island, mainly to protect the local water supply but also preserve walking paths and scenic vistas. In 1903 the Trustees were incorporated and given tax-exempt status by the state. On behalf of the Trustees, Dorr helped facilitate acquisition the Cadillac Mountain summit area in 1908 and land at the north end of the Tarn valley, in what would become Sieur de Monts Spring and the Great Meadow, in 1909. (CLR 2007: 18)

The Question of Roads and Automobiles:

The turn of the twentieth century also fanned a long simmering feud between year-round residents and the summer cottagers regarding new roads. While the island's year-round residents saw the roads as a pipeline for economic opportunity by accommodating tourists and summer residents, the cottagers viewed the roads as a threat to the reasons they came here in the first place, which was the island's isolated natural beauty. "It is to escape the sights and sounds of the city that intelligent people come in summer to such a place as this rough and beautiful island," wrote Charles W. Eliot in 1904, "the short season populations do not wish to be reminded in summer of the scenes and noises amid which the greater part of their lives inevitably passes." (CLR 2007:19; from Goldstein 1992:181, as cited in HAER ME-11:12)

In 1903 the cottagers successfully lobbied the state legislators to give town voters the power to prohibit cars on the island. The cottagers won the vote to restrict cars from selected roads near Bar Harbor, and in 1909 were able to extend the ban throughout the island. Year-round residents

protested on economic and democratic grounds. One accused the “city millionaires” of attempting by “every means in their power to make Bar Harbor a quiet, exclusive resort where their little clique can have full sway and where no state of Maine man is welcome.” Dorr was able to promote a compromise by lifting the vehicle prohibition in Bar Harbor, the economic hub of the island, but maintaining it in other island towns. By 1913, however, automobiles were ubiquitous and the prohibition of cars had been lifted. (CLR 2007:19; from “Opponents of Automobile Bill...,” 27 January 1909, as cited in HAER ME-11:13)

Sieur de Monts National Monument and Lafayette National Park:

By 1913 the Trustees had preserved over 5,000 acres on Mount Desert Island. However, the organization had its share of critics who argued against removing large tracts of land from the public tax rolls and possibly discouraging development and commerce. Given the Trustees political vulnerability, Dorr felt that to protect the lands for all time the Trustees should seek federal assistance. He then asked President Woodrow Wilson to make these lands part of a national monument, which did not require an act of Congress. After much lobbying and title searches, Sieur de Monts National Monument was authorized on July 8, 1916 (Figure 8). At this time, the Trustee’s reservation had grown to over 6,000 acres protecting four lakes and ten mountains, with a contiguous boundary superimposed over a mosaic of donated lands with extant features. By October of that year, Dorr, as the monument’s first superintendent, reported that 105,255 tourists and 15,361 automobiles had visited the park. (CLR 2007: 19)

Primarily because of George Dorr’s dedication and tireless promotion, Sieur de Monts National Monument was later reauthorized as Lafayette National Park in 1919, so named to honor the island’s colonial heritage. The park was the first national park east of Mississippi River and the only park in the country created solely from donations of private land. The boundaries of the national park did not include Sand Beach or Great Head. However, just to the northwest, the Beehive area was owned by the Trustees by 1913 and became part of the national park by 1921. (CLR 2007: 21)



Figure 5. Portion of a map of Mount Desert Island, 1887, by George N. Colby and J.H. Stuart. Two dwellings are shown north-northeast of Sand Beach, straddling Schooner Head Road. (Library of Congress, # 98687166)

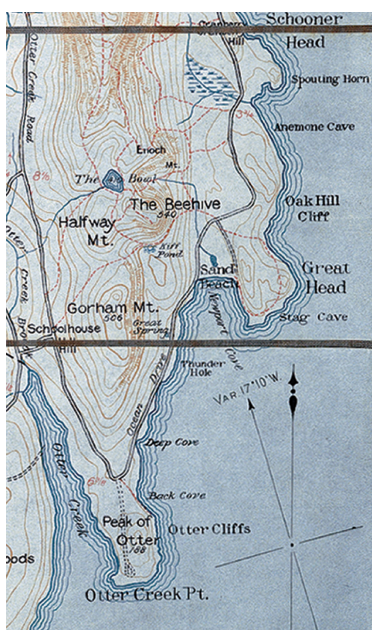


Figure 6. Portion of an 1896 path map of Mount Desert Island showing the labeled Ocean Drive, by Bates, Rand, and Jacques. (CLR 2006: 49)



Figure 7. “Buckboard Party Passing Sand Beach,” 1888. (Southwest Harbor Public Library, accessed February 2, 2026, [https://swhpl.digitalarchive.us/items/show/10156.Item 12747](https://swhpl.digitalarchive.us/items/show/10156.Item%2012747))



Figure 8. Portion of map showing park lands in 1917 (shaded green) and lands in possession of the Trustees of Reservations (hatched green). (Acadia NP archives, from CLR 2006: 299)

THE SATTERLEE ESTATE, 1900-1920s

The ownership history of the Sand Beach and Great Head area prior to 1900 is limited to research of historic maps in the park’s 1998 Archeological Overview and Assessment. An 1807 map identified Great Head area as Lot 63, but unlike several adjacent lots it did not identify an owner (see Figure 1).

The lot encompassed 93 acres, approximately bounded by Schooner Head Road on the north,

Beehive Lagoon on the west, and the coastline on the south and east. Later, Great Head was associated with the E.T. Lynam homestead (1850-1870), Webber homestead (1870-1880s), and Mrs. Straten (1880s). An 1874 map shows a home at the end of Schooner Head Road, on the south side, labeled as "Webber's" (see Figure 4), while an 1887 map shows the same structure (unlabeled, likely Straten) and another home just to the north, possibly that of landowner Dr. H. Derby (see Figure 5). Both homes were likely summer cottages. The 1887 map also indicates a short driveway heading south from the Straten house down to the east end of Sand Beach. An undated photograph shows a post and rail fence on the north edge of the property, paralleling Ocean Drive/Schooner Head Road (Figure 9). (AOA 1998: 148,197)

After Straten, the area was apparently owned by the Joyce family until 1900 when financier and banker John Pierpoint Morgan purchased the Great Head property, and the 20-acre Sand Beach area to the west, totaling 117 acres. Morgan's purchase was a wedding gift for Louisa, his oldest child, who married Herbert Satterlee, but due to issues with the property title the land transfer was not finalized until 1910, ten years after the couple's marriage. The Satterlees had two daughters, Mabel and Eleanor, who grew up exploring the landscape. ("Hints of the Satterlee Estate in Acadia"; AOA 1998: 197)

Development of Satterlee Field, as it was called, began in 1911 on the south side of Schooner Head Road. The house previously occupied by Webber and Straten (identified on the 1874 and 1887 maps) may have initially housed the Satterlee family and then became the caretaker's house. On the night of July 27, 1911, the house likely accommodated seven sailors who survived the wreck of the *Tay*, a Canadian lumber schooner that struck Old Soaker in a storm. What remained of the vessel was thrown high on Sand Beach by waves until covered by sand from later storms. ("Hints of the Satterlee Estate in Acadia"; AOA 1998: 197-198; Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for November 1950)

In the years that followed buildings were added just to the south of the house, including an estate worker's house, barn, icehouse, potting shed, barn, and greenhouse, while a water tower and tennis court were situated to the east. A new road connected this area to the existing driveway (shown on the 1887 map), which was widened and improved with several retaining walls. By 1917 the family's "eating camp," "sleeping camp," and guest log cabin ("Camp Gramlee") structures were built at the southern end of the driveway, a spot that offered scenic views of the beach and cove (Figures 10 and 11). The estate gardens featured lawns, flower beds, and gardens designed by local landscape architect Beatrix Farrand in 1917. Farrand designed the estate gardens in the Picturesque Design style to blend with the surrounding landscape and added footpaths, bridges, and benches (Figures 12 and 13). The family acquired a large millstone (7 feet in diameter) and placed it near Sand Beach for use as a flagpole base. (CLR 2006: 217; AOA 1998: 197; Satterlee Memorial Plaque, <https://www.nps.gov/places/satterlee-memorial-plaque>; "The Satterlee Trail," accessed 2 February 2026; "Satterlee Field," accessed 2 February 2026)

In the fall of 1914, the Satterlees built a unique entertaining space at the highest point on Great Head. Standing 15 feet tall with a diameter of 18 feet, the teahouse was a mortared stone structure modeled after round defensive fortresses called Martello towers built by the British Empire in the nineteenth century and onward (Figures 14, 15, and 16). The observation deck at the top of the tower, accessible by an interior ladder, boasted panoramic views of Frenchmans Bay, the dramatic coastline, and surrounding mountains. (AOA 1998: 251; "Satterlee Teahouse")

The extent of public access to the teahouse or the entirety of Great Head is unknown, but the family welcomed the public to use Sand Beach. The Satterlees did not develop anything on at beach or west of Beehive Lagoon, but they did allow several movies to film there, including "Queen of the Sea" in 1917 and "Robinson Crusoe" in 1920. (AOA 1998: 183-184)

Sand Beach Defensive Battery:

Sand Beach is one of the few navigable landing areas on eastern Mount Desert Island, and as such was apparently protected by Navy personnel during World War I. How extensive the "defenses" are is unknown, but one secondary source states that the millstone on Great Head overlooking Sand Beach was a platform for a machine gun station. Another platform was on the west side of the

beach, but its location is unknown. To protect the nearby Otter Cliffs Radio Station, several steps were taken at Sand Beach as well at a lookout tower on Otter Point, and by a platoon of Navy sailors. Local lore additionally believes several German boats were in and around Bar Harbor, and that one spy landed on Sand Beach at night but was later captured. (AOA 1998: 251)



Figure 9. Undated photograph looking west at The Beehive, from Schooner Head Road/Ocean Drive. Note the post and rail fence at image left.

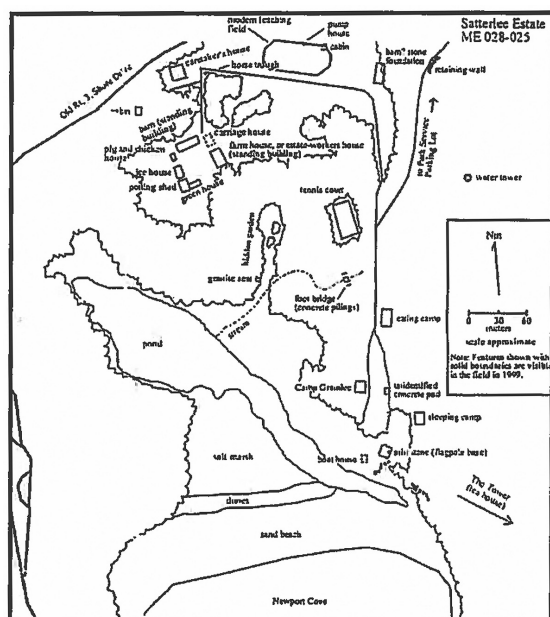


Figure 10. Map of the Satterlee Estate by Peter Morrison, 1998. (AOA 1998: 70)



Figure 11. View of the “sleeping camp” building at the Satterlee Estate, 1917. (*Hints of the Satterlee Estate in Acadia*, accessed 3 February 2026)



Figure 12. Hand-colored slide of a wood footbridge amongst birch trees at the Satterlee Estate, 1924 by Frances Benjamin Johnston. (Library of Congress, #2008675979)



Figure 13. Hand-colored slide of lawn and garden beds at the Satterlee Estate, 1924, by Frances Benjamin Johnston. 1924. (Library of Congress, #2008675990)



Figure 14. View looking southeast from the Beehive to Sand Beach and Great Head, 1917-1947. The Satterlee tea house is visible atop Great Head as is the “sleeping camp” building edging the small field. (“Satterlee Field, accessed 2 February 2026, <https://www.nps.gov/places/satterlee-field.htm>)

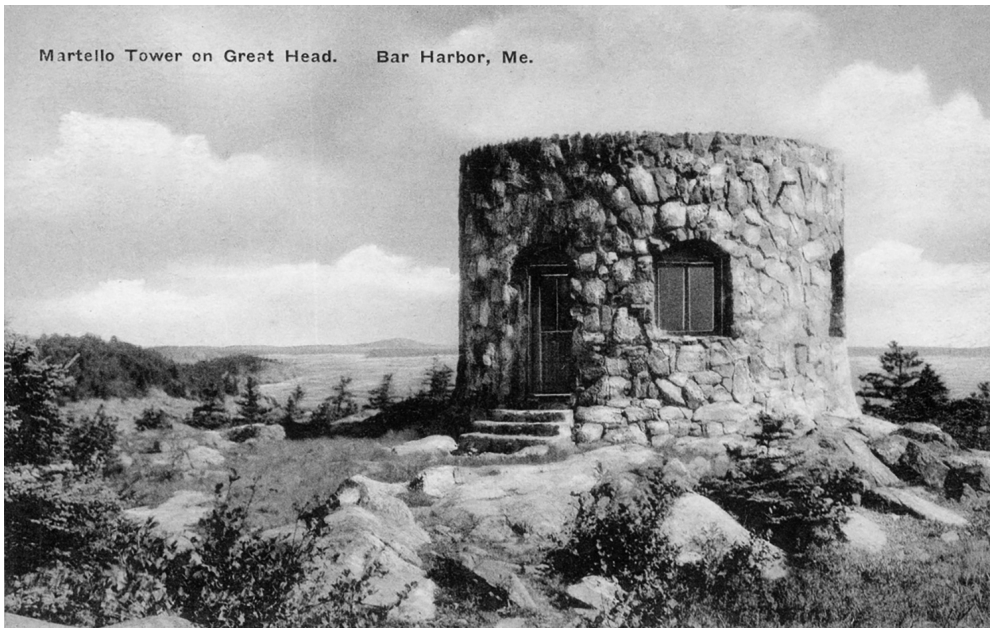


Figure 15. "Satterlee Tea House," 1914-1947. (Southwest Harbor Public Library, accessed February 3, 2026, <https://swhpl.digitalarchive.us/items/show/1598>. Item 12645)



Figure 16. View looking southwest at Great Head and the Satterlee teahouse, 1914-1947.

PARK ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MASTER PLANS, 1922-1940s

At the new national park, plans were underway to improve visitor access to the park's scenery. In 1922 NPS Director Stephen Mather instructed Superintendent Dorr to prepare maps, estimates, and other data concerning proposed road projects that would bring visitors into the park. Dorr formalized the route proposed in 1888: a motor road stretching from Eagle Lake Road (State Route 233),

alongside Eagle Lake and Jordan Pond, to the Jordan Pond Tea House, a popular island eatery since 1896. The "Mountain Road" (now Jordan Pond/Eagle Lake Road) was necessary "to enable our rangers to pass readily between the northern and southern sides of our mountain range, for wildlife and woods protection." Dorr's plan also included a new road from the Mountain Road to the summit of Cadillac Mountain. (CLR 2007: 21-23)

Financier and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who had an estate in Seal Harbor, took great interest in Dorr's idea. Rockefeller had opposed repeal of the automobile ban, concerned that more cars would threaten the area's tranquility, and donated money to the Trustees to complete title searches for the national monument. It was the presence of cars that inspired Rockefeller to construct carriage-only roads, first at his home and then eventually on lands held by the Trustees or owned by the park. Motorists had attempted and had usually succeeded in driving on them, so dedicated motor roads, he thought, would keep the automobiles off his carriage roads. (CLR 2007: 23)

The NPS approved the two road projects in 1922, but with Dorr skeptical that adequate public funding would be approved, Rockefeller offered his financial support. He also offered the services of his carriage road engineering and surveying team to ensure the motor roads were built well and were as scenic as the carriage roads. Indeed, Rockefeller had spared no expense on the carriage roads, enlisting the services of the best engineers, architects, and designers. State of the art construction techniques were used to build the roads with gentle curves and grades that fit the topography and took advantage of the scenic views. Exhibiting Picturesque Style design and craftsmanship, distinctive features such as rustic stone-faced arched bridges, hand laid rock walls and embankments, and large coping stone guardwalls ultimately had a profound effect on the design and character of future roads and developed areas. (CLR 2007: 23-24)

The motor road project, along with some carriage road sections, were not without critics, mostly from several influential cottagers concerned about impacts the roads would have on the wilderness quality of the backcountry regions and the crowds they would attract. Although they managed to delay construction of the motor road, it was completed in 1927. (CLR 2007: 24-25)

1927 Park Master Plan and NPS Rustic Design:

By the end of the 1920s, planning, design, and construction of park facilities throughout the NPS became increasingly standardized. Projects were characterized by the emerging NPS Rustic Design style, which derived from the Picturesque Style in landscape design, the "wilderness" qualities of the early parks, and the Prairie Style emphasis on native plants. Features constructed in NPS Rustic Design utilized labor-intensive methods to create a rugged and frontier-like quality appropriate to a wilderness setting. General standards were developed, but parks were given flexibility so that features could be customized with local materials such as stone or timber to fit the setting. (CLR 2007: 26-27)

Lafayette National Park was unique because it was located adjacent to communities with an established infrastructure and summer tourism industry, and its development and boundaries had been mostly shaped by private interests. Park projects had been guided by the Picturesque Style traditions already established, and this was continued through the use of the NPS Rustic Design style. The park's first master plan, completed in 1927, reflected this complex relationship. In addressing increasing visitation, which was 70,000 a year in mid-1920s, the master plan proposed a general development scheme that included the "essential extensions of the park, plans for roads and trails, utility sites, and other developments," illustrating that present and future construction projects were part of an overall plan. The 1927 master plan ultimately served as the foundation for many of the projects completed through the 1940s. (CLR 2007: 27-28)

In 1929 legislation renaming Lafayette National Park to Acadia National Park authorized the expansion of park acreage through donations but gave no power to purchase additional lands. As such, no plans were prepared for Satterlee's Sand Beach/Great Head property. However, projects to improve the adjacent Ocean Drive and Ocean Path were underway in the early summer of 1929. (CLR 2007: 28)

Ocean Drive Demonstration Segment:

With his interest in motor roads in the park growing, Rockefeller directed his engineers and construction crews to reconstruct a segment of Ocean Drive, the old scenic road built by the Town of Bar Harbor around 1887 (Figure 17). The 500-foot segment at Thunder Hole, funded by the Town of Bar Harbor, was intended to demonstrate what the whole of Ocean Drive could become. When completed in late summer 1929, the graded and crowned road retained and reset the existing angular guardwall stones to appear like those along the carriage roads, Jordan Pond/Eagle Lake Road, and Cadillac Mountain Road then under construction. Paralleling the drive was a rebuilt section of the Ocean Path (#3) that allowed townspeople and visitors to safely observe the new road and the ocean views. (CLR 2007: 28)

A Comprehensive Motor Road System:

By the end of the summer of 1929, with the Ocean Drive Demonstration Section complete and well-received by the public, construction of Cadillac Mountain Road underway, and the Jordan Pond/Eagle Lake Road almost two years old, Rockefeller became a major proponent of automobiles in the park. His earlier idea of a limited number of motor roads separate from his carriage roads expanded into a much larger system of scenic roadways taking motorists from the mountaintops to the coasts. To control how his vision might be realized, Rockefeller proposed that he assume the costs associated with its construction. The NPS unsurprisingly was in favor of the offer. (CLR 2007:32)

In August 1929, Rockefeller hired consultants associated with his carriage roads to study the possible routes, including the Olmsted Brothers, the landscape architectural firm based in Brookline, Massachusetts. The 14-mile circuit route began at Jordan Pond/Eagle Lake Road, headed along the north slope of Kebo Mountain, along the Great Meadow, through the Tarn valley and the east slope of Gorham Mountain, and along Ocean Drive to Otter Cliffs. These roads, and State Route 3, would essentially create a loop for motoring visitors. (CLR 2007: 34)

Anticipating controversy, Olmsted noted that the construction of the motor roads would require some alterations to the scenery but would nonetheless allow countless people to enjoy the park's scenery, more so than any other means. In September 1930 Rockefeller's offer was reported in the local and national media. Controversy rose again, once again pitting the wealthy summer residents against the year-round residents, and essentially the wilderness preservation philosophy against local economic interests. Rockefeller took the attacks seriously and personally, and withdrew his offer in January 1931, which was as big a news story as his initial offer. (CLR 2007: 35-37)

Meanwhile, the Town of Bar Harbor, in spite of the Rockefeller's withdrawal of the offer, voted to abandon their ownership interest in Ocean Drive in March 1931 as part of the precondition to the commencement of Rockefeller's road program (Rockefeller had already acquired the land in 1930). Going one step further, town officials passed a resolution appealing to Rockefeller that he reconsider his withdrawal. Similar appeals were also tendered by the NPS, and in May 1931 Rockefeller agreed to let his request for release from the project lay "on the table" for a year. He then turned his attention to the legal details of the town's offer. (CLR 2007:39-40; eTIC dwg. ACAD 123-60124, 1930)

The New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps:

The year 1933 ultimately became a watershed year for Acadia's motor road program. By this time, all approvals necessary to begin Rockefeller's plan, meeting with so much controversy in 1930, had been secured. As much as anything else, the deepening Great Depression had eliminated the vocal opposition to Rockefeller's multi-million dollar building project. In its worst period, the Depression left fifteen million people out of work, and economies based on tourism, like those at Mount Desert Island, were hit hard as Americans simply went without vacations and eliminated leisure time expenses. Rockefeller's own great fortune was also greatly reduced, but he continued to sponsor many charitable causes, which because of the Depression needed his good works more than ever. Nevertheless, Rockefeller became less enthusiastic about being sole benefactor of Acadia's motor road project. (CLR 2007:42)

During 1933, the Roosevelt administration's "New Deal" make-work programs were passed into law as an effort to stop the downward spiral of the nation's economy. The New Deal provided money and

labor to the NPS, mostly through the Public Works Administration and the Emergency Conservation Works Act. Some motor road construction at Acadia was accomplished under contract primarily from and making use of Emergency Conservation Work funds. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which performed "Emergency Conservation Work," had two camps in the park. From 1933-1941, Camp NP-1 at McFarland Hill was involved in trail and landscaping work and fabricated many of the site details for the motor roads such as granite curbs, wood gates and fences, and signs. (CLR 2007:42)

Aware of the opportunity that the CCC presented, Rockefeller and Superintendent Dorr took steps to obtain the greatest benefit from their availability. New Deal work at Acadia required routine and extensive collaborations between federal agencies, state and local governments, and even private citizens. While most projects were on public lands, the goal was to serve the public good, and therefore relevant work on private land was permitted. At Rockefeller's suggestion, the projects were supervised by a landscape architect named Benjamin Breeze, who would become the park's resident landscape architect. (Moreira 2009: 270; CLR 2007: 44-45)

Reconstruction of Ocean Drive and the Ocean Path:

The next segment of Ocean Drive to be reconstructed was a 2,300-foot segment running south from the Thunder Hole Demonstration Section to Otter Cliff Road and the Otter Cliff area. This section was completed by August 1933. Work then began on the 3,000-foot segment of Ocean Drive running north from the Demonstration Section to Schooner Head Road and the adjacent Satterlee property at Sand Beach/Great Head. This section was completed in August 1934 (Figure 18). The drive featured parking lots on the west side of the road to preserve the ocean views, except at Sand Beach where the landforms blocked such views. At this location the drive's alignment was shifted westward and the old roadbed was converted into a parking lot (Figure 19). The east side of the new alignment required stone retaining walls in places where the existing outcrops were inadequate. Ocean Drive represented the first completed section of Rockefeller's comprehensive yet controversial motor road system. (CLR 2007: 43-45)

Concurrent with the road work, Breeze directed the CCC to rebuild and improve the Ocean Path (#3) from Sand Beach to Otter Point. The trail and motor road projects proceeded simultaneously, and the two sets of workers shared construction materials, with excess debris from the road used on the trail. The CCC used native stone in the guardwalls and culvert headwalls, and revegetated shoulders and construction scars. By 1937, the Ocean Path reconstruction work was largely complete. (CLR 2007: 44-45)

Sand Beach Trail and Gate:

The improvements to Ocean Drive and the Ocean Path made Sand Beach an even more popular destination (Figure 20). According to a 1936 park drawing, a path extended from a staircase at the newly-established parking lot to the beach itself (see Figure 19). It is not known if the staircase or path already existed or if they were possibly built by the CCC. In 1940 the park designed a wood access gate and fence at this trailhead, possibly as a subtle reminder that the trail and beach, though open to the public, were nonetheless privately owned. The drawing notes that the CCC completed this project in 1941 and confirms the presence of the retaining wall that supported the original Ocean Drive roadbed (Figure 21).

More Construction on the Motor Road System:

Additional land donations to the park allowed construction of new motor road segments in 1933-1941 that advanced Rockefeller's vision: Stanley Brook Road and Otter Cliffs Road (1934-1936), Kebo Mountain Road (1936-1938), Otter Cove Causeway and Blackwoods Road (1938-1939), Kebo Mountain Road Extension and Champlain Mountain Road (1939-1940), Day Mountain Road (1939-1941), and Paradise Hill Road (1940-1941).

In 1933 plans for the northern end of the motor road system were changed when Rockefeller's engineers surveyed a route around the north and east sides of Champlain Mountain, a shorter and less expensive alternative to the controversial route through the Tarn valley and the east slope of Gorham Mountain. However, this new route was fraught with difficulties in obtaining land holdings and rights-of-way from the wealthy residents of the Schooner Head Road area, namely Mr. Kent and

Mr. Palmer. As a result, two road segments were constructed towards a union at these two difficult properties in 1939-1940: Kebo Mountain Road Extension, a southeasterly extension of Kebo Mountain Road that ended at Dorr Quarry Road, which in turn connected to Schooner Head Road, and Champlain Mountain Road, a northerly extension of Ocean Drive that ended at the "Wire Gate Road" (now Schooner Head Overlook Access Road), which also connected to the Schooner Head Road. Thus, until the Kent and Palmer lands could be acquired, Schooner Head Road continued to serve as a temporary link to the newest segments. (CLR 2007: 59-60)

With the exception of Stanley Brook Road, these roads were constructed by the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR, now Federal Highway Administration), who earlier had built Cadillac Mountain Road as part of an interbureau agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. The agreement had the BPR undertake surveys, develop specifications, and supervise construction while NPS engineers and landscape architects focused on the planning and review. This relationship ensured that the park surroundings were well preserved, and the overall character of the new roads were compatible with the natural environment. One of the distinctive features of these roads was the BPR's use of rectilinear-shaped stones for guardwalls, rather than angular-shaped stones they set out along Cadillac Mountain Road (Figure 22). (CLR 2007: 22-23)

1941 Park Master Plan:

Beginning in 1933, the park's resident landscape architect, Benjamin Breeze, designed and implemented many projects aimed at improving public facilities at Acadia National Park. Meticulously drawn plans were created for picnic areas, campgrounds, recreation areas, and a new naval station on Schoodic Peninsula as well as the motor roads and trails on both the island and peninsula. All of the projects adhered to the NPS Rustic Design style. (CLR 2007: 63)

In 1941, Breeze improved and repackaged the site plans and schematics as a new park master plan that served as a snapshot of what projects had been accomplished and what was left to be done. Though outside of the park, the plan indicated existing conditions at the Sand Beach/Great Head area. One sheet documented several buildings at the Satterlee Estate, interior driveways, a winding trail around Great Head via the teahouse, and another trail to Ocean Drive via the beach (Figure 23). Another sheet indicated, for the first time, Sand Beach as a future developed area (Figure 24). An aerial photograph from 1944 offered a view of the Sand Beach and Great Head area, as well as a photograph from 1947 (Figures 25 and 26). (CLR 2007: 64)

The CCC and World War II:

In 1941, priorities in the park, not to mention throughout the country, were changing as the likelihood of the nation entering World War II increased. The focus of the CCC at Acadia shifted from park development to civil defense projects. On the Schoodic Peninsula the naval radio station was expanded, with some structures constructed on park lands. That same year, the military began operation of a radar station on the summit of Cadillac Mountain to seek out enemy submarines. During the duration of the war, Cadillac Mountain Road remained closed to the public. In 1942 the CCC camps were closed and Benjamin Breeze was reassigned to Washington D.C. NPS funding was cut in half to fund the war effort, limiting work to basic maintenance of existing facilities. (CLR 2007: 65)

Beach Facilities:

Although the park had referenced Sand Beach in the 1941 master plan, acquisition of the Satterlee property appeared to be unlikely. With the completion of freshwater beaches at Lakewood (1933-1934) and Echo Lake (1940), the park developed plans in 1942 for a saltwater beach in the inner part of Otter Cove, on the north side of the recently completed Otter Creek Cove Bridge and Causeway. Breeze's plan called for parking, utilities, bathhouses, imported sand, concession facilities, and a removable floodgate at the bridge to hold water in. However, the project had significant engineering challenges (retaining the sand, sewage disposal, working the floodgates, algae development), and visual impacts, prompting Breeze to self-evaluate the plan:

"We, therefore, do not believe that the Otter Cove area can bear the additional strain of Beach Development...If there is even a remote chance that the park service might some day acquire the Satterlee Sand Beach, it would be worth the wait and in the meantime we can still have the use of it..." (email, Jacobi to Gladstone, 9 June 2026, citing Breeze, "Memorandum for the Regional

Director, Region 1," 28 March 1942)

This conclusion was reiterated by the NPS Regional Director Thomas Allen in a Memorandum to the NPS Director a few days later: "...scenic encroachment and consequent damage to park values may be greater than the advantages of the development would justify." (email, Jacobi to Gladstone, 9 June 2026, citing Thomas J. Allen, "Memorandum for the Director," 3 April 1942)

The issue lay dormant until 1945 when Judge John A. Peters and Rockefeller, both stockholders in the Acadia Corporation, raised the issue with Secretary Ickes. The Acadia Corporation was the locally owned concessioner that built and began operating the Summit Tavern at the Cadillac Mountain summit in 1934. No longer at the park, Breeze made a trip back to Acadia and revised the plan, suggesting the disturbance might not be unreasonable considering the benefits, and wondered how long the NPS could wait for the Satterlee beach to become available. (email, Jacobi to Gladstone, 9 June 2026)

In 1947, the engineering challenges surfaced in earnest along with political discord. It was discovered that the permit issued to the NPS by the U.S. (Army Corps of) Engineers to construct the bridge and causeway did not include closing the channel for swimming because Otter Creek Cove was a navigable waterway. According to Superintendent Hadley, when the NPS applied for the permit in 1935, the plans included stopping the flow with timber installations, but fishermen using the inner cove protested the closure, citing their need for access to it for protection from storms and working on their boats at low tide. Because of this disagreement, in an October 17, 1947, letter to the Corps of Engineers in Boston, Superintendent Hadley advised that the new public hearing required would be held in November. On that same October date, the Mount Desert Island Fire of 1947 began at Dolliver's Dump and the hearing was postponed. (email, Jacobi to Gladstone, 9 June 2026)



Figure 17. View from Ocean Drive looking south towards Otter Point, c.1928, before reconstruction. Note the guardwall stones. The Ocean Path (#3) is not clearly visible; it may have shared the road in this area. (CLR 2007: 88)

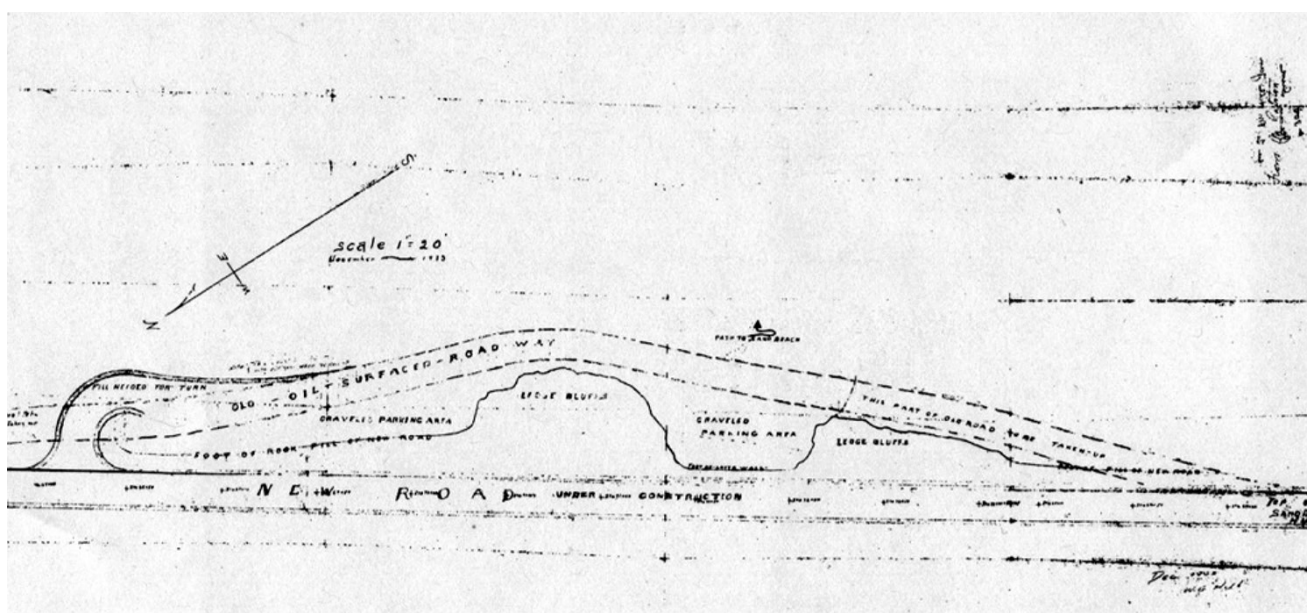


Figure 18. Plan showing the new alignment of Ocean Drive at Sand Beach, and the old section reconfigured as a parking lot, c.1933-1934. (CLR 2007: 92, courtesy Rockefeller Archives Center)

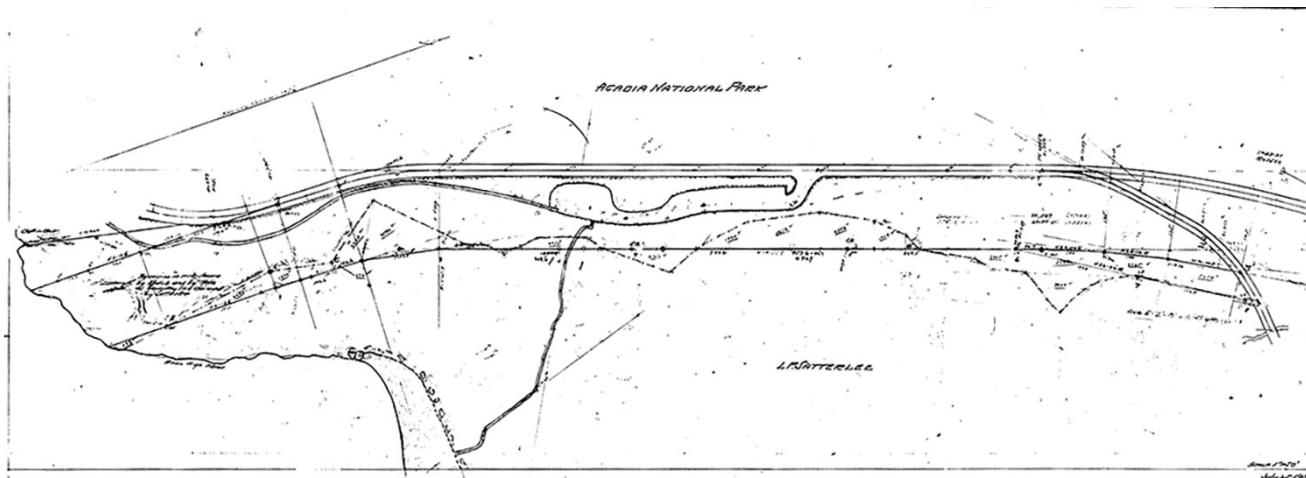


Figure 19. Drawing dated 1936 showing the parking lot, Ocean Drive, and Ocean Path (Trail #3). Note the steps and stairs at the parking lot heading to the beach. (CLR 2007: 92, courtesy Rockefeller Archives Center)



Figure 20. Sand Beach, 1935. (Acadia NP archives)

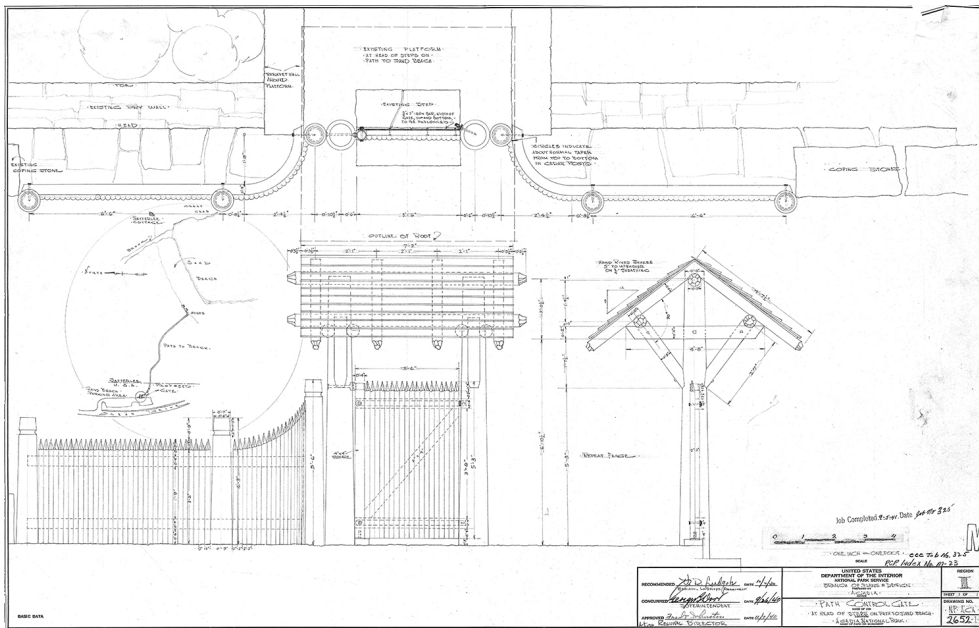


Figure 21. Drawing of a gate and fence for the Sand Beach trailhead at the original parking lot. (eTIC dwg. ACAD 123-2652)

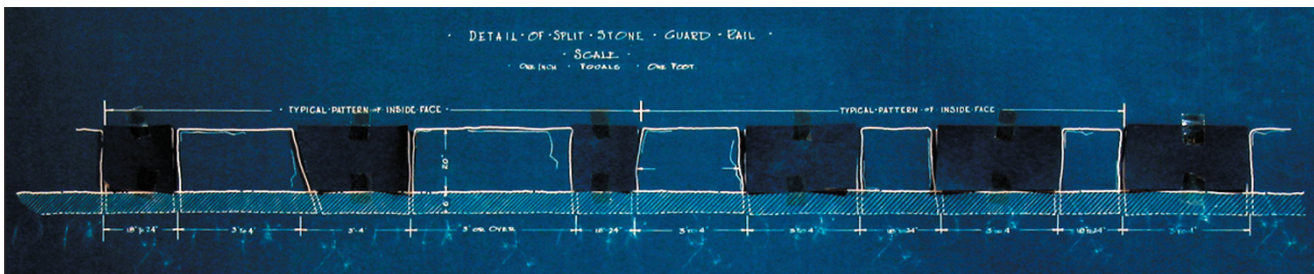


Figure 22. Detail of rectilinear guardwall stones on Kebo Mountain Road, 1936. (US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Public Roads, Project 6A1, Sheet 14 of 14, 1936)

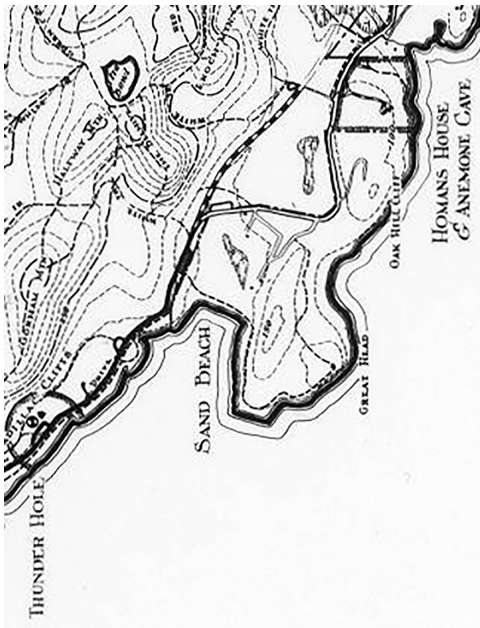


Figure 23. Portion of the park's 1941 Master Plan showing roads, trails, and existing developed areas. Buildings, roads, and trails are shown at the Satterlee Estate, as is a trail from Great Head to Ocean Drive, via Sand Beach. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-2658)



Figure 24. Portion of the park's 1941 Master Plan showing roads and existing developed areas. Sand Beach is represented with a dashed semicircle, which indicates a proposed developed area. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-2657)

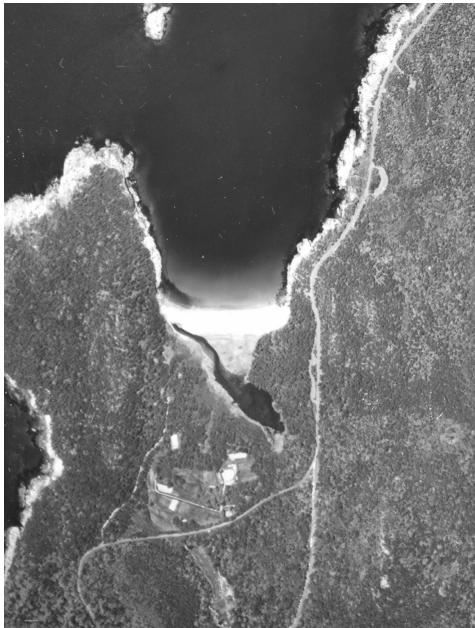


Figure 25. Aerial photograph, June 1944. (ACAD NP files)

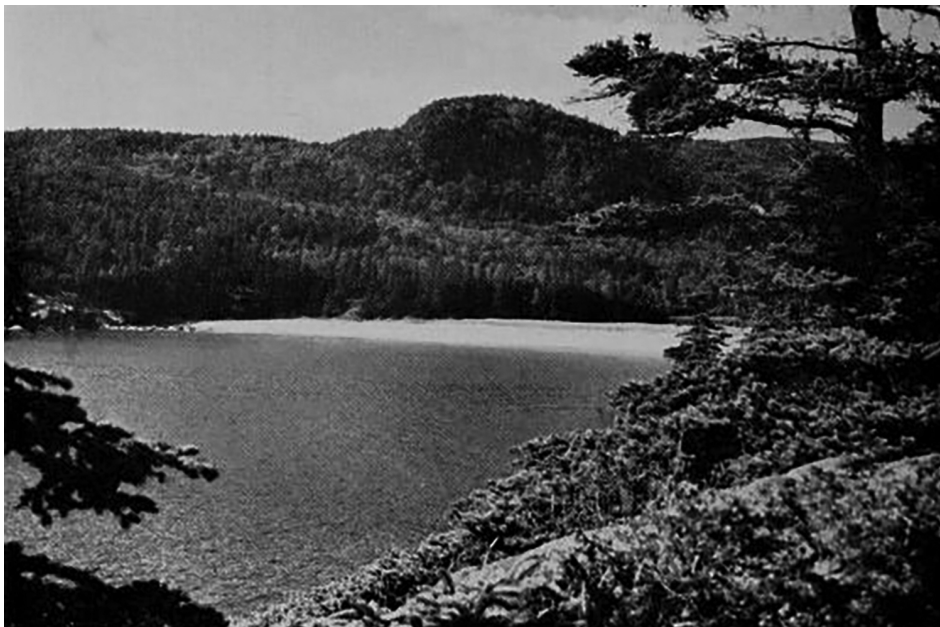


Figure 26. Sand Beach and The Beehive from Great Head in 1947, by R.L. Scott. (Hale 1949)

THE GREAT FIRE AND SATTERLEE FIELD, 1947-1949

In October 1947, after an unusually dry summer, 17,128 acres of land on Mount Desert Island (11,753 acres of which are currently in federal ownership), were devastated by the “Bar Harbor Fire.” Allegedly beginning in a cranberry bog west of Halls Cove, the fire burned a relatively small area in its first three days but then spread exponentially to the south and east on October 23 when strong winds fanned the flames. As described by park superintendent Benjamin Hadley:

“Soon after three o’clock in the afternoon a change in wind conditions occurred. Without diminishing in velocity the wind began to veer from the southwest to the west, and with increasing velocity, swung into the west. By four o’clock the wind reached gale velocity and the fire became a raging tornado of flames bent apparently on destroying the whole eastern half of Mount Desert Island. The fire advanced with great rapidity from Halls Cove to Bar Harbor, entered the western section of the village, consuming nearly three hundred dwellings, swept over the eastern flank of Cadillac Mountain, and the whole of Dorr and Champlain Mountains, reached the shore at Sol’s Cliff, and raced along the shore to beyond the Thunder Hole.” (Memorandum, Hadley to Regional Director, 17 November 1947: 3)

The fire destroyed 67 summer estates, five large hotels, and over 170 permanent homes. Several park buildings and structures were lost, such as the springhouse building at Sieur de Monts Spring, as well as log guardrails, road and trail signs, gates, and most of the plantings by Beatrix Farrand along the carriage roads. Both the carriage roads and motor roads served as firebreaks and access points. (CLR 2007:65-66)

The fire consumed most of Great Head and Sand Beach until it reached the ocean. According to Richard Hale in his book, “The Story of Bar Harbor,” three of the five buildings at the Satterlee Estate that had been wetted down were saved but everything else was lost. The Farrand gardens were destroyed and the teahouse was damaged, as was much of the surrounding forest. (Hale 1949: 226-227; “Hints of the Satterlee Estate in Acadia,” accessed 3 February 2026)

The Satterlee family had regularly summered at Satterlee Field from 1911 until Louisa died in October 1946 and Herbert died in July 1947. The property passed to their youngest daughter Eleanor, who visited one last summer in 1948 even though most of the estate had burned.

Satterlee’s Land Transfer to Acadia National Park:

A year later in the aftermath of the fire, the Otter Cove hearing had yet to be rescheduled. At the urging of Rockefeller, NPS Director Drury wrote to the sisters Eleanor Morgan Satterlee and Mrs. Abbot Ingalls expressing his sorrow for their loss and asking if each would be willing to donate the property or sell it at a modest sum. (email, Jacobi to Gladstone, 9 June 2026)

Just prior to Drury’s letter to her, Eleanor Satterlee had called on Superintendent Hadley at his park office on November 19, 1948, saying she wished to donate the 116-acre Great Head property to the park. Mrs. Satterlee made three requests for the transaction: a life tenancy in the remaining bungalow; the retention of a caretaker in the farm house (Sand Beach House); and the installation of a bronze plaque mounted on a large boulder overlooking Sand Beach commemorating her mother. Mrs. Satterlee then bought her sister’s interest in the property in order to effect the transfer. The property passed to the NPS on May 25, 1949, just in time for a busy holiday weekend. Tragically, Mrs. Satterlee enjoyed her life estate for only two years and died in 1951. (email, Jacobi to Gladstone, 9 June 2026; “Satterlee Field,” accessed 2 February 2026; “The Satterlee Trail,” accessed 5 February 2026)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MANAGEMENT, 1949-2026

Most of the design and project work at Acadia National Park in the ten years after the war was focused on completion of park facilities started in the 1930s, repairs to aging buildings, and modest rebuilding after the 1947 Bar Harbor fire. Among the noteworthy projects were the construction of Day Mountain Road Extension (1951) and the Paradise Hill Road and bridges (1952), which left only one segment of the motor road system – around the north and east sides of Champlain Mountain – unfinished. The park also improved facilities at the Blackwoods and Seawall campgrounds. (MPDF 2007, Sec.E: 69; CLR 2007: 103-105)

The years immediately following the war also saw annual increases in visitation that strained the park's infrastructure. Sand Beach remained one of the park's top destinations, but complaints increased about its "lack of facilities" and "lack of sufficient parking area." Consequently, developing Sand Beach became a priority with the 1949 acquisition. By late 1950 field investigations were underway for a sewage disposal and water supply system, and in early 1951 the Bureau of Public Roads completed a site-wide survey. (Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports: August 1949, July 1950, December 1950, February 1951)

On November 25-26, 1950, a major storm struck coastal Maine, causing widespread damage and loss of power. Heaviest damage in the park occurred at Sand Beach, the Ocean Path (#3), Otter Cove Causeway, and the road at Seawall.

"At Sand Beach, nearly one-third of its length was washed away. Over the remaining two-thirds probably one half in depth of the sand cover is gone. In all probability the sand which disappeared will return again. Storms of the past have carried away sand, perhaps not to the same extent, and it has always returned." ("Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports, for November 1950)

The storm also uncovered the wreck of the Tay, as described by Superintendent Benjamin J. Hadley: "Wind-driven waves of unusual height and power produced awe-inspiring surf along the Ocean Drive and at the Sand Beach. Their reach onto the shore was of unusual length, so much so that after more than thirty years they reached and uncovered the hulk of the Tay. There it lies, a relic from the past, a bit of the history of the sea and its once considerable traffic." ("Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports, for November 1950)

Development of Sand Beach Visitor Facilities:

The new facility was located just east of the existing parking lot, on a northeasterly sloping area overlooking Sand Beach. Initial plans from the fall of 1950 featured an access road to a new 82-car terraced parking lot, a V-shaped arrangement of a comfort station flanked by two future angled changing room structures, and interior paths and steps connecting to the existing path/staircase from the old parking lot to the beach (Figure 27). The entrance to the old parking lot, designated as overflow parking, was from the new access road. A revised plan from 1952 showed the comfort station flanked by two future L-shaped changing rooms in an orthogonal arrangement, and revealed locations of walks, steps, retaining walls, and lawn areas. This plan also straightened the sharp curve of the access road at its intersection with Ocean Drive, and shifted the entrance of the overflow lot south to its own intersection off of Ocean Drive (Figure 28). (eTIC, dwg. 123-2771-B, 1951; eTIC dwg. 123-2043, 1952)

The comfort station was completed in 1952 and featured men's and women's restrooms housed in a single-story, rectangular-shaped structure with board and batten siding and a wood-shingled, bellcast hip roof (Figure 29). The building complemented the standards of the NPS Rustic Design style associated with early park development from 1933 to 1942. Its design was similar to the restrooms built at Seawall and Blackwoods Campgrounds (1937-1938) and Sieur de Monts Spring after the 1947 fire (1949), and its roofline was like that of the Thunder Hole Ranger Station built in 1934 (Figure 30, see Figure 29). An aerial photograph from 1953 shows the completed building (Figure 31). (EA 2002: 10,12; eTIC, dwg.123-2031-C, 1951)

The two, single-story changing room structures, completed in 1955, each housed twelve rooms and also featured board and batten siding but were more utilitarian in their design (Figure 32). That same

year the BPR completed construction on the paved access road and parking lot, concrete curbs, bituminous walkways, dry rubble stone masonry walls, stone steps, rock-paved gutters, stone headwall culverts, and rectilinear guardwall stones. A 3.5-foot tall, 2.5-foot-square stone water fountain was also erected along the walk fronting the comfort station (Figure 33). An aerial photograph from 1956 shows these facilities, as well as three lawn panels fronting the comfort station and two changing room structures (Figure 34). Around 1958 a 7-foot by 8-inch redwood timber “Sand Beach Swimming” sign was erected at the intersection of Ocean Drive and the access road. No planting plan has been discovered for the developed area, but a historic photograph shows the lawns and new trees and shrubs in the parking lot islands by 1962. The septic system was located in a small ravine to the northwest of the parking lot. The water supply came from a tank west and uphill from Ocean Drive that also supplied the Thunder Hole facilities. (EA 2002: 12; eTIC, dwg.123-2878, 1961; eTIC, dwg.123-2852, 1958; eTIC, dwg.123-41921, 1953; eTIC, dwg.123-3004, 1954; eTIC, dwg.123-3004-A, 1954)

Superintendent Frank R. Givens reported on Sand Beach/Great Head area in 1956: “The greatest improvement of a visitor use area was the completion of the Sand Beach parking area and dressing rooms. This popular area has heretofore been extremely unsatisfactory both from the visitors viewpoint and from the standpoint of operation and administration.” (Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1956 Fiscal Year)

“The appearance of the Great Head-Sand Beach area was greatly improved by crews of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. All fire-killed trees remaining from the 1947 fire were felled, greatly improving the scenic beauty of the popular Sand Beach and Ocean Drive areas.” (Superintendent’s Annual Report for 1956 Fiscal Year)

Historic photographs show some of the fire damage still visible in 1950s and early 1960s and the impact on scenic views (Figures 35 and 36). A comparison of the aerials from 1944, 1953, and 1956 show the extents of the fire at the Sand Beach / Great Head area (see Figures 25, 31, and 34).

Development at Great Head:

The work at Sand Beach occurred concurrently with projects at the Satterlee Estate. With the 1949 property conveyance to the federal government, Eleanor Morgan Satterlee retained a life estate until her death, which occurred in April 1951. After her estate removed Eleanor’s belongings, the park repurposed two surviving Satterlee buildings into park housing – the estate workers cottage and the guest log cabin (Camp Gramlee). The surviving carriage house was removed between 1954-1956, after the park built a three-vehicle garage nearby. By 1961 the park had removed Camp Gramlee. That same year the park developed a preliminary plan for a new eighteen-foot-wide gravel road from the intersection of the Schooner Head Road and Satterlee Driveway to a terminal loop northwest of the Great Head’s high point, downslope from the Satterlee teahouse ruins. This road was not built. In the 1960s, what was left of the teahouse was demolished down to the foundation for safety reasons. (Superintendent’s Monthly Narrative Report for April 1951; “The Satterlee Trail, <https://acadiaadventures.substack.com/p/the-satterlee-trail-aka-the-great>, “Satterlee Tea House,” accessed 2 February 2026; Satterlee Tea House, accessed 5 February 2026; eTIC, dwg.123-2878, 1961; dwg.123-3031, 1961)

Completion of the Motor Road System:

Completion of the final segment of Rockefeller’s motor road system, named Bureau of Public Roads Project 4A2, became possible in 1955 when Schooner Head Road resident Mrs. Potter Palmer deeded a portion of her property to the park. This gift allowed the park to connect the Kebo Mountain Road Extension and Champlain Mountain Road on park property, thus bypassing Schooner Head Road. Project 4A2 was a “Mission 66” project, a ten-year NPS program of park development designed to help parks accommodate the enormous increase in visitation after the war. The program’s immense number of projects oftentimes led to a lack of oversight on the part of the NPS, and many of the Mission 66 projects have been criticized for not maintaining the agency’s high pre-war standards and rustic traditions. However, Acadia’s Project 4A2 carried forth the NPS Rustic Design style characteristics of the BPR’s previous park roads. The project was completed in 1958, after which the loop became known as the Park Loop Road. Mr. Rockefeller died two years later at the age of eighty-seven and was able to realize a vision that occupied well over three decades to

complete. (CLR 2007: 67-69)

Infrastructure Projects, 1970s-2001:

Many of the projects at Sand Beach from the 1970s to the early 2000s focused on infrastructure. Up until the early 1970s, access to the beach from the Sand Beach facilities was by way of stone steps, much like those used on trails throughout the park (Figure 37). The exact location of these steps is unknown. In 1972 the park prepared a drawing to replace the stone steps with a staircase of alternating steps and landings. At the top of this staircase, a level area defined by rectilinear stones and the Satterlee monument connected to existing paths to the old parking lot (1934) and the new parking lot (1955) (Figure 38). While the exact year the staircase was built is unknown, it is likely near the same location as the current staircase. (eTIC, dwg.123-60210, 1972)

In response to the continued increase in park visitation, a large portion of the Park Loop Road was converted to one-way traffic in 1969, running clockwise from Sieur de Mons Spring to Day Mountain Road. This was done to allow motorists to park in the right lane of the road at key destinations rather than on the vegetated road shoulders, including along Ocean Drive at Sand Beach. Access to Sand Beach itself was improved for pedestrians. In the 1980s one-way traffic pattern was expanded, with the new starting point moved from Sieur de Mons Spring to Kebo Mountain Road. (CLR 2007: 71-72,166; Review comment, G. Gladstone, 9 June 2026)

Access to Great Head and Sand Beach was improved in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the late 1980s the park constructed a parking lot at the intersection of Schooner Head Road and the old Satterlee driveway for visitors hiking the Great Head Trail (trail #2) (Figure 39). The paved lot accommodated 17-vehicles and had a sidewalk on its south side to safely access the driveway, which intersected with the trailhead a short distance to the south. In the early 1990s the park mitigated erosion issues on the Great Head Trail with a bogwalk, rock waterbars, and a retaining wall. Around 1990 the short section of Schooner Head Road, from the Satterlee Estate to Ocean Drive was designated as the Sand Beach–Great Head Trail (trail #9, now the Satterlee Trail). This road section was closed to vehicles because the park funneled visitors to the Fee Station on the Park Loop Road, at Schooner Head Overlook Road. In 1994 the park installed accessible ramps at the Sand Beach parking lot as well as a pay telephone. (eTIC, dwg.123-60203, 1980s; eTIC, dwg.123-60313, 1994; CLR 2006: 217,219)

Utility upgrades were undertaken during this period. From 1978-1981 the park rehabilitated the failing sewer system that was contaminating the tidal Beehive Lagoon and adjacent Sand Beach. The project involved relocating the septic leach field from its location just west of the 1955 parking lot to a new site around 450 feet east of the park residence at the former Satterlee Estate. Piping extended under the Sand Beach Access Road, Ocean Drive, and the Satterlee Trail. In 1987 the 10,000-gallon water storage tank uphill and west of Ocean Drive was replaced. By 1996 a unisex pit toilet was installed in the south lawn area. (eTIC, dwg.123-81440, 1978; dwg.123-41040, 1979; dwg.123-41040-A, 1979; dwg.123-41040-B, 1981; dwg.123-81457, 1987; dwg.123-41069, 1996)

Construction of Bus Shelter:

The park's 1992 General Management Plan identified management actions to reduce ongoing crowding and vehicle congestion in high-density use areas by reducing reliance on automobiles. The plan recommended establishment of a public transportation system, after which right-lane parking on the Park Loop Road would be eliminated. After years of study, the Island Explorer bus system was established in 1999 to provide public transit service from feeder routes near visitor accommodations and a hub in downtown Bar Harbor to destinations throughout the park. (FTP 2019: 2; GMP 1992: 35-36)

Sand Beach became a popular bus stop, and in 2001 the park built an open-sided bus shelter structure at the southeast edge of the Sand Beach parking lot, on the lawn in front of the south changing room structure. The 12-foot by 20-foot steel and wood structure featured a cedar-shingled hipped roof to appear compatible with the nearby comfort station. A wood-supported information sign with a cedar-shingled gable roof was installed nearby, as were bike racks and rectangular granite blocks for seating (Figure 40). Despite the successful implementation of the bus system, right-lane parking is still allowed on portions of the Park Loop Road, including Ocean Drive at Sand Beach.

(eTIC, dwg.123-60373-A-B, 2001)

Visitor Facilities Rehabilitation Project, 2002:

In 2002 the park prepared an environmental assessment for a project to rehabilitate and upgrade visitor facilities at Sand Beach. Out of three alternatives, Alternative B was identified as the preferred option to address the site's deficiencies (Figure 41). Completed in 2003-2004, improvements included:

- Construct a universally accessible ramp to the comfort station;
- Rehabilitate the interior and exterior of the existing comfort station;
- Demolish the north and south changing rooms;
- Rebuild the south changing room;
- Construct a lifeguard storage/office building at the site of the north changing room;
- Construct a year-round, universally-accessible vault toilet in the new storage/office building;
- Upgrade utilities. (EA 2002: 10-12,21-23)

The new lifeguard building occupied the same footprint as the changing room, but was shorter in length.

Recent Projects:

By 2010 years of storms and erosion had severely skewed and broken the steps and landings of the staircase to the beach. In 2011 the park built a new structure that featured five sets of poured bituminous concrete steps and four landings, as well as post and board fencing and stainless-steel railings. The bottom set of steps was enlarged to create a larger ingress/egress area. The old granite slab steps were repurposed into a retaining wall on the land side of the staircase, replacing the previous granite edge. The plan also included new plantings (Figure 42). (PMIS 104057; PEPC 17056; eTIC, dwg.123-60454, 2011)

In 2017 the western end of the Satterlee Trail (trail #9), was relocated to a new crushed stone causeway with wooden cribs and handrails alongside Ocean Drive. Visitors rarely used the old section due to wet conditions and instead treaded alongside the road occupied by large coping stones, leaving very little safe passage for pedestrians (Figure 43). (PMIS 222534, PEPC 25557)

Recent and Future Planning for Sand Beach:

According to the 2019 "Final Transportation Plan / Environmental Impact Statement," annual visitation to Acadia National Park grew by 59% between 2007 and 2017, with 3.5 million visits recorded in 2017. Most visits occurred from June through October. Roads and parking facilities serving the most popular destinations – Cadillac Mountain, Jordan Pond, Thunder Hole, and Sand Beach – suffered the most vehicular traffic congestion. To alleviate congestion and maintain a positive visitor experience, the plan's preferred alternative (Alternative C) proposed a timed-entry reservation system during the peak visitor season for key sites, including the Ocean Drive corridor. The first-come, first-serve protocols at the Sand Beach parking lot would be retained, unless monitoring indicated traffic or resource conditions worsened beyond acceptable thresholds. Right-lane parking along Ocean Drive would be retained in the near term but eventually phased out as other options and parking become available. During initial implementation of the reservation system, the Sand Beach Entrance Station would be used to validate reservations on the Ocean Drive corridor. The Sand Beach parking lot would be reconfigured to provide three or four parking spaces for commercial tour vehicles. Schooner Head Road, from the Schooner Head Overlook Road to the trailhead at Satterlee Trail, would be closed to vehicle traffic, and a new trail would be constructed to the Great Head trail system to facilitate enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access to this area of the park. To date the road has not been closed. (FTP-EIS 2019: 4,36-38)

Back-to-back severe storms on January 10 and 13, 2024, caused extensive damage to the park's coastal infrastructure and resources. Intense winds and extremely high tides created a storm surge 4 feet higher than predicted and caused severe flooding. At Sand Beach, the storm eroded the bluff and uprooted trees, undermined the staircase, and eroded and destabilized the dunes (Figure 44). In the storm's aftermath, the park has requested funding for three projects:

- Proposed for 2026: Implement site-specific stabilization measures, including regrading eroded areas, installing natural erosion control features, restoring dune and slope contours, and revegetating

with native coastal and upland plant species. As part of restoration, collect native seeds from affected and nearby reference sites to support a park seed expansion program and propagate native plants for use in restoration and revegetation efforts. ("Stabilize Landscapes, Revegetate Main Picnic Areas, and Repair Erosion of Sensitive Areas," PMIS 349607, PEPC 132293)

- Proposed for 2026: Support the monitoring of invasive vegetation along Ocean Path and surrounding landscape during the repairs and revegetation efforts required following the winter storms of 2024. ("Monitor Invasive Vegetation within Storm Affected Areas of Mount Desert Island," PMIS 349402, PEPC 130049)
- Proposed for 2026-2028: Rehabilitate the parking lot and beach access at Sand Beach to improve wheel-chair accessibility and protect Beehive Lagoon to loss due to winter storms in January 2024. In particular, the project will establish a new accessible route to the beach. ("Improve Sand Beach accessibility and visitor services; Improve entrance station circulation and flow," PMIS 349280, PEPC 129884, \$23 million)

Other proposed projects include rehabilitating the Sand Beach water and wastewater systems waterline (proposed for 2026-2027, PMIS 343182, PMIS 312192) and remove and replace existing septic drain field (proposed for 2027-2028, PMIS 350924).

The Tay:

According to National Park Service records, the remains of the Tay were exposed in 1964, 1969, 1972, 1979, and 1985 as the seasonal storm cycles eroded and replenished sand on the beach. Sustained high water levels and repeated flooding from the January 2024 high tides moved the wreck, which broke apart as it battered against the exposed, rocky floor of the beach. Park staff photographed, measured, and mapped the remaining timbers. They attached tags to the larger pieces that will allow the wreck to be tracked if pieces continue to move or float away. Each tag has a unique code that visitors can scan using the camera on their mobile phones. Within just a few weeks of the tagging, sand had almost completely buried the timbers of the Tay and covered most of the rocks. Another storm in March removed the sand again. With the help of visitors, the fate of the Tay can now be more closely followed. ("Monitoring the Sand Beach Shipwreck," accessed 2 February 2026)

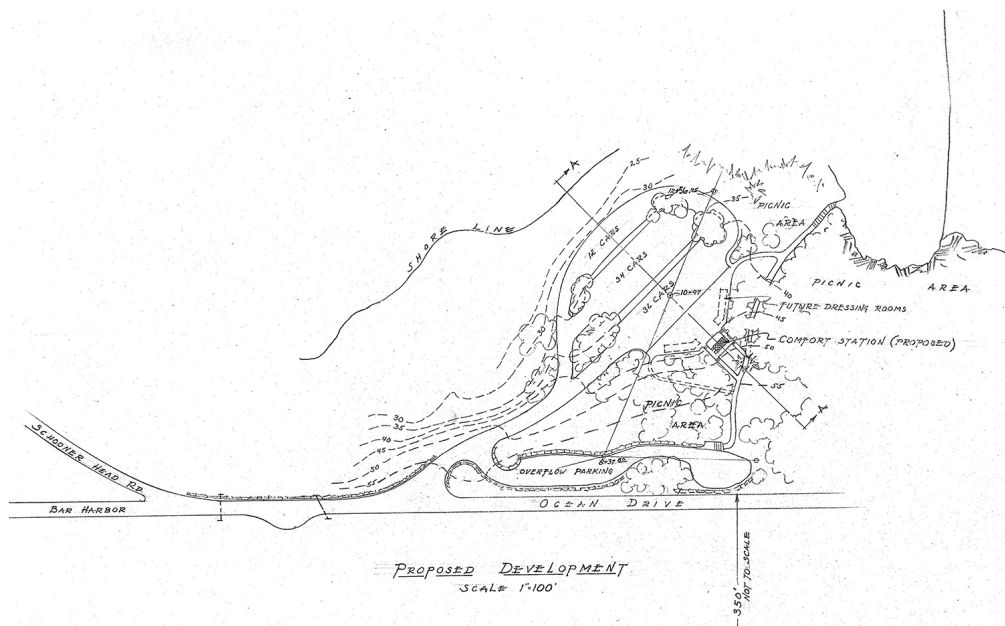


Figure 27. Initial plan of the Sand Beach development, 1951. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-2771-B)

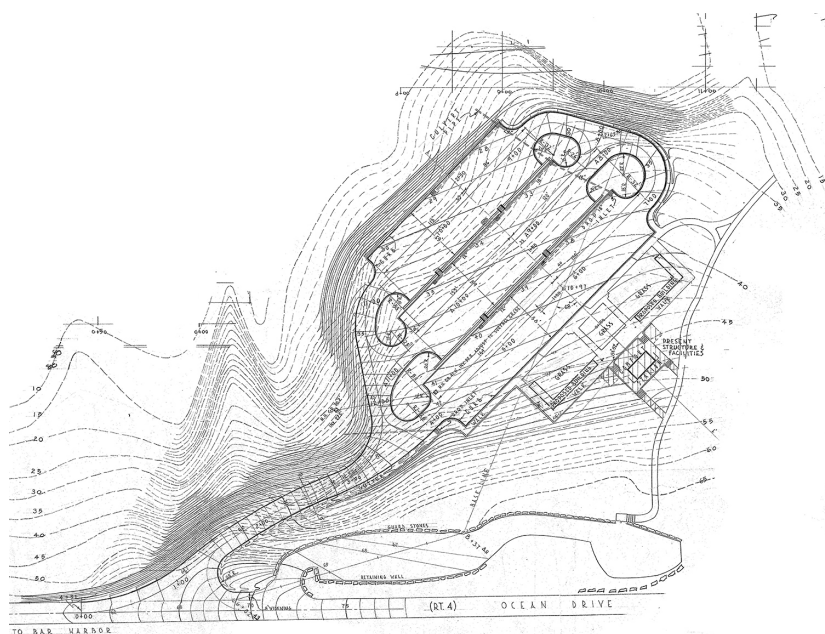


Figure 28. Revised plan of the Sand Beach development, 1952. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-2043)

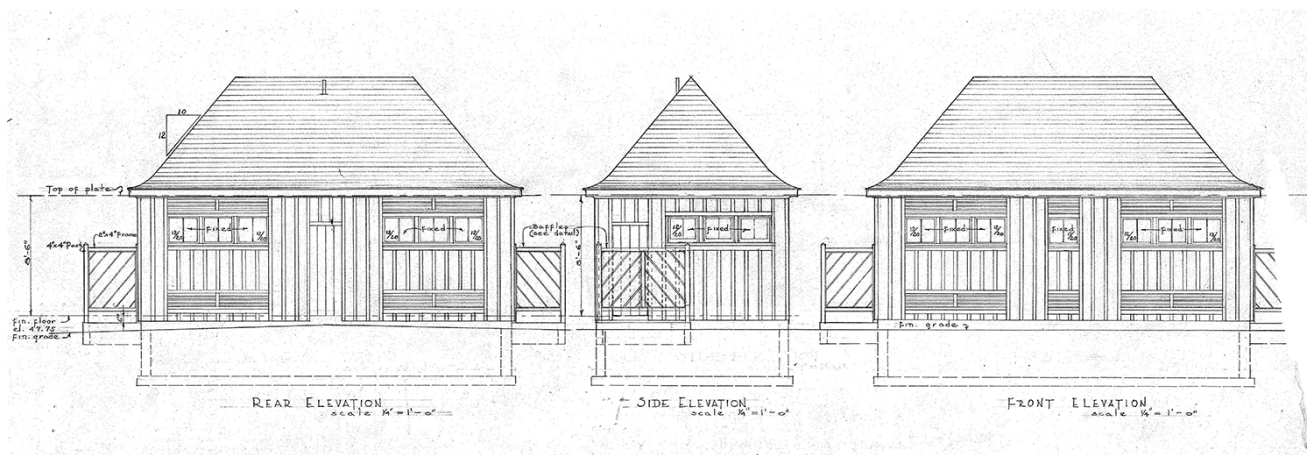


Figure 29. Detail of the Sand Beach Comfort Station, 1951. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-2031-C)



Figure 30. The rustic design of the restroom at Sieur de Monts Spring, 1949, is similar to its counterpart built a few years later at Sand Beach. (Acadia NP archives, from Sieur de Monts CLI, 2021: 76)



Figure 31. Aerial photograph of Sand Beach and Great Head, 1953, showing construction access to the new Comfort Station. (Acadia NP archives)

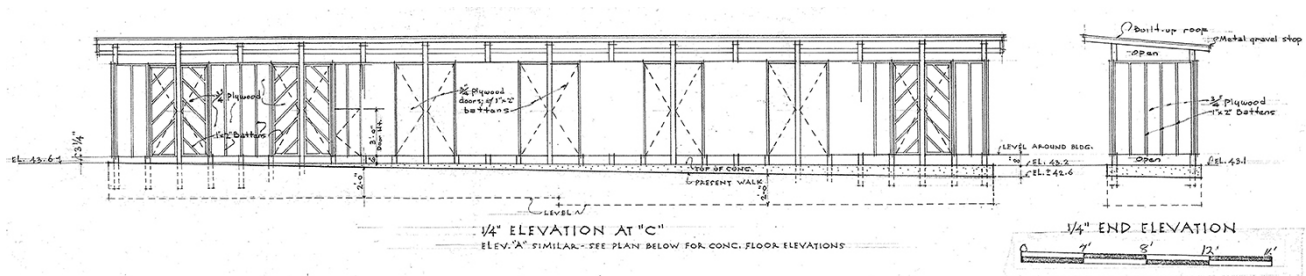


Figure 32. Plan and elevation of the two changing rooms at Sand Beach, October 1954. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-3004-A)

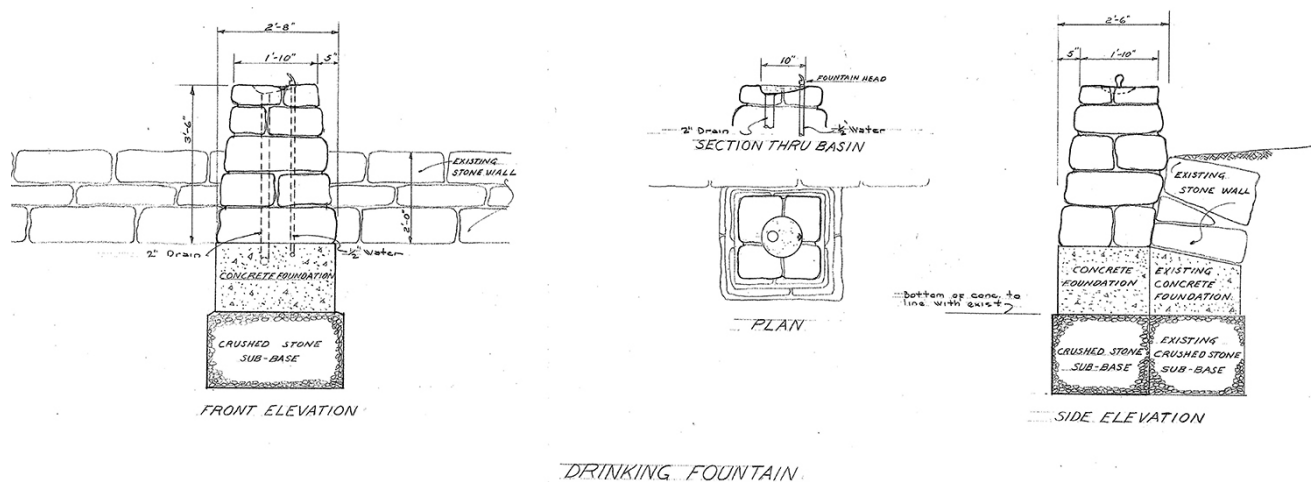


Figure 33. Detail of the front elevation of the stone water fountain at Sand Beach, October 1954. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-3004-A)



Figure 34. Aerial photograph of Sand Beach and Great Head, 1956, showing the completed access road and parking lot. (Acadia NP archives)



Figure 35. View looking east at the beach and Great Head, 1957. Ocean Drive and the Ocean Path are in the foreground. (Willis Humphreys Ballard, "Sand Beach from Ocean Drive," Southwest Harbor Public Library, accessed February 2, 2026, <https://swhpl.digitalarchive.us/items/show/4406>.Item 7860)



Figure 36. View looking northwest at the Sand Beach parking lot and The Beehive. 1962. (Willis Humphreys Ballard, "Sand Beach and the Beehive from Great Head Ledges," Southwest Harbor Public Library, accessed February 2, 2026, <https://swhpl.digitalarchive.us/items/show/6535>.Item 7906)



Figure 37. View looking westward at stone steps connecting the beach to the visitor facilities, 1971. (eTIC, Doc. 123-P110)

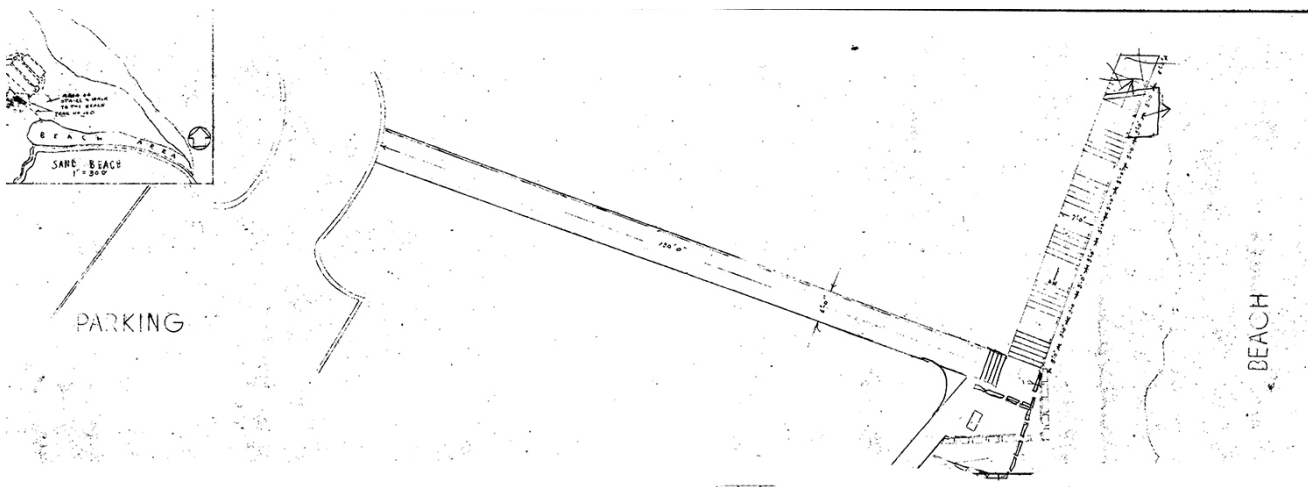


Figure 38. Plan of proposed staircase from visitor facilities to the beach, 1972. (eTIC, dwg. ACAD 123-60210)

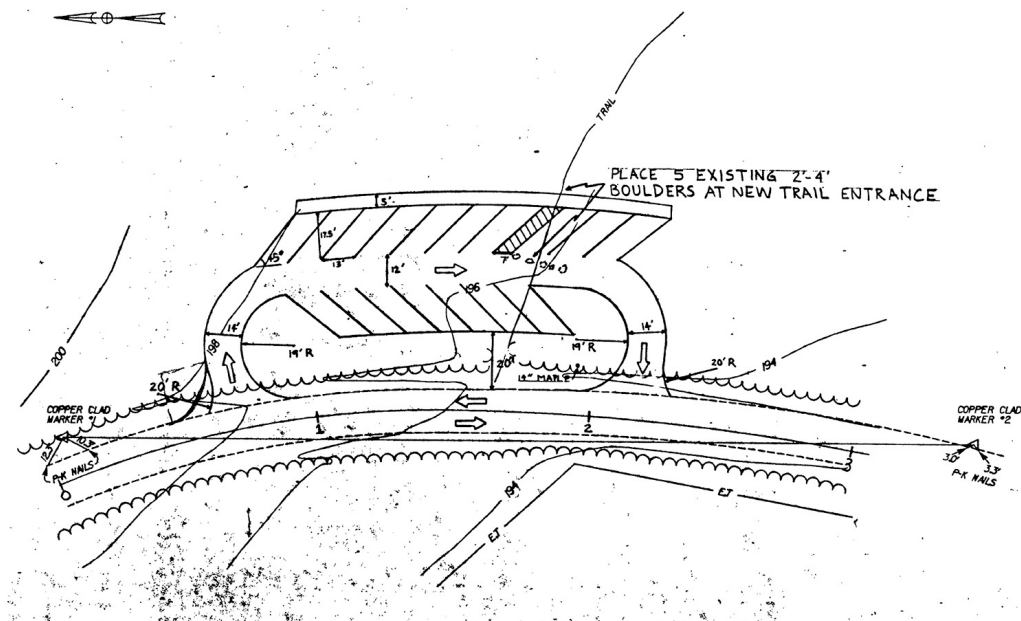


Figure 39. Plan of parking lot at Great Head, 1980s. (eTIC, dwg.123-60203)

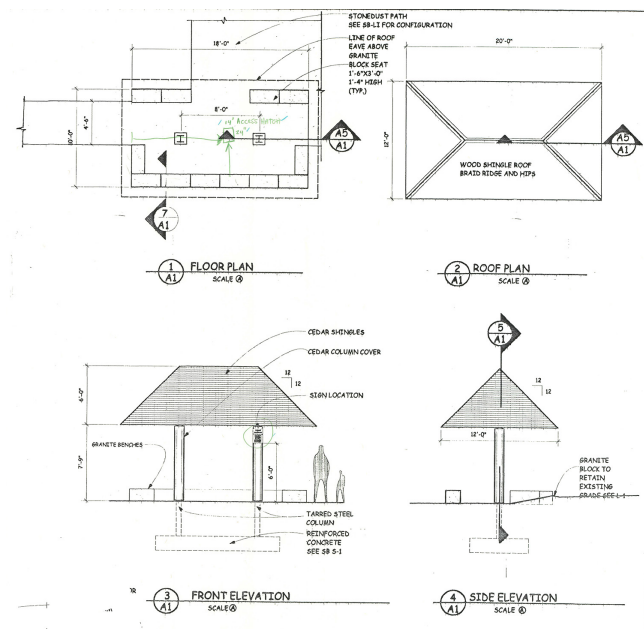


Figure 40. Plans for the bus shelter at Sand Beach. (eTIC, dwg.123-60373-B, 2001)

Sand Beach
Acadia National Park

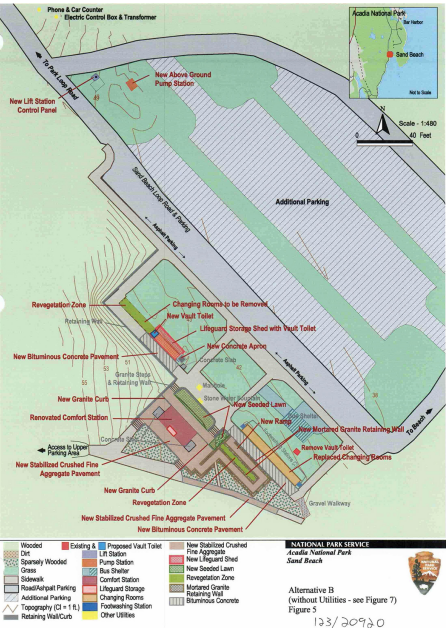


Figure 41. Map of proposed improvements at Sand Beach, completed in 2003-2004. (EA 2002: 22)

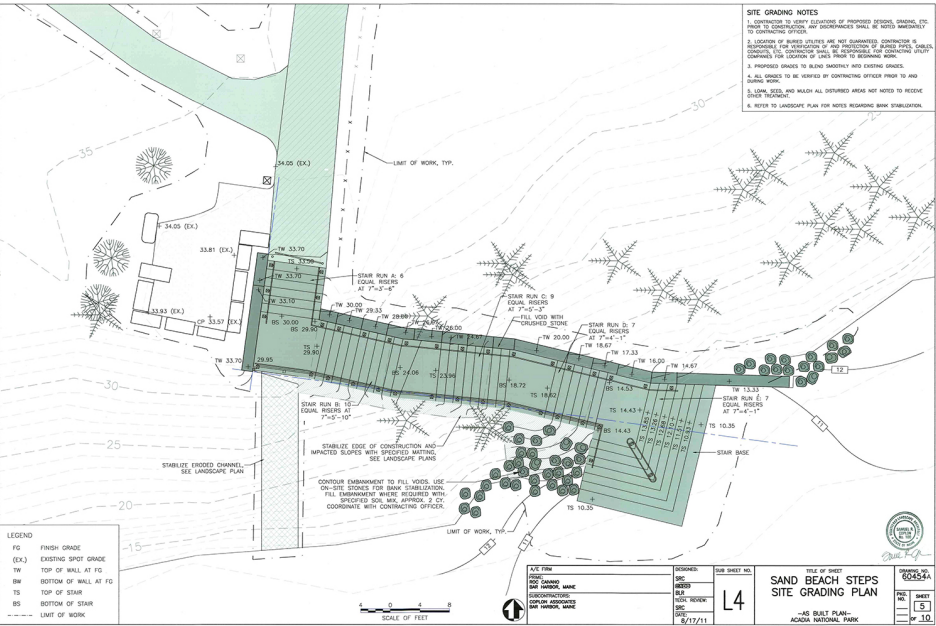


Figure 42. Plan view of the rehabilitated staircase to the beach, 2011. (eTIC, dwg.123-60454)



Figure 43. View looking south at the reconstructed Satterlee Trail (trail #9) along Ocean Drive. The Sand Beach Access Road is in the distance at image left. (PEPC, 222534)



Figure 44. View looking northwest at the bottom of the staircase, showing undermined piers and retaining wall stone. A portion of the eroded bluff is visible at image left. (OCLP 2024)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Recreation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Defense	Fortification	Battery (Defense)	Yes	No	No
Government	Government Office	Comfort Station (Latrine)	Yes	Yes	No
Transportation	Pedestrian-Related	Hiking Trail	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Leisure-Passive (Park)	Leisure-Passive (Park)	Yes	Yes	No
Recreation/Culture	Monument (Marker, Plaque)	Monument (Marker, Plaque)	Yes	Yes	No
Transportation	Road-Related	NPS Class I Principal Road	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Scenic Landscape	Overlook	Yes	Yes	No
Transportation	Road-Related	Parking Area	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Scenic Landscape	View	Yes	Yes	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

Public Access Narrative

Ocean Drive, Ocean Path, Satterlee Trail, and Great Head Trail provide access all year. The Sand Beach Comfort Station is open seasonally and the vault toilet is open in the winter. The Island Explorer bus service makes scheduled stops at the lower parking lot frequently during the summer months.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: Yes-Unrestricted Information

Ethnographic Narrative:

In 2007, the report, "Asticou's Island Domain: Wabanaki Peoples at Mount Desert Island, 1500-2000, Acadia National Park, Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Volume 1 and Volume 2," was completed by Harald E.L. Prins and Bunny McBride, through the NPS Northeast Region Ethnography Program, under cooperative agreement with the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Maine. The historical-ethnographic overview of Acadia National Park spans almost 500 years and covers a wide coastal stretch between Penobscot and Gouldsboro Bays, as well as surrounding areas. As stated in the report's Executive Summary: "such breadth of coverage is necessary in order to take in the park's center piece on Mount Desert Island, plus Isle au Haut and Schoodic Peninsula, along with various land holding arrangements (including easements) on numerous offshore sea-islands in this area. The study explores the shifting but ongoing relationship between this habitat and Wabanaki peoples – a group of northeastern Algonquian-speaking ethnic groups or tribal nations today distinguished as the Abenaki, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot." (Prins and McBride 2007: i)

The report's findings indicate that:

"Mount Desert Island has been a nexus point over the centuries for Wabanaki peoples – not only part of their prehistoric and historic hunting, fishing, gathering and trading range, but a strategic location in military maneuverings during the colonial wars and American Revolution, a prime place for marketing traditional crafts (and thereby for sustaining knowledge concerning the making of these crafts) and more recently a center point in their individual and collective efforts toward cultural reclamation. Their deep and intertwined connection to the area is reflected in traditional Wabanaki legends and place names. It is also evident in the names and genealogical information of specific 19th-century Wabanaki individuals identified in this study – most of whom have descendants associated with two or more of Maine's still existing tribal groups. (Prins and McBride 2007: iv)

The 2007 report specifically references Sand Beach. For more information, please refer to Asticou's Island Domain or contact park staff.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The historic integrity of Sand Beach project area is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1844-1955 with the existing conditions as assessed in 2024-2026. Many landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today. The rugged landforms that embrace Sand Beach and Newport Cove remain untouched, presenting visitors one of Acadia National Park's most scenic destinations. Swimmers, picnickers, hikers, and cyclists who witness the dramatic views of this seaside landscape are supported by park facilities designed in a rustic style that visually harmonize with the surrounding wooded terrain. The centerpiece of the development is a comfort station built in 1952, featuring board and batten siding and a hipped, bellcast roof that demonstrates the distinctive Acadia design used throughout the park. Historic circulation features include two parking lots, trails, and walkways. One walk accesses a (non-working) historic stone drinking fountain, which stands in from of the comfort station and adjacent to three lawn panels. The site's stone-constructed retaining walls, guardwalls, and steps reflect sound site planning that responds to local site conditions. A memorial plaque, dedicated in 1949, marks the occasion when the Satterlee family donated the site to the park.

Since 1955, some landscape characteristics and features at Sand Beach have changed. The most notable is the growth of vegetation since the development was completed in 1955, when the site was mostly open due to the 1947 fire. In 2003-2004 the park replaced the two original changing room structures with a new changing room building and a new lifeguard building. Both structures preserved the site's original layout and generally maintained the size and scale of the previous structures. Other changes include construction of accessible ramps, a stainless-steel drinking fountain, a bus shelter, and a concrete staircase to the beach.

INTEGRITY

The National Register of Historic Places defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey its significance through physical resources. The National Register program identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Retention of these qualities is necessary for a property to convey its significance; however, not all seven aspects must be present to retain integrity. The following evaluation is based on an 1844-1955 period of significance for Sand Beach. Overall, Sand Beach retains integrity of all seven aspects.

Location:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The popularity of Sand Beach as a coastal scenic destination has grown steadily since Thomas Cole's explorations in 1844. In the 1930s John D. Rockefeller, Jr. reconstructed Ocean Drive, at which time a roadside parking lot and trail were developed to facilitate visitation to the beach. In the early 1950s the NPS built a second parking lot and additional visitor facilities on a bluff near the beach. These features remain in their original locations to provide beach access.

Design:

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Sand Beach exhibits the characteristics of the NPS Rustic Design style that developed in the national park system from 1933-1942 and implemented at Acadia through the late 1950s. The site is integrated with the local topography, sited on a gently sloping bluff that rises above the beach and a pond/wetland. Site features harmonize with the surrounding landscape, constructed with native stone that complements the rock outcroppings or brown-stained wood that blends with the forest vegetation. The woodlands help screen the development and stabilize steep slopes, aided by new plantings of native species. Walkways and trails are designed to direct pedestrian traffic and protect adjacent vegetation, although some social paths are present. Awareness of the NPS Rustic Design style is also evident in the compatible designs of the nonhistoric changing room structure, bus shelter, and accessible walkway.

Setting:

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. The historic Sand Beach developed area retains its seaside setting and rustic architectural character, owing to limited modifications over time. One notable change

is the increased vegetation on the site since its original completion in the early 1950s. At that time much of the bluff and the surrounding landscape were open due in large part to damage from the Bar Harbor fire. Over time forest vegetation has regenerated around the development, and the park has added some new trees and shrubs. The woodlands shield the development from the beach but still provide views of Great Head and The Beehive, which frame the cliffs, rocks, and dunes of this coastal destination.

Materials:

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The general design standards of the NPS Rustic Design style were purposely flexible, which allowed Acadia National Park to customize features with local materials to ensure visual integration with the surrounding landscape. This is still evident at Sand Beach where local stone and timber are the predominant materials for buildings, structures, and small-scale features. Other landscape materials include asphalt and concrete, and a limited amount of stainless steel, metal, plastic, and glass. Native spruce, fir, red maple, yellow birch, trembling aspen, paper birch – whether indigenous or planted by the NPS – are common throughout the site.

Workmanship:

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. This aspect of integrity is evident in the 1952 comfort station's bellcast, hipped roof and board and batten siding, which are key characteristics of other structures built at Acadia in the NPS Rustic Design style. Such workmanship is also noticeable in the site's stone-constructed features, including tool marks on the faces of the granite guardwall stones, positioning of dry-laid stones in retaining walls, and the tapered form of the mortared-stone drinking fountain.

Feeling:

Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. Sand Beach's natural features evoke the same timeless feelings today that attracted artists, scientists, and travelers to Mount Desert Island in the mid-nineteenth century – that of a seaside destination both passive and violent. Although the Sand Beach development came after the peak of the NPS Rustic Design style, the site represents the style's characteristics through its sympathetic layout on the bluff, the design of facilities that harmonize with the surrounding landscape, and the preservation of the surrounding natural setting. Like Acadia's other developed areas, Sand Beach represents excellence in landscape architecture and architecture.

Association:

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The connection of Sand Beach to early park development is intact through the presence of historic buildings, structures, circulation systems, and views. The dramatic scenery that has attracted people to Sand Beach for hundreds of years has been preserved as part of Acadia National Park. Lastly, the park's association with the donors of this site, the Satterlee family, is memorialized with a plaque mounted to a stone.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

The next section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features at the Sand Beach project area. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1844-1955), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is non-contributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource. If a feature is non-contributing, it is evaluated as "compatible" (visually congruent with the historic character of the landscape) or "incompatible" (visually incongruent with the historic character of the landscape).

Note: Trailheads of the Ocean Path, Satterlee Trail, and Great Head Trail are within the project boundary but are not evaluated in this CLI. They are evaluated in the Historic Hiking Trail System: Bar Harbor District CLI.

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

Natural systems and features are the natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of the landscape, and can include geology, geomorphology, hydrology, ecology, and climate. The Sand Beach project area is located along the eastern shore of Mount Desert Island, between two prominent landforms named Great Head (top elevation 165 feet) and The Beehive (515 feet). The beach marks the northern shoreline of Newport Cove, a small and sheltered bay that directly meets the Atlantic Ocean. The beach itself is bound by dunes, a pond/wetland, wooded bluffs, and rocks lying at the base of pink-gray granite cliffs. At the east end of the beach at high tide, ocean water occasionally enters the Beehive Lagoon, a brackish pond/wetland located north of the beach and dunes. The lagoon also receives water from an unnamed stream and pond to the north and Kief Pond to the west. These natural systems and features present scenery that has attracted artists, scientists, and travelers since the mid nineteenth century (Figures 45, 46, and 47).

The name Sand Beach is somewhat of a misnomer, as the beach is actually composed of pulverized seashells. It is one of only two beaches on the Atlantic seacoast north of Cape Hatteras that features both sand dunes and sediment made almost entirely of calcium carbonate particles (shell fragments). The sources of this material are the community of creatures like barnacles and mussels that inhabit the waters of the region. Additionally, because Newport Cove faces south, it is able to capture the prevailing summertime wave action, which approaches Mount Desert Island from the south and southwest and carries shell material onto the beach. Old Soaker, a small offshore rocky ledge (visible from Sand Beach or Great Head), helps break up the surf entering the cove so fine sediments gather and aren't washed away. Sand Beach does not receive much sediment from the island itself, such as eroding Cadillac granite, thus allowing the shell material to predominate. The dynamic processes at Sand Beach are illustrated in the occasional appearance of wreckage from The Tay, a schooner that struck Old Soaker in 1911. The wreck was originally washed onto the beach and then was buried, but most recently was exposed by a series of storms in 2024. ("The Geological Story of Sand Beach")

Sand Beach's visitor facilities are located on a bluff situated approximately 40 feet below Ocean Drive corridor and 40 feet above the beach and pond/wetland. Trees and shrubs help stabilize the bluff faces, but erosion is greatest at the west end where the bluff edge nears the beach. Severe storms and record high tides in 2024 inflicted severe damage to the bluff, uprooting trees and destabilizing the area (Figure 48). The top of the bluff remains closed to visitors.

Soils at the visitor facilities are from the Schoodic rock outcrop. These soils originated from glacial till. Schoodic soils are very shallow, nearly level to very steep, excessively well drained, and can be found on ridges and summits. The surface is very gravelly, fine sandy loam that is easily blown away once exposed. Rock outcrops consist of exposed bedrock on the crests of ridges and mountains and on steep side slopes of moderately deep to bedrock, and on steep side slopes of mountains. These soils are found in depressions between shallow till ridges. (EA 2002: 13)

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 45. View looking east-northeast at Sand Beach, with Great Head in the distance. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 46. View looking northwest at the dunes at Sand Beach. The vegetation in the distance blocks the presence of the parking lot. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 47. View looking north at Beehive Lagoon, a wetland/pond just north of the beach and dunes. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 48. Oblique view at 2024 storm damage along the bluff. View looking northwest. (Acadia NP, 2024)

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Spatial organization is the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in a landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces. The early 1950s Sand Beach development exhibits principles of the NPS Rustic Design style practiced at Acadia in 1933-1942, harmonizing facilities with the surrounding landscape through careful consideration of site conditions and deliberate use of native materials. The site's facilities were arranged on a bluff gently sloping to southwest to northeast, below which were Beehive Lagoon to the northeast and Sand Beach to the southeast, and above which was the Ocean Drive and Ocean Path corridor to the west. Patchy vegetation that survived the 1947 fire occupied some of these perimeter areas.

The comfort station and changing rooms were built on the higher southwest half of the site, which had the closest beach access. The one-story, hipped-roof comfort station essentially served as the development's focal point and was flanked by two one-story, flat-roofed changing room structures. An orthogonal arrangement of retaining walls, steps, and walks surrounded these three buildings and also defined three lawn panels that separated this area from the (lower) parking lot to the northeast. This parking lot featured three levels, also delineated by walls and steps. A curved access road connected the parking lot to Ocean Drive. At this junction was the entrance to the (upper) parking lot, a smaller lot developed on the old roadbed of Ocean Drive in 1934, predating the Sand Beach facilities. A trail ran from this lot, connected to the walkways at the comfort station, and continued to the beach.

The organization of spaces described above were completed by 1955, and this arrangement is essentially intact today. Changes include replacement of the northwest changing room with a slightly smaller structure and additions of a bus shelter, accessible walkway, and a formal staircase and overlook at the beach (Figures 49 and 50).

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 49. View looking east at the historic Sand Beach Comfort Station, walkways, and retaining walls. The non-historic changing room structure is in the background image right. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 50. View looking east at the access road and parking lot at Sand Beach. (OCLP 2024)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Land uses are the principal activities in a landscape that form, shape, and organize the landscape as a result of human interaction. Recreation has long been the predominate use of Sand Beach project area since Hudson River School artist Thomas Cole's visit in 1844. Other artists, scientists, and travelers followed, utilizing the Great Head Trail and Ocean Path to explore the beach and the surrounding cliffs and headland. Public access continued in this area even after Sand Beach and Great Head were owned by Herbert and Louisa Satterlee, who developed their family estate on the northwest side of Great Head, overlooking the beach. After the 1947 fire destroyed much of the estate and its woodlands, and following the deaths of Herbert and Louisa, the Satterlee family donated the property to Acadia National Park in 1949. Two interesting land uses briefly occurred during the Satterlee period; it was the site of a defensive gun battery during World War I and served as a movie set for several films in 1919-1920.

Today's Sand Beach development continues to support the site's recreational uses, offering restrooms, changing rooms, a lifeguard storage/office, parking lots, water fountains, trailheads and walkways, and a stop for the Island Explorer bus. These amenities, along with picturesque scenery, make Sand Beach one of the top three visitor destinations in the park today.

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Topography is the three-dimensional configuration of the landscape surface characterized by features (such as slope and articulation) and orientation (such as elevation and solar aspect). The distinctive topography of Sand Beach and surrounding landforms has significantly contributed to its appeal as scenic destination, and also influenced the development of trails, estate buildings, and visitor facilities in the area. A key tenet of the NPS Rustic Design style is integration of new features with the local topography, and this is illustrated at the Sand Beach visitor facilities. The site layout was carefully planned to preserve the natural topography, incorporating retaining walls, steps, and drainage systems solely where required to mitigate erosion risks or preserve existing vegetation. This attention is perceivable today as the overall site design respects the natural topography.

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Buildings are elements constructed primarily for sheltering any form of human activity in a landscape, while structures are elements constructed for functional purposes other than sheltering human activity. The site's historic comfort station, guardwalls, retaining walls, steps, culvert headwalls, and stone waterway represent the principles of the NPS Rustic Design style. The nonhistoric changing rooms, lifeguard building, accessible ramp walls, and parking management stones are compatible with the site's historic character.

Feature Evaluations:

--Changing Room (noncontributing-compatible).

The existing changing room dates to 2003-2004, replacing an earlier structure completed in 1955 (Figure 51). Similar in design and size to the former building, the 10-room structure features vertical board and batten siding, diagonal board and batten doors, and a sloped flat roof. The structure's wood siding and brown color renders it compatible with the adjacent historic comfort station and the site as a whole.

--Comfort Station (contributing).

The oldest extant building at Sand Beach is the original comfort station, completed in 1952 (Figure 52). The one-story, rectangular-plan building features brown-painted board/batten siding, louvered wood vents, and a steep bellcast hip, asphalt-shingled roof. Men's and women's rooms are separated by a narrow pipe space. Like the 1949 comfort station at Sieur de Monts, the Sand Beach Comfort Station illustrates a later application of the NPS Rustic Design style used on the restrooms at the Blackwoods and Seawall campgrounds in the 1930s and early 1940s.

--Lifeguard Storage/Office/Vault Toilet (noncontributing-compatible).

Constructed in 2002-2003, this building replaced one of the original changing room structures. The one-story, sloped-roof structure houses storage and office space for lifeguard operations, as well as a vault toilet available to visitors all year. The building is the same width as the previous building but is shorter in length. It is clad in brown-painted board and batten siding to match the historic comfort station (Figure 53).

--Parking Management Stones (noncontributing-compatible).

Introduced in the 1970s, the park places these stones along the motor road system and developed areas to discourage parking on shoulders and curbs (Figure 54). The stones are typically smaller and rounder than the park's historic angular and rectangular stone guardwalls.

--Stone Guardwalls (contributing).

Rectangular stone blocks are positioned along the north side of the access road and the west side of the lower parking lot as a barrier to the adjacent ravine. Such guardwall stones are found on motor road segments designed in the NPS Rustic Design style and built by the Bureau of Public Roads before and after the Sand Beach facilities were developed (Figure 55).

--Stone Headwall Culverts and Stone Waterway (contributing).

The oldest culvert assembly at the Sand Beach development is a stone box culvert with a cast iron drop inlet and a headwall outlet incorporated into the stone retaining wall that supports the upper parking lot (former 1887 Ocean Drive alignment). This runoff drains into a stone waterway that leads to culvert under the access road that features a cast iron drop inlet, reinforced concrete pipe, and a stone headwall outlet. Eight culverts with cast iron drop inlets drain the three levels of the 1955 parking lot, with water conveyed through reinforced concrete pipes to a single pipe that exits through a headwall incorporated into the east end of the lower level retaining wall. The use of local stone in drainage systems is consistent with the NPS Rustic Design style, and is common throughout Acadia's historic motor road system and in other developed areas (Figure 56).

--Stone Retaining Wall – Upper Parking Lot (contributing).

The oldest stone wall at the site is associated with the parking lot overlooking Sand Beach that was developed when Ocean Drive was realigned in 1934 (Figure 57). The curving, dry-laid stone wall varies in height from one to twelve feet. The construction date of the wall may be older, perhaps as early as 1887, but more research is needed on the matter.

--Stone Retaining Walls and Stone Steps – Lower Parking Lot and Walkways (contributing).

The NPS built granite retaining walls at Sand Beach to accommodate facilities and integrate them with the site's topography. For the comfort station and changing rooms and their adjacent walkways, walls between two and three feet high were positioned to create level spaces. Stone steps were incorporated into the walls to accommodate pedestrian traffic (see Figures 51 and 52). For the lower parking lot, taller retaining walls, up to five feet high, created the three-tiered parking lot that also incorporated stone steps (Figure 58).

--Stone Walls – Accessible Ramp (noncontributing-compatible).

In 2003-2004 the park modified a portion of the 1950s retaining wall between the comfort station and the changing room to build an accessible ramp. The ramp features granite stone walls, a concrete walkway, and planting beds (see Figure 51). The design and materials blend the structure with the existing walls and walkways.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Sand Beach Comfort Station	210970	Contributing	41086		Location	True	No
Stone Headwall Culverts and Stone Waterway	210971	Contributing					No
Stone Guardwalls	210972	Contributing					No
Stone Retaining Walls and Stone Steps – Lower Parking Lot and Walkways	210973	Contributing					No
Stone Retaining Wall – Upper Parking Lot	210974	Contributing					No
Changing Room	210975	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Lifeguard Storage/Office/Vault Toilet	210976	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Parking Management Stones	210977	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Stone Walls-Accessible Ramp	210978	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 51. View looking east at the changing room, built in 2003-2004. The stone steps in the foreground date to the site's original development in the early 1950s, while the accessible ramp at image right was built in 2003-2004. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 52. View looking south at the Sand Beach Comfort Station, built in 1952, and stone retaining walls, steps, and drinking fountain that exhibit characteristics of the NPS Rustic Design style. Walkways in this area connect to the lower parking lot, upper parking lot, and the beach. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 53. View looking west at the Lifeguard Building, built in 2003-2004. Note the native vegetation in the background. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 54. Nonhistoric parking management stones can be found in the lower parking lot and access road at Sand Beach.(OCLP 2024)



Figure 55. View looking west at rectilinear guardwall stones at the lower parking lot (1955). This NPS Rustic Design style characteristic was introduced on the historic motor road system in the 1930s. Note the woodland vegetation in the adjacent ravine. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 56. The culvert outlet on the Sand Beach Access Road features a stone headwall, similar to those used on segments of the historic motor road system. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 57. View of the north end of the stone retaining wall that supports the upper parking lot (1934). (OCLP 2024)



Figure 58. View looking south at steps incorporated into the lower parking lot retaining walls. (OCLP 2024)

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Vegetation includes deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous plants and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced in the landscape. Native woodland vegetation, as well as native trees and shrubs installed by the park, are consistent with the NPS Rustic Design style and contribute to the site's historic character.

Based on the Standardized National Vegetation Classification System, the Sand Beach area is mapped as Spruce-Fir-Red Maple/Spruce-Yellow Birch and Aspen-Birch forests. The open, dry upland woods are dominated by paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), and balsam (*Albies balsamea*) with a well-developed shrub and sapling layer containing witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) and moosewood maple (*Acer pensylvanicum*). The herbaceous layer is relatively sparse and dominated by large-leaved aster (*Aster macrophyllum*). There are no rare or unique communities of plants located in the vicinity of the visitor facilities. (EA 2002: 34-35)

Feature Evaluations:

--Woodlands (contributing).

An aerial photograph taken after completion of the Sand Beach Comfort Station indicated low vegetation throughout the bluff and along its edges and slopes. Scattered groupings of taller trees that survived the 1947 fire were mostly located in the southeast part of the bluff, between the comfort station and the beach. Consistent with the guidelines of the NPS Rustic Design style, this existing vegetation was retained wherever possible and now thrives as successional woodlands that surrounds and penetrate the Sand Beach development (see Figures 52, 53, 55, and 57).

--NPS Trees and Shrubs (contributing).

Although no historic or contemporary planting plans have been located for the project area, the park has continued to plant native trees and shrubs in the vicinity of the three buildings and in the parking lot islands. Newer plantings are conspicuous because of their size, but older plantings are indistinguishable from the surrounding woodlands. As this outcome was intentional, plants installed by the park can be considered contributing features (see Figures 51 and 54).

--Lawns (contributing).

A drawing from 1952 identifies the three grass panels between the comfort station and parking lot, which exist today. Grass also surrounds the comfort station, accessible ramp, and parking lot islands and edges. The grass areas proximate to the three buildings and the parking lot islands exhibit severe damage from social trails (see Figure 52).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Woodlands	210979	Contributing					No
NPS Trees and Shrubs	210980	Contributing					No
Lawn Areas	210981	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Circulation refers to the spaces, features, and applied material finishes that constitute systems of movement in a landscape. The site's access road, parking lots, walkways, and trails exhibit

standards of the NPS Rustic Design styles through their practical layouts, sensitive designs, and use of native materials. The non-historic overlook and beach staircase are compatible with site's historic character, but the presence of social trails is incompatible.

Feature Evaluations:

--Access Road (contributing).

The access road connects Ocean Drive and the lower parking lot. Completed in 1955, the two-lane asphalt road is approximately 275 feet long (see Figure 50). Rectangular guardwall stones are positioned along the road's north grass shoulder. A stone retaining wall, stone gutter, and several parking management stones define the south shoulder. A more substantial stone retaining wall, associated with the upper parking lot stands just uphill to the southwest.

--Beach Staircase (noncontributing – compatible).

This staircase was built in 2011 to replace a similar staircase built in the early 1970s. The poured concrete structure is built into the side of the bluff and features five sets of steps and four landings. Wood railings are topped with stainless steel rails on both sides. Long granite blocks salvaged from the previous structure are stacked on the backside of the structure to retain the bluff. Wave action from the January 2024 storms displaced some of the walls and exposed several supporting concrete piers (see Figure 44 and Cover).

--Lower Parking Lot (contributing).

Completed in 1955, the asphalt-paved lot can accommodate around 100 vehicles and offers accessible spaces and a dedicated lane for the Island Explorer bus. Designed to fit the site's topography, the layout features three tiers separated by retaining walls bordered by grass strips. Curbs are granite. The travel lanes at the ends of the parking lot feature rectangular guardwall stones. The angled parking spaces are positioned to accommodate counterclockwise traffic flow (Figure 59).

--Overlook (noncontributing – compatible).

Located at the top of the staircase to the beach, the rectangular-shaped space is defined by rectangular stone blocks and features an earthen/gravel surface. An interpretive wayside is anchored into one of the blocks (missing in 2024). The Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque is attached to a slightly larger angular stone just to the north. The overlook's origin may coincide with construction of the first staircase in 1972, but more likely it dates to construction of the current staircase in 2011 (Figure 60). This area offers a view of the beach, Great Head, and the ocean.

--Social Paths (noncontributing – incompatible).

Social paths are non-contributing circulation features that damage or kill groundcovers and other vegetation. Such paths develop over time from visitors straying off walkways and trails, and leave unsightly scars on the landscape. One of the worst problem areas at Sand Beach is the lawn around the bus shelter (Figure 61). There are also social paths in the parking lot islands.

--Trail and Stairs between Upper Parking Lot and Overlook (contributing).

This trail links the upper parking lot with the overlook and beach staircase (Figures 62 and 63). Starting at a stone staircase on the west end, it becomes timber and gravel steps, then an earthen gravel path leading to the overlook. Developed as early as 1934, the route may be older since the Satterlee family, owners of the area until 1949, allowed public access to Sand Beach.

--Upper Parking Lot (contributing).

What now functions as Sand Beach's upper parking lot was formerly the original alignment of Ocean Drive. The reconstruction of Ocean Drive in 1934 shifted this somewhat curved section of roadway 45-74 feet westward and around 10-20 feet higher to straighten the alignment (Figure 64). The abandoned road section was converted to parking for around twenty vehicles, accessed from its north end connection to the drive. The south end was dead ended and became the trailhead to the Ocean Path. The parking lot was the only such facility at Sand Beach until construction of the lower parking lot on the bluff below in 1955.

--Walkways (contributing).

The walkways were built by 1955 as part of the larger Sand Beach development. In the vicinity of the comfort station, asphalt and concrete walks are components of the orthogonal layout of the site's three buildings, retaining walls, and grass panels (see Figure 52). The walks vary in width and length. An asphalt walkway wraps around the east end of the lower parking lot. An earthen/gravel walkway runs from the southeast corner of the parking lot to the overlook and staircase (Figure 65). Post-historic alterations have been made to accommodate the bus shelter and improve accessibility.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Access Road	210982	Contributing					No
Lower Parking Lot (1955)	210983	Contributing					No
Trail and Steps between Upper Parking Lot and Overlook	210984	Contributing					No
Upper Parking Lot (1934)	210985	Contributing					No
Walkways	210986	Contributing					No
Beach Staircase	210987	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Overlook	210988	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Social Paths	210989	Noncontributing – Incompatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 59. View looking northwest from the middle tier of the lower parking lot, built by 1955. The Beehive is in the background. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 60. The top of the staircase to the beach features a small overlook area. View looking southeast. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 61. View looking east at social trails around the bus shelter. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 62. View looking northwest at the stairs at the western end of trail between the upper parking lot and the beach. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 63. View looking southeast at fencing along the eastern end of the trail between the upper parking lot and the beach. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 64. View looking south at the upper parking lot, the original Ocean Drive alignment converted to parking in 1934. At image right is the current Ocean Drive. (OCLP 2024)



Figure 65. View looking north at the earthen/gravel walkway between the beach staircase and the lower parking lot, a wayside kiosk, and post and rail fencing. (OCLP 2024)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

A view is the expansive and/or panoramic prospect of a broad range of vision that may be naturally occurring or deliberately contrived. A vista is a controlled prospect of a discrete, linear range of vision, which is deliberately contrived. All views at the Sand Beach development contribute to the site's historic significance.

Feature Evaluations:

--View from Bluff to the Beach (contributing).

This view, from the southeast edge of the bluff at the overlook area above the beach staircase, offers a panoramic view of the sandy beach, the waters of Newport Cove, and the ledges and trees on Great Head. Vegetation in the foreground frames the view, but in recent years some has been lost to bluff erosion. While now formalized with the overlook, this historic view has been an attraction since the time of Thomas Cole and Rusticators, and likely before (see Figure 60). There are similar panoramic views from Great Head to the beach, but those viewpoints are beyond the Sand Beach project boundary (and are contributing features of the Great Head Trail).

--Panoramic Views to/from Sand Beach (contributing).

The same panoramic views that beaconsed Thomas Cole and other artists, writers, and travelers to Sand Beach can be experienced today. These views highlight the scenic relationship among Sand Beach, Great Head, the Beehive, Beehive Lagoon, Newport Cove, Otter Cliffs, and the Atlantic horizon, especially as experienced from the beach and historically documented viewpoints (Figure 66).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
View from Bluff to the Beach	210990	Contributing					No
Panoramic Views to/from Sand Beach	210991	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 66. View looking south from the beach to Newport Cove. (OCLP 2024)

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

Small-scale features are elements that provide detail and diversity for both functional needs and aesthetic concerns in the landscape. The Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque and the stone water fountain are contributing features at Sand Beach. All other features are non-contributing.

Feature Evaluations:

--Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque (contributing).

The plaque is located at the overlook above the beach staircase (Figure 67). Dedicated in 1949, the rectangular bronze plaque measures 25.5 by 16.5-inches and features recessed rope molding and raised Roman lettering. The plaque is mounted to roughly rectangular granite slab boulder facing east. The inscription reads:

SATTERLEE FIELD
SATTERLEE FIELD OF APPROXIMATELY
100 ACRES WAS DONATED IN 1949 BY
ELEANOR MORGAN SATTERLEE
TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN MEMORY OF HER MOTHER
LOUISA P. SATTERLEE
AS PART OF
ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

While the date of the plaque's placement near the parking lot is outside the period of significance of the New Deal programs, the design and materials of the Satterlee plaque clearly follow the NPS Rustic Design vocabulary and are consistent with other contributing memorials in the park.

--Stone Water Fountain (contributing).

The mortared-stone fountain is situated on the northeast side of the comfort station, abutting a stone retaining wall. Constructed in 1953-1955, the object is 2.75 feet square at the bottom and 1.1 feet square at the top, and is 3.5 feet high (see Figure 52). A small granite step is situated on one side. The fountain was inoperative when checked in the fall of 2024. The design and materials of the water fountain represent the NPS Rustic Design vocabulary.

--Other Small-Scale Features (noncontributing).

In 2001 a bus shelter was constructed at the east corner of the parking lot, on the lawn northeast of the changing room structure (see Figure 61). The 22- by 12-foot structure is supported by two wood clad steel posts and topped with a hipped, wood-shingled roof. Under the canopy are granite blocks that offer seating. Directly next to the shelter is a steel bicycle rack, and a wayside kiosk supported by two wood posts and topped with a wood shingled gable roof. A similar kiosk is located on the walkway that connects the parking lot and beach staircase. To encourage visitors to stay off of the adjacent vegetation, the park has erected a run of wood post and rail fencing along this walkway (see Figure 65). Such fencing can also be found along the lower portion of the trail connecting the staircase and upper parking lot, and along the walkway on the south side of the lower parking lot (see Figure 63). Two vertically-oriented wayside signs anchored in granite blocks stand on the north edge of the middle lawn panel, facing the parking lot. A horizontally-oriented wayside sign was located at the lookout but has been temporarily removed. A steel pipe swing gate is located near the upper end of the access road and a pay telephone is situated in one of the parking lot islands. Wood-clad steel trash cans, steel and fiberglass utility boxes and cabinets, wood post trailhead signs, and directional metal signs are placed throughout the developed area. Individually and collectively, these small-scale features do not detract from the site's historic character.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque	210992	Contributing	41364		Asset	98486	Yes
Stone Water Fountain	210993	Contributing					No
Bicycle Racks	210994	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Bus Shelter	210995	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Bus Shelter Seat Blocks	210996	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Gate	210997	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Post and Rail Fences	210998	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Pay Phone	210999	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Stainless Steel Water Fountain	211000	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trail Directional Sign	211001	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trash Can Bins	211002	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Utility and Septic System Equipment	211003	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wayside Kiosks	211004	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wayside Signs	211005	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 67. The Satterlee Field Memorial Plaque overlooks Sand Beach. (OCLP 2024)

Landscape Characteristic: Archeological Sites

Archeological sites are the locations of ruins, traces, or deposited artifacts in the landscape and are evidenced by the presence of either surface or subsurface features. Only sites identified and evaluated in approved National Register documentation are identified in this report.

The park's 2004 Archeological Overview and Assessment identifies five sites within the Sand Beach project area: "Queen of the Sea" movie set, O&A #243; "Robinson Crusoe" movie set, O&A #242; Sand Beach Battery, O&A #419; Sand Beach Midden, O&A #19/ASMIS #ACAD00018; and the Schooner Tay shipwreck, O&A #359/ASMIS #ACAD00051. The sites were not investigated during field work for this CLI because evaluations of archeological significance are beyond the scope of the CLI.

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 8

Next Assessment Due Date: 06/22/2034

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 06/22/2026

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall condition of the Sand Beach project area is evaluated as “fair.” Storm damage and erosion have damaged the beach staircase and made the bluff edge unstable. Heavy visitor uses around the Sand Beach visitor facilities have created social trails that compact soil and inhibit the growth of grass and other groundcovers.

Fair: The property shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the landscape characteristics will cause the property to degrade to a poor condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Erosion

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Erosion is damaging the bluff edge that abuts the beach.

Date Identified: 06/22/2026

Resolved? No

Type of Impact: Inundation/Flooding

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Flooding events have damaged the beach staircase and impact the adjacent sand dunes and Beehive Lagoon.

Date Identified: 06/22/2026

Resolved? No

Type of Impact: Inundation/Sea Level Rise

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Sea level rise has an ongoing effect on the beach, dunes, and Beehive Lagoon.

Date Identified: 06/22/2026

Resolved? No

Type of Impact: Inundation/Storm Surge

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: Storm surges have damaged the beach staircase and impacted the stability of the bluff edge, dunes, and Beehive Lagoon.

Date Identified: 06/22/2026

Resolved? No

Type of Impact: Other

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: The calcium carbonate composition of the beach has recently become threatened due to erosion from both natural processes and human activity. (FD 2016: 23)

Date Identified: 01/01/2016

Resolved? No

Type of Impact: Structural Deterioration

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Maintenance of the beach staircase is an ongoing challenge due to frequent storm events.

Date Identified: 06/22/2026

Resolved? No

Type of Impact: Visitation

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Social trails have damaged lawn areas and other groundcover vegetation.

Date Identified: 06/22/2026

Resolved? No

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Document Type: General Management Plan

Document Date: 1992-01-01

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

According to the park's 1992 General Management Plan (GMP), Sand Beach falls within two management zones – Developed and Natural – as well as the Natural Environment Subzone.

--Developed Zone: Managed lands to provide and maintain facilities for educational and interpretive services; for recreational opportunities, such as campgrounds; for other visitor services, such as restaurants; for administration and maintenance of park resources; and for vehicular circulation in the park.

--Natural Zone: Manage land and waters to conserve and protect natural resources and ecological processes and provide for their use and enjoyment by the public.

Natural Environment Subzone: Conserve natural resources and provide environmentally compatible interpretive and recreational activities in ways that do not adversely affect those resources and processes.

The GMP specifically identified the comfort station, bathhouses, and access road as part of the Development Zone. The GMP also described specific goals for visitor facilities at Sand Beach, which included the replacement or rehabilitation of the existing bathhouses and restrooms. (GMP 1992: 49,51,57)

In the park's 2016 Foundation Document, the Sand Beach area coincides with several of the park's fundamental resources and values, including Range of Visitor Experiences, Glacial Landscape, Mosaic of Habitats Supporting Diverse Flora and Fauna, Legacy of Conservation Ethic and Philanthropy, Network of Historic Roads and Trails, and Scenic Resources and Values. The report also identified Sand Beach as among the three most popular destinations in the park. (FD 2016: 7-9,23)

Treatment Type: Rehabilitation

Treatment Completed: Yes

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

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Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Bar Harbor, Maine

Supplemental Information Narrative:

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Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Beach

Supplemental Information Narrative:

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Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Great Head

Supplemental Information Narrative:

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

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Supplemental Information:

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

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