
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2001

Revised: 7/2025



Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Assateague Island National Seashore

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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:	Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Resource Classification:	Cultural Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	300161
Parent Landscape:	300161
Inventory Status:	Complete

Park Information

Park Name:	Assateague Island National Seashore
Alpha Code:	ASIS
Park Organization Code:	4190
Park District:	ASIS
Region:	Northeast
Restricted:	Yes

Landscape Description:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is located in the southern district of Assateague Island National Seashore (NS) in Accomack County, Virginia. The park was created by Congress in 1965 to preserve the outstanding Mid-Atlantic coastal resources of Assateague Island and its adjacent waters and the natural processes upon which they depend, and to provide high quality resource-compatible recreational opportunities. The Coast Guard decommissioned the Assateague Beach Station in January 1967, and in September 1967 the National Park Service assumed custody of it as part of Assateague Island NS. Lands surrounding the property are owned and managed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service as the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

Located at the southern end of the island, at the turning point of a curve, or "hook" shape, Coast Guard Station No. 150 occupies a narrow strip of land bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and Toms Cove to the west. The most prominent historic resource remaining today is the 2-story Station House, which occupies the site's highest point (elevation 12 feet) at the center of the property. This building, and the 1-story Garage/Boathouse and 3-story Lookout Tower to the south, date to 1922 and frame an open area, or yard, which likely served as an activity space for drills and possibly recreation. At this time life-saving operations were predominately oriented to the ocean surf to the east, but in the 1930s operations shifted to the calmer waters of Toms Cove to the west. The wooden wharf and T-dock extend around 600 feet into the cove and date to 1931-1935, while the new 2-story Boathouse, marine rail launchway, and breakwater were built in 1938-1939. These additions were in response to natural processes that had moved the ocean shoreline southwesterly and to modern adaptations in life-saving techniques that relied on larger and heavier rescue boats. Recurring storms have severely damaged parts of the wharf and railway, and only the pilings of the dock remain. None of site's buildings are used today.

A 5-foot wide wood walkway connects the Toms Cove facilities to the Station House. Narrow concrete walks wrap around the Station House and connect to a 1-story Generator House built in 1959. Interior roads wrap around the yard and Station House, and parallel the wood walkway; some road segments appear as sand and gravel but others have reverted to grass traces. A two-track sand and grass road enters the site from the southeast, off the ocean-side beach.

Vegetation surrounding the Coast Guard Station is of typical beach/dune associations including dwarf shrubland, dune shrubland, and some herbaceous vegetation. Existing junipers that dot the landscape are either volunteer or planted after the date of significance. In 1962-1965 sand fences and man-made vegetated dunes were built to help protect the site from violent storms. These dunes remain today, cloaked in vegetation, and represent the project boundaries of this CLI. They lie beyond the station's original 5.32-acre boundary, and encompass the adjacent lands that the Coast Guard, and later the Navy, at times made use of to erect various towers and conduct drills. As Assateague Island, and Toms Cove, continue to change dramatically in both shape and size, this will likely have a great impact on the Coast Guard Station property and its features.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station (United States Coast Guard Station No. 150) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The property possesses national significance in the area of Maritime History as an example of the federal life-saving station. Maritime life-saving has been a significant aspect of marine transportation in the United States, and the federal government has been involved in life-saving operations since the mid-nineteenth century. Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is a federally-constructed and operated life-saving station built before 1950 and planned as a component of the national system of life-saving stations. The US Congress established Assateague Beach as a life-saving station in 1874 under the Life-Saving Stations Act. The current station was developed in 1922 by the US Coast Guard (USCG) during the organization's formative years and then expanded during the 1930s as part of a major effort to modernize shore stations in the early twentieth century. The property possesses national significance in the area of Architecture for its grouping of purpose-built buildings and structures that sheltered and supported the functional components necessary to perform life-saving missions. The buildings are an example of the work of US Life-Saving Service (USLSS) master architect Victor Mindeleff; the Station House in particular exemplifies the Chatham Design style created by Mindeleff in 1914, which features Colonial Revival style elements. The collection of buildings also represents the evolution of life-saving practices and infrastructure.

The period of significance for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station begins in 1922, when the station was completed and commenced life-saving activities, and extends through 1967 when life-saving operations ceased and the property was transferred to the NPS.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The historic integrity of Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1922-1967, with the existing conditions as assessed in 2023-2024. Many landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today. The station complex was designed and adapted for the purpose of saving lives and ships in distress. The siting of the station on a narrow strip of land between ocean and cove fulfilled this purpose in a unique way by allowing the crews to enter dangerous waters from the calmer waters of the cove. This relationship is still evident and is enhanced by the historic spatial organization and linear sequence of buildings, structures, and circulation features, as well as the surrounding maritime setting of beaches and natural and man-made dunes. The Station House is still the focal point of the station, where it sits on a low knoll. A Garage/Boathouse, Lookout Tower, Generator House, and Boathouse, along with water cisterns, a system of wood and concrete walkways, and a wharf remain today as surviving structures. The Entrance Road and interior roads are still distinguishable, though some have become traces due to infrequent use. Though now unused, the historic open yard used for life-saving drills fronting the Station House is still legible. A few electrical poles and concrete traces can be found throughout the property. Views to and from the property add to the story of the Coast Guard history by providing a visual of how life may have been for the life-savers of the surf on an isolated barrier island along the Atlantic coast.

Since 1967, some landscape characteristics and features at Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station have changed. The dynamic nature of the island continues to shift the ocean shoreline southwesterly and away from the station. A natural succession of vegetation has also grown up around the complex, but so far the road corridors and yard remain open and free of invasive shrub growth. The NPS once used the facility for seasonal housing and storage, but is now vacant. Most buildings and structure show evidence of damage and deterioration, particularly the wharf, breakwater, marine rail launchway, and wood walkways at Toms Cove. The T-dock has completely collapsed, with only pilings left today. Notably missing are the boats, wreck pole, flagpole, telephone poles, and other equipment that characterized a functioning life-saving station. Assateague Island, including Toms Cove, continues to change dramatically in both shape and size. Ultimately, this will likely have a great impact on the Coast Guard Station property and its features.

Condition:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is in "Fair" condition. All buildings and structures show evidence of deterioration or damage. Of most concern are facilities at Toms Cove and the poor condition of the wharf, breakwater, marine rail launchway, and wood walkway. The T-dock has collapsed and only its pilings remain above the waterline. The landscape is in better condition, despite storm events and blowing sands that continue to reshape it. A natural succession of vegetation has grown up around the complex, but so far the road corridors and yard remain open and free of invasive shrub growth due to NPS mowing practices.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is an individual landscape within the Assateague Island National Seashore. It represents the only CLI in the CRIS-CL database. The Hunting Lodges landscape has been removed from CRIS-CL due to the loss of integrity.

Landscape Type:

Historic Vernacular Landscape

Historic Designed Landscape

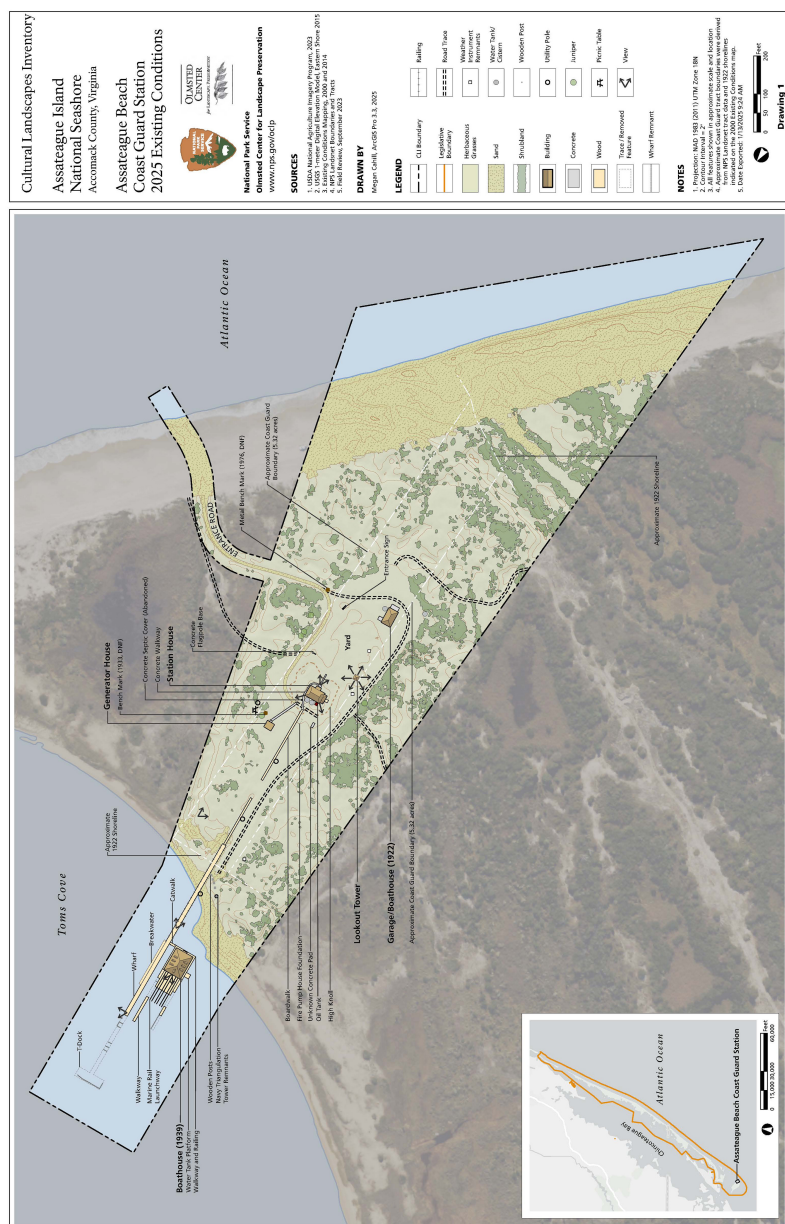
Other Names:

Other Name:	(Assateague Beach Unit) Chincoteague Coast Guard Station Norfolk District (1940-1941)	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station 6th District (1923-1939)	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station Norfolk District (1939-1940)	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station, Assateague Island National Seashore	Other Name Type:	Current
Other Name:	Assateague Beach Life- Saving Station 5th District(1874-1914) *	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	Assateague Beach Lifeboat Station Chincoteague Group (1941 -1962)	Other Name Type:	Historic

Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Assateague Island National Seashore

Other Name:	Assateague Beach Lifeboat Station (name used by the Maritime Initiative)	Other Name Type:	Current
Other Name:	Assateague Beach Station U.S. Coast Guard 5th District (7/1/62—1/17/67)	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	U.S. Coast Guard Station No. 150 6th District (1914-1923) **	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	**Although the official name of the station changed through time, the number 150 remained associated with the station through 1967 as seen in the 1966 aerial photograph.	Other Name Type:	Historic
Other Name:	*The early station consisted of different structures at a different location; however, the station built in 1922 inherited the name and history of the original station and has been documented in several sources as the same station.	Other Name Type:	Historic

Site Plan



Site map, 2025.

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	10/01/2001

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

The original CLI for Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station was approved by the Superintendent on October 1, 2001, but the report was not officially certified until September 8, 2004 when the Virginia SHPO concurred with the National Park Service’s findings of the CLI. Condition reassessments for Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station were approved by the Superintendent on September 28, 2007 and August 9, 2013.

The original CLI was entered into CLAIMS Database by Matthew Witters, and revised to meet SHPO standards in 2004 by Nancy J. Brown. This Level-A Update was written by Jeff Killion, Historical Landscape Architect at the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston, MA. Field work for this update was completed in September 2023. The park contact for the this project is Bill Hulslander, Chief of Resource Management. He can be reached 410-629-6061 or bill_hulslander@nps.gov.

SUMMARY OF CLI REVISIONS, 2025

Updates that have made to the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station CLI since the 2004, 2007, and 2013 and versions include revisions to the National Register section to reflect the park’s National Register documentation that was completed in 2015. Several features previously evaluated as Undetermined are now evaluated as Contributing: Remnant Man-Made Dunes, Entrance Road and Trace, Interior Roads, System of Concrete Sidewalks (around Station House and Generator House), USCG Generator House, Flagpole Foundation, and Power Poles. A previously unevaluated feature – the Station House Yard – is evaluated as Contributing.

Additional changes include updating the Chronology and Physical History sections to document changes in the landscape since 2013; updating the site plans; updated photographs; and a new assessment of the overall landscape condition. Upon approval by the Park Superintendent, this update will supersede all previous versions of the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station CLI.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
Condition Reassessment
2007**

Assateague Island National Seashore:
Beach Coast Guard Station

Assateague Island National Seashore concurs with the condition reassessment for the Beach Coast Guard Station, including:

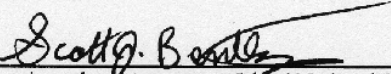
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Beach Coast Guard Station

Good: indicates the inventory unit 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 inventory unit 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 inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit 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 condition reassessment for the Beach Coast Guard Station is hereby approved and accepted.



Superintendent, Assateague Island National Seashore

9/28/07

Date

Condition reassessment form, September 28, 2007.

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
Condition Reassessment
2013**

Assateague Island National Seashore
Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station

Assateague Island National Seashore concurs with the condition reassessment for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station, including:

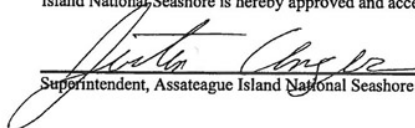
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station

Good: indicates the inventory unit 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 inventory unit 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 inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit 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 condition reassessment for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station at Assateague Island National Seashore is hereby approved and accepted.



Superintendent, Assateague Island National Seashore

8/9/13

Date

Condition reassessment form, August 9, 2013.

Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Assateague Island National Seashore

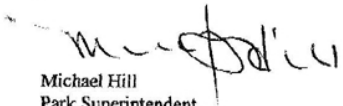
FROM: ASSATEAGUE ISLAND HS

FAX NO.: 4106411099

09-19-02 02:57P P.02

Park Concurrence

I have reviewed and hereby approve the final 2001 Cultural Landscapes Inventory report
for Assateague Island National Seashore, Beach Coast Guard Station.


Michael Hill
Park Superintendent

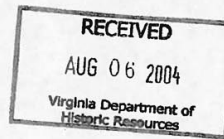
Date 10/1/01

Park concurrence form, October 1, 2001.

Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Assateague Island National Seashore



2001-1274
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Assateague Island National Seashore
7206 National Seashore Lane Berlin, Maryland 21811



✓
August 4, 2004

Ms. Susan E. Smead
Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221

Dear Ms. Smead:

Enclosed are two revised copies of the Beach Coast Guard Station Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) from Assateague Island National Seashore. We have made the revisions recommended by your office to our 2001 submittal and again request a consensus determination by the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office regarding our revised findings for the property. We request this consensus determination **by September 1, 2004.**

Based on the enclosed CLI report, we seek your concurrence on our determination that the landscape of the Beach Coast Guard Station is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. We request that you confirm our findings that:

- the landscape has significance in the area of Maritime History, Life Rescue Service,
- the landscape is significant to the period 1922-1954, and that it has integrity to that period, and
- certain landscape characteristics and features contribute to the significance of the property (see enclosed list).

If you concur with our revised evaluation of the Beach Coast Guard Station landscape resources, please sign on the space provided below, and return this letter to Nancy J. Brown, CLI Program Co-Coordinator (Address: National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 200 Chestnut St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19106) **by September 1**. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me or Ms. Brown at (215) 597-8863, and copy her on all correspondence.

Sincerely,

Michael Hill, Superintendent

cc: Nancy J. Brown

Enclosures

SHPO concurrence letter, September 8, 2004 (2 pages).

I concur that the Beach Coast Guard Station at Assateague Island National Seashore is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. I further concur with the evaluation and contributing resources of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory for the Beach Coast Guard Station.

Kathleen S. Kilpatrick SHPO
Signature

9-8-04
Date

for Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, Director, SHPO

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Updates Certification Form
2025**

Assateague Island National Seashore
Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station

Assateague Island National Seashore certifies the CLI update for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station

Good: indicates the inventory unit 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 inventory unit 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 inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit 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 update for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station at Assateague Island National Seashore is hereby approved and accepted.

WILLIAM HULSLANDER Digitally signed by WILLIAM HULSLANDER
Date: 2025.07.16 10:52:46 -04'00'

Acting Superintendent, Assateague Island National Seashore Date

Park concurrence form, July 16, 2025.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion		09/28/2007	Condition reassessment.
Jeff Killion		10/05/2009	Approved Treatment Category changed from Stabilization to Preservation per discussions with CLI TAG team. Stabilization removed as an option for this field.
Jeff Killion	Change in Condition	08/09/2013	Condition reassessment completed as scheduled.
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	07/16/2025	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station CLI has been conducted at a Level A effort.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Virginia	Accomack County

Size (Acres): 5.32

Land Tract Number(s)

12-107 (to be confirmed)

Boundary Description:

The Assateague Beach Station property lines are much the same today as they were in 1922. Notable exceptions are that the ocean shoreline no longer borders the property on the south. The Abstract of Title of 1967, with the same description of 1922, minus the provisions given the Coast Guard, is as follows:

“Conveys all that certain lot of land situate on Assateague Beach, in the County of Accomack, State of Virginia, an thus described and bounded: beginning at the concrete post at the southwest corner of the property of the Chincoteague Fish Oil and Guano Company, then North 0° 50'. West for a distance of 617.1 feet, more or less, along the west boundary line of the said Chincoteague Fish Oil and Guano Company; to mean high water line on Assateague Anchorage; sometimes called Toms Cove; thence westerly, following the meanderings of the mean high water line of Assateague Anchorage or Toms Cove, 200 feet, more or less, to the intersection of said mean high water line and a line parallel to and 200 feet distant from the said west boundary line of the said Chincoteague Fish Oil and Guano Company; thence South 0° 50' East 1111.5 feet, more or less, to mean high water line on the Atlantic Ocean; thence southeasterly, following the meanderings of the mean high water line of the Atlantic Ocean, 200 feet, more or less, to point of intersection of the said mean high water line with the west boundary of the Chincoteague Fish Oil and Guano Company, projected; thence North 0° 50' West 593 feet, more or less, to point of beginning; containing 5.32 acres, more or less”.

At the current cove shoreline, the description above places the southern boundary just north of the dune line created in the 1960s and approximately 1000 feet short of the current ocean shoreline on the west and 500 feet short of the ocean shoreline on the east. The shoreline is now angled northeast [see Map 1].

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
GIS	Area	37.86752959	-75.36789252	
GIS	Area	37.86564018	-75.36768953	
GIS	Area	37.86354484	-75.36695062	
GIS	Area	37.86360114	-75.36674771	
GIS	Area	37.86361474	-75.36645649	
GIS	Area	37.86352329	-75.36619753	
GIS	Area	37.86324231	-75.36587552	
GIS	Area	37.86307401	-75.36553715	
GIS	Area	37.86293897	-75.36513067	
GIS	Area	37.86279035	-75.36520982	
GIS	Area	37.86292249	-75.36560757	
GIS	Area	37.86313133	-75.36602043	
GIS	Area	37.86339406	-75.36631797	
GIS	Area	37.86345704	-75.36650412	
GIS	Area	37.86345251	-75.36666086	
GIS	Area	37.86338978	-75.36689278	
GIS	Area	37.86102197	-75.36600951	
GIS	Area	37.8587645	-75.36887507	
GIS	Area	37.86616768	-75.36884702	
GIS	Area	37.8674558	-75.36898543	

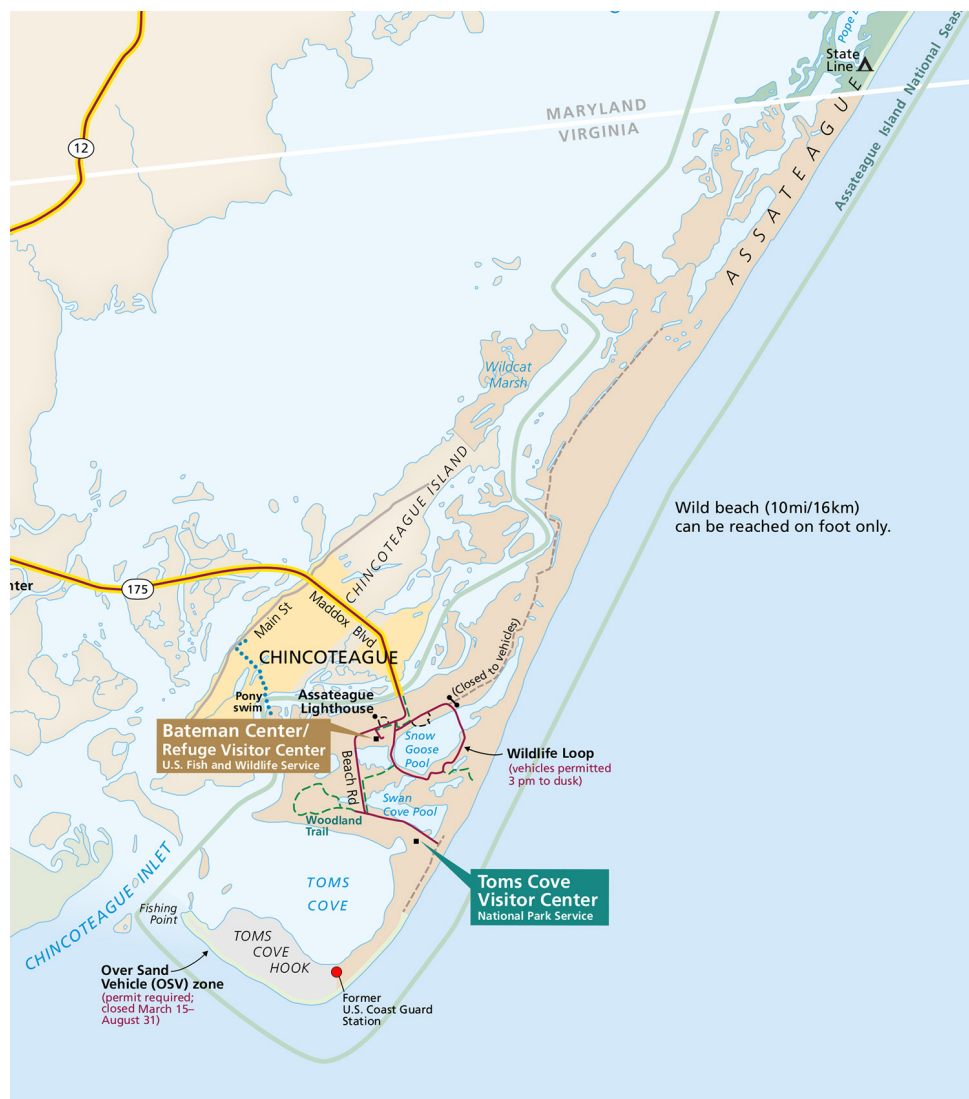
Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Assateague Island National Seashore

Location Map:



Map of Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland and Virginia. (Harpers Ferry Center)

Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Assateague Island National Seashore



Map showing the Virginia portion of Assateague Island NS. The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is located at the south shore of Toms Cove as indicated by a red dot. (Harpers Ferry Center, annotated by Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, 2024)

Regional Landscape Contexts:

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).

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is part of the Assateague Island National Seashore and located in the southern district in Accomack County, Virginia. The station is owned and managed by the National Park Service, however the surrounding landscape is part of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge under the administration of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The nearest city is Chincoteague, Virginia.

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Cultural context is the general human overlay on the physical form of the landscape. The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is part of a rich Atlantic coastal heritage. Coastal Indian tribes before European settlement in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries originally used the island for hunting, fishing, and even growing crops. Because of dangerous shoals along the Atlantic coast, legislation was passed to provide assistance to shipwrecks. It was this legislation that eventually gave rise to the establishment of numerous life-saving stations along the coast, eight of which were located between Cape Henlopen and Cape Charles. The stations were built for the main purpose of saving lives and assisting storm victims, however, duties over the years at Assateague Beach have included watches for enemy ships during wartime, policing of rum-running, predicting weather, assisting with fires, and policing of illegal hunting and fishing. Many of the communities that developed on the island were dependent on the natural resources that the barrier island habitat could provide. Such employment consisted of an early salt works factory, fish and oil factories, oystering and clamming practices, and the employment that the life-saving stations could provide. When any of these resources failed to provide, the communities disappeared or adapted; Chincoteague has survived and prospered with tourism as an economic resource.

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. The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is located within the Atlantic Coastal Plain on the southern-most end of a 37-mile long barrier island stretching from the Ocean City Inlet in Maryland to the Chincoteague Inlet in Virginia. The island is separated from the mainland by Sinepuxent Bay in the north and Chincoteague Bay in the south. Assateague Channel separates Chincoteague Island from Assateague Island in the extreme southern end. The characteristics of this zone are described as low, open areas covered with sediment and vegetation in direct proximity to the inland bays and the Atlantic Ocean. This includes a belt of salt marsh on the landward side of the island and the sand dunes built, shifted, and altered by wind and storm events. Elevations are between 0 and 15 feet. (Bearrs 1968: 1,2; William & Mary College 2000, web)

The tilted beds of the Coastal Plain extend east offshore 50 to 75 miles to the edge of the North American continental shelf. The Coastal Plain proper extends from sea level inland to the Fall Line, where at about 200 feet above sea level it meets the Piedmont Plateau. The dynamic forces of littoral currents, winds, and westward moving sands create the barrier island environment at the interface between the continental shelf zone and the coastal plain.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Should be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 07/16/2025

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

As approved on October 1, 2001, the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station met the Must be Preserved and Maintained management category because the property is nationally significant as defined by the National Register criteria. While the category of management is based on its significance, use, condition, and location, it is also a measure of the agency's priority for preservation and maintenance as founded in legislation, policy, and park planning considerations.

Therefore, in this CLI Update the management category has been changed to "Should be Preserved and Maintained" based on the guidance set forth in the park's 2017 General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. Regarding the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station:

"NPS will protect and maintain the former Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station and Green Run Lodge in situ as long as possible with improvements, subject to availability of funding. Adaptive reuse of both properties will provide additional protection. At the Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station, non-structural storm protection features, such as bayside stabilization, will be considered to protect the property from natural coastal processes and/or the effects of climate change/sea level rise. If it is determined that the historic structures and cultural landscape have become so damaged by coastal storms, sea level rise, or other climate change related issues that they create a hazard, NPS will document the resources in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (NPS 1995c) and other NPS policies, guidelines, and standards. Then NPS will likely demolish the damaged structures and rehabilitate the sites to foster a return to natural conditions." (GMP/EIS RoT 2021: 8)

Management Agreements:

Type of Agreement: None

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

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. The adjacent lands and waters retain integrity and contribute to the significance of the cultural landscape.

Dunes:

The dune system and beaches surrounding the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station are an important off site landscape characteristic. The form the land takes along with the future of built environs on the island's hook is integrally dependent upon the dynamics of the dune and beach system. The effects of the man-made vegetated dunes built around the station in the 1960s is seen today; although the sand-fences are gone, the lines created by the dunes are present as are overwash, or depression, areas created by the presence of the dunes. The value of the dunes in protecting the structures at the station is undetermined especially when compared with allowing natural systems to evolve. Activities on the beach include shell collecting, walking, fishing, and off-road vehicle use where delineated.

Atlantic Ocean and Toms Cove:

These off-site water bodies are critical components of the Coast Guard Station cultural landscape. The force of littoral currents acting on the beach will forever change the shape of the hook and the cove. The cove provides a water access to the station. The shoals to the south of the island are still present with many areas marked buoys not only in the ocean but also in the cove and the nearby inlets. Activities in the waters include boating, clamming, swimming, fishing, and surfing.

Views:

Adjacent lands provide the contextual setting and important viewsheds critical for the Coast Guard Station's operations. The view north across the calm waters of Toms Cove to the north and west is of a marsh habitat and body of water created in a short time period and important to the lifesaving crews. The view south towards the Atlantic Ocean to the south and east provides the reason that the station exists. The views east and west along the shorelines provides the context of where the station is located and where so many men served to provide aide, shelter, and protection to anyone in need. Views in to the station include those from Assateague Light, on the several occasions throughout the year when tours are given to the top, the view from the Visitor's Center across the cove, which may be for many visitors the first of the station, the view from the fish factory ruin, and the views upon approach from either the beach or the cove. Most of these views are entirely within public lands, (either federal or state ownership) and therefore protected.

Sites (for more information, see Upload version of this report, dated 8-14-2025):

- Chincoteague and Wallop's Island National Wildlife Refuges (NWR)
- Fish Factory Sites
- Assateague Light
- Assateague Village, Village Cemetery, the location of the 1875 C.G. Station, and the former C.G. Infirmary
- Wallop's Island former C.G. Station and Wallops NASA Research Station
- Community of Chincoteague, Chincoteague Station, and Chincoteague Museum

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

Assateague Island National Seashore was created for the purpose of “public outdoor recreation use and Enjoyment” through Public Law 89-195 in 1965. Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station (Station), a historic former Coast Guard facility, transferred to the National Park Service in 1967.

In 1972, the NPS submitted a draft National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station to the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which entered the 5.32-acre property in the Virginia Landmarks Register on February 28, 1973. There is no record that the nomination was approved by the Keeper of the National Register.

On January 15, 1980, the Keeper signed a Determination of Eligibility Notification that determined the complex of buildings at the station were eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as “representative examples of early twentieth-century US Coast Guard Buildings constructed primarily to execute the boat and life rescue service provided along the coastline. As a type of building, their simple, frame construction takes a vernacular form that reflects some influence of the Colonial Revival style, indicative of their period of design.” The key buildings included the Station House, Tower, Garage, and Boat House. No landscape features were documented at that time.

On September 8, 2004, the Virginia SHPO concurred with the findings of the 2001 Cultural Landscape Inventory for Assateague Island Coast Guard Station. The CLI identified national-level significance for the 5.32-acre site under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance was identified as 1922-1954, beginning with the year in which the US Coast Guard established the Assateague Beach Station on Toms Cove Hook and ending 50 years prior to 2004, when the NPS submitted the CLI to the Virginia SHPO for review. Numerous contributing landscape features were identified in the CLI (see Analysis and Evaluation chapter).

On April 24, 2014, the Virginia SHPO reaffirmed its concurrence of the 2004 CLI, stating that the site was eligible for the National Register at the national level under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History for its association with the life-rescue service and Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a significant representative example of early twentieth-century US Coast Guard architecture. The SHPO recommended the extending the period of significance to 1967, the year the Coast Guard decommissioned the station, to encompass the entire period of Coast Guard use “because the site was repeatedly altered to further meet the needs of the Coast Guard duties.”

On March 15, 2013, the Keeper approved a Multiple Property Documentation Form “U.S. Government Lifesaving Stations, Houses of Refuge, and pre-1950 U.S. Coast Guard Lifeboat Stations.” The MPDF identified historic contexts, property types, and registration requirements with which to evaluate such resources. The three historic contexts were “Federal Government Lifesaving Programs from 1848 to 1950,” “American Lifesaving Practices and Technology,” and “Significant Persons Associated with the Federal Lifesaving Program.” The four station types were Lifesaving Boathouse, Integral Station, Station Complex, and House of Refuge. Registration requirements for listing properties in the National Register under this multiple property group included meeting Criteria A, B, C and/or D in the areas of Architecture, Engineering, Maritime History, Politics/Government, and/or Transportation.

On November 2, 2015, National Register documentation for the 11.18-acre Assateague Island Coast Guard Station Historic District was approved by the Keeper. Significance at the national level was identified under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance was identified as 1922-1967, beginning when the station was completed and commenced life-saving activities, and ending when life-saving operations ceased at the site and the property was transferred to the NPS. The documentation identified numerous contributing and non-contributing landscape features (see Analysis and Evaluation chapter).

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the “CLI Professional Procedures Guide,” the areas and periods of significance for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station at Assateague Island NS, and the site’s numerous historic resources that contribute to its significance, are adequately documented in the 2015 National Register. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is considered “Listed-Documented.”

Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 11/02/2015

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Contributing

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station (United States Coast Guard Station No. 150) is nationally significant under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station begins in 1922, when the station was completed and commenced life-saving activities, and extends through 1967 when life-saving operations ceased and the property was transferred to the NPS.

The property meets the registration requirements of the 2013 National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), "U.S. Government Lifesaving Stations, Houses of Refuge, and pre-1950 U.S. Coast Guard Stations." The property represents the "Station Complex" property type defined in the MPDF as a life-saving station that incorporated multiple buildings to accommodate Coast Guard personnel and the equipment required to conduct life-saving activities. It also possesses all the aspects of integrity necessary to convey the distinctive design characteristics of a Colonial Revival-style, Chatham-type life-saving station as designed by USLSS master architect Victor Mindeleff.

CRITERION A

Maritime History:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is nationally significant in the area of Maritime History as an example of a federal government life-saving station. The station's connection with national trends in the evolution of federal life-saving programs and its placement at a location along an Atlantic trade route with a notorious and lengthy history of shipwrecks make it of exceptional value in representing the importance of the protection of maritime commerce in the nation's history. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 14)

The US Congress established a federal life-saving service post at Assateague Beach in 1876, just 5 years after the service was established, and the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station was constructed in 1922 to replace this post during the early years of the USCG's institutional life. The station represents the national concern for the protection of shipping and mariners' lives in coastal waters and the related significance of shipping and affiliated maritime trades in the country's history. It specifically retains its feeling as an early twentieth century life-saving station adjacent to Chincoteague Shoal and its association with federal life-saving activities during the transition between the US Life Saving Service (USLSS) and the early years of the US Coast Guard (USCG). The station also reveals how life-saving practices changed from the use of small "surfboats," which were hauled on a cart by life-saving crews from the boathouse to the beach, to larger and heavier motorized "lifeboats," which required the assistance of launching ways. The property retains the historical location, maritime setting, materials, workmanship, and design that are essential to conveying this feeling and association. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 14-15,26)

CRITERION C

Architecture:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is nationally significant in the area of Architecture for its embodiment of the distinctive design characteristics of a Colonial Revival-style, Chatham-type life-saving station as designed by USLSS master architect Victor Mindeleff. The station retains all the major components of the Station Complex design, except the Drill Pole. The station gains additional significance because it contains two boathouses, which demonstrate the characteristics of two different standardized designs intended for different types of lifesaving boats and also, through their different locations, demonstrate the USCG's site-specific adaptation of the property to the dynamic Coastal Island environment. The station house, boat house, and other resources exemplify their respective types and functions through their standardized design, materials, and workmanship. The undisturbed beach setting and intact location of the resources contribute to the feeling and association of the property and obviously express its function historic life-saving station. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 23)

The Station House is an example of the Chatham Design, a standardized station house developed by Mindeleff in 1914. This was Mindeleff and the USLSS's last standardized plan before the USCG took over. The USCG continued to use the Chatham Design in ensuing decades and USLSS and USCG built at least 29 Chatham Design life-saving stations in Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Michigan, California, and Oregon. The Chatham Design, named for the Chatham, Massachusetts, USLSS location where the design was first used, evidenced a strong Colonial Revival style influence characterized by a rectangular plan, two-story, and two-bay-by-five-bay building with a gable-on-hip roof and a columned entrance porch. Water collection cisterns were included in the standardized design. The Garage/Boathouse and the Lookout Tower, both important original components of the Station Complex, are likely standardized USLSS or USCG designs. The USCG Boathouse completed in 1939 follows a USCG standardized plan developed in the 1930s by the USCG's Office of Civil Engineering, in Washington, D.C. Larger and more elegant than its predecessor, its design includes Colonial Revival architectural detailing similar to that of the standardized Station Houses from the 1930s. The building's larger, three-stall plan and use of launching ways were designed to accommodate the increased numbers and size of boats in standard USCG life-saving stations. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 24-26)

National Register Significance Criteria:

- A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
- 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 1922 - CE 1967

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Developing the American Economy	Shipping and Transportation by Water	Ships, Boats, Lighthouses, And Other Structures	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Vernacular Architecture	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Maritime History

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

NRIS Information:

NRIS Name: Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station

NRIS ID: 15000766

Primary Certification Date: 11/02/2015

NRIS Name: U.S. Government Lifesaving Stations, Houses of Refuge,
and pre-1950 U.S. Coast Guard Stations

NRIS ID: 64501177

Primary Certification Date: 03/15/2013

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number: Unknown

Name: Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station

Listed Date: 02/28/1973

Narrative: It was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1973.

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1524 - 1648	Explored	Giovanni da Verranzano, a Florentine employed by King Francis I of France, sailed his ship Dauphine somewhere in the vicinity of Accomack County in 1524.
CE 1687	Settled	Survey and permanent settlement of the island begins when Colonel Daniel Jenifer patents 3,500 acres covering all of Assateague Island south of the Maryland-Virginia border.
CE 1689	Land Transfer	In 1689 Maximilian Gore buys the 3,500 acres, which is then split up through inheritances but reverts back to the state because of failure to pay taxes.
CE 1750	Exploited	By the 1750s, the tribes of the eastern shore had emigrated.
CE 1770 - 1779	Built	During the 1770s, the first salt works are established on the island.
CE 1789	Established	The US Lighthouse Establishment is created and operated under the Department of the Treasury.
CE 1790	Established	On August 4, Congress authorizes building of the first "ten boats" establishing the Revenue-Marine. Two are assigned along the coasts of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. The history of the Coast Guard begins.
CE 1833	Built	Assateague Lighthouse is built at what is then the southern end of the island, close to Assateague Village.
CE 1848 - 1878	Established	US Life-Saving Service (USLSS) begins in 1848 formally established in 1878. Approximately 280 stations will be built on the East and West Coasts and the Great Lakes.
CE 1866 - 1867	Built	The Assateague Lighthouse is rebuilt as a 113-foot high brick tower that still stands today.
CE 1874 - 1905	Built	Between 1874-1905, eight life-saving are built between Cape Henlopen, Delaware and Cape Charles, Virginia. Three are built on Assateague Island.
CE 1875	Built	Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station is built on a then open cove in a 1874-Style: a combination of Stick Style and Carpenter Gothic Style.
CE 1875	Built	The Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station is constructed 1.2 miles south of the Assateague Lighthouse on the north shore of the Assateague Anchorage, present day Toms Cove. It includes a station house, stable, and later several barns.
CE 1876	Altered	By 1876 formation of the island tip's fork shape had begun, likely due to a storm event. The fork begins to block the ocean from most of Chincoteague Island. This marks the beginning of the sheltered "Assateague Anchorage," an embayment later known as Toms Cove.
CE 1885 - 1886	Land Transfer	The Clarke family buys 3,000 acres from R.M.H. Deas, including lands on Assateague, Chincoteague, and the mainland. The land is then conveyed to the Field family in 1886.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1898	Built	In 1898 a telephone line linked the Assateague Lighthouse to the Life-Saving Station.
CE 1910	Established	The US Lighthouse Establishment becomes the US Lighthouse Service and is administered by the Bureau of Lighthouses.
CE 1912	Altered	By this time, the island tip's fork shape has transformed into the hook shape that wraps around the Assateague Anchorage, today's Toms Cove.
CE 1912 - 1916	Built	Seaboard Fish Oil & Guano Company is built at the southeast shore of the cove. It is destroyed by fire in 1916 and not rebuilt.
CE 1915	Established	President Woodrow Wilson signs act to merge the US Light Saving Service with the Revenue Cutter Service to create the US Coast Guard. The Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station is renamed US Coast Guard Station No. 150.
CE 1915	Built	A storm warning and flag tower is erected.
CE 1919 - 1926	Built	A second fish oil factory known as the Conant Fish Oil & Guano Factory of Chincoteague, VA is built a quarter-mile west of the Seaboard factory site. It closes in 1926 when the anchorage becomes filled in with shifting sands.
CE 1920	Built	By 1920 the Coast Guard installs a signal located just off of the island hook's tip, which flashes every ten seconds.
CE 1920 - 1933	Expanded	Coast Guard duties increase with the onset of Prohibition known as the "rum war," greatly reducing the amount of liquor smuggled into the U.S.
CE 1920	Established	The name Assateague Anchorage appears on a map.
CE 1921	Land Transfer	Samuel B. Field inherits much of the family lands in the Virginia portion of Assateague Island. Field transfers a 5.32-acre tract of land on the island's hook to the federal government for a new USCG station complex.
CE 1922	Built	A new Chatham-style station house with two exterior water tanks, and a boathouse are built along with a signal/flag tower and wreck pole. Construction of two-story lookout tower is begun and finished the following year.
CE 1923	Established	US Coast Guard Station No. 150 is renamed Assateague Beach Station.
CE 1925	Altered	By 1925 the signal at the island's hook tip is changed to flash every three seconds.
CE 1930 - 1939	Built	In the 1930s a structure is located just east of the boardwalk, possibly for housing or storage
CE 1932 - 1933	Built	In 1932-1933 a light tower is erected due south of the boathouse and flashes every five seconds.
CE 1932 - 1962	Removed	Between 1932-1962 the signal/flag tower is removed.
CE 1933	Altered	By 1933 the signal at the island's hook tip is changed to flash every five seconds.
CE 1933	Altered	The Great Hurricane devastates the town of Chincoteague and destroys Wallop's Island Station. The Assateague Station landscape is flooded.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1933 - 1935	Built	Coast Guard constructs a new T-shaped dock and wharf on Toms Cove, based on a plan produced in April 1931. A wood walkway extends from the wharf to just north of the Station House. Railings and a pump house are added by 1935.
CE 1938	Altered	Station House undergoes alterations with a new porch and west door.
CE 1938 - 1939	Built	A new Colonial Revival Style Boathouse is built on the shore of Toms Cove with marine railways on the launchway. The original boathouse is converted into a garage. The lookout tower is raised from two stories to three. Around this time a 50-foot tall steel U.S. Navy Triangulation Tower is built west of the walkway/pier.
CE 1938	Built	A water cistern is erected on the west side of the boathouse, set on a wood platform that cantilevers off the walkway.
CE 1938 - 1939	Altered	The Lookout Tower is raised to its current height of three stories.
CE 1939	Established	In July, Congress merges the US Lighthouse Service with the US Coast Guard. Duties at Assateague Beach Station broaden.
CE 1940	Built	In c.1940 a water cistern is erected on the east side of the Garage/Boathouse.
CE 1941 - 1946	Expanded	Coast Guard duties increase with involvement in World War II. Horse, truck, and foot patrols and round the clock watches are performed. Between 40-50 servicemen and volunteers are at the station with temporary housing. Coast Guard operations are transferred to the Navy.
CE 1940	Built	A water cistern is erected on the west side of the Boathouse.
CE 1943 - 1962	Moved	Between 1943-1962, the wreck pole is relocated or rebuilt between the Garage/Boathouse and the Station House.
CE 1943	Established	Chincoteague Island National Wildlife Refuge is established.
CE 1943	Established	The name Assateague Anchorage is replaced with Assateague Cove on a map.
CE 1943	Built	The Navy builds a Vertical Steel Radiator Tower south of the garage/boathouse.
CE 1947 - 1949	Built	In 1947-1949 a fire pump house is built just north of the Station House. A new walkway is built at the boathouse wharf, or dock, but the location is not known.
CE 1950	Built	A breakwater, or bulkhead, is added to the east side of the wharf around 1950 to protect against the damaging conditions and effects of wave action.
CE 1955	Built	The entire heating system, including radiators, is replaced with oil-fired hot-water heating and domestic hot-water system.
CE 1957 - 1962	Removed	The Vertical Steel Radiator Tower and the housing/storage structure east of the boardwalk are removed in 1957-1962.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1959	Built	A generator house and concrete walkway are built northeast of the station house.
CE 1962	Altered	Destruction from the famous Ash Wednesday Nor'easter rekindles NPS interest in Assateague Island. The Coast Guard Station landscape is ravaged.
CE 1962 - 1965	Built	Sand fencing and man-made vegetated dunes are constructed along the station boundaries.
CE 1965	Established	Assateague Island National Seashore is signed into law on September 21 by President Lyndon B. Johnson.
CE 1966	Established	The name Assateague Cove is replaced with Toms Cove on a map.
CE 1967	Established	On April 1, the Coast Guard ends its 177-year association in the Treasury Department to enter the newly-created Department of Transportation.
CE 1967	Land Transfer	The Assateague Beach Station is decommissioned, and the National Park Service takes possession.
CE 1970 - 1975	Naturalized	By early 1970s, maintaining the dunes became too expensive and the NPS encourages a more natural dune environment.
CE 1976 - 1994	Removed	Between 1976 and 1994, the Triangulation Tower on the shoreline of Toms Cove is removed.
CE 1982	Planned	The park's General Management Plan is completed. The plan for the Coast Guard Station includes stabilization, adaptive use, and interpretation.
CE 1992	Reconstructed	The water tank on the west side of the boathouse is rebuilt.
CE 2012	Damaged	Hurricane Sandy strikes, damaging significant portions of the boathouse launchway, wharf, and breakwater.
CE 2015 - 2024	Moved	The water tanks at the boathouse removed sometime after 2015 and is currently located in the dunes west of the Garage/Boathouse.
CE 2017 - 2021	Planned	The park's General Management Plan is updated. The plan for the Coast Guard Station includes stabilization, preservation, and adaptive reuse for as long as possible.

Physical History:

EXPLORERS AND HABITATION, 1524-1875

Assateague Island, in Virginia, was called Accawmacke by the Native American tribes of the eastern shore, a name adapted to the county as Accomac and eventually Accomack. Assateague, meaning "a running stream between," was derived from one of the tribes who once used the island to hunt, fish, and grow food crops. Tribes that frequented the island were closely associated with the Nanticokes, of the Algonkian family. Tribes living in the vicinity of Assateague and Chincoteague Islands included the Pocomoke, Annamessex, Manokin, Nassawattex, Acquintica, Assateague, Chincoteague, and Kicotanks. Although villages were on the mainland, the tribes hunted fowl, set traps, fished, grew corn, collected berries, ate wild peas, and used the woodland resources of the barrier islands. (Bears 1968: 3,5; Wroten 1972: 7,11; Mears Rew 2000, web)

One of the earliest known European sailors who may have navigated the Chincoteague Inlet is Giovanni da Verrazzano, a Florentine employed by King Francis I of France, who in 1524 sailed his ship *Dauphine* in the vicinity of Accomack County. Verrazzano landed somewhere on Assateague Island or the mainland, and encountered an Indian tribe that was inhabited there. Verrazzano reported that the tools used by the tribes were made from reeds and animal or fish bones. (Bears 1968: 3,5; Wroten 1972: 7,11; Mears Rew 2000, web)

The Assateagues and Europeans were initially cooperative. During a storm in 1649, a local tribe helped Colonel Henry Norwood and fellow passengers when their ship, the *Virginia Merchant*, wrecked on the shore of Assateague Island. In 1659, however, Colonel Edward Scarborough campaigned to rid the island of Indians at any cost, beginning what became known as the “Seaside War.” Several treaties were signed over the years until by the 1750s, the tribes of the eastern shore had emigrated. The majority moved to the Susquehanna River area where they became part of the Iroquois and gradually moved northward to Ontario, Canada. A remnant of the tribe has survived near Indian River, Delaware. (Wroten 1972: 8,12-14; Hurley 1999, web)

European Settlement:

Europeans first settled the lower peninsula of the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay, encompassing present-day Accomack County and Northampton County, Virginia, and Worcester County, Maryland, in about 1615, but did not establish themselves on the coastal islands until the third quarter of the seventeenth century due to the islands' remoteness and conflict with the Assateague Indians in 1659 over trespassing rights. In 1668 the Maryland-Virginia border at Assateague Island was established, and around 1687 survey and permanent settlement of the island began when Colonel Daniel Jenifer patented 3,500 acres covering all of Assateague Island south of the border. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 15)

One such settlement was Assateague Village, located just east of the future Assateague Lighthouse. The village featured a school, church, and general store. Residents were dependent on the products they could produce themselves from the natural resources offered by the land and ocean. They grew and canned much of their food in gardens along a shell-covered road, and collected oysters, clams, and fish, from which they concocted lighting by burning fish oil in the oyster and clam shells. The villagers also raised sheep for wool and food, raised hogs for meat and lard, cut wood for fire, and hunted duck, geese, and other wildlife. Spurred by new colonial regulations concerning livestock, small groups of livestock rangers raised horses and sheep on the island through the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. (Wroten 1972: 15,26; Bears 1968: 86; Mears Rew 2000, web; NR 2015, Sec.8: 15)

In 1689 Maximilian Gore bought from Jenifer, for 12,000 pounds of tobacco, “3,500 acres of sandy and marshy and swampish land on Assateague Island.” The 3,500 acres was split up through inheritances through the years and eventually reverted back to the state because of failure to pay taxes. (Bears 1968: 10,12)

Growth of Assateague Village was initially very slow; by 1764 there were only 25 residents on Assateague. During the 1770s, the first salt works were established on the island and was the only employment other than the raising of livestock until the mid-nineteenth century, when improved transportation and communication systems facilitated the development of small-scale tourism, fishing, and fish-packing enterprises on the island. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 15)

Construction of Assateague Lighthouse:

The coastal waters off Assateague Island are located along an important thoroughfare for ships sailing between major eastern United States ports and for ships sailing international routes between these cities, the Caribbean, and Europe. The shifting, but ever-present Chincoteague Shoal and lesser shoals and banks were difficult to navigate and the region's powerful storms, particularly in late summer, autumn, and winter, increased the challenge. These conditions, which could easily cripple a sailing ship, began victimizing craft off Assateague Island almost from the beginning of European exploration and settlement. Consequently, the waters off Assateague Island rapidly developed a particular notoriety among maritime professionals as a hazardous area both for cargo and lives. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 16)

Plundering of wrecks by locals prompted officials in coastal Virginia and Maryland counties to protect and dispose of wrecked vessels and goods therein. However, no such attention was given to assisting crews or passengers. In 1785 the Massachusetts Humane Society initiated the world's first organized life-saving service consisting of volunteers. Life-saving improvements were also manifested in 1789 with establishment of what would be the US Lighthouse Establishment, which built lighthouses along the coasts to guide ships away from dangerous shoals. The following year, the US Revenue Cutter Service was established as the Revenue-Marine to serve as an armed customs enforcement service. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 16-17)

In 1833 Assateague received its first lighthouse at what was then the southern end of the island, close to Assateague Village. The need for this "important sea-coast station" was to guide ships around the shoals that extended along the coast and up to 12 miles out to sea. The lighthouse was rebuilt in 1866-1867 as a 113-foot high brick tower that still stands today. (Bears 1968: 49-50)

Around the time of this rebuild, a series of maps illustrated the ever-changing shape of the island. An 1866 Martinet's Map of Maryland showed the southern tip of Assateague Island as ending further north than the island of Chincoteague that was exposed to the ocean (Figure 1). Within 10 years, formation of the tip's fork shape had begun, likely due to a storm event. The fork began to block the ocean from most of Chincoteague Island. This marked the beginning of the sheltered "Assateague Anchorage," an embayment later known as Toms Cove (Figure 2). The two points of the fork become known as Assateague Point and Fishing Point, names that would follow the shoreline as it evolved over time.

R.M.H. Deas and wife owned much of the land in the area until 1885 when the Clarke family bought 3,000 acres from Deas, including lands on Assateague, Chincoteague, and the mainland. The land was then conveyed to the Field family in 1886. (Wroten 1972: 15; Abstract of Title, 1967; Bears 1968: 10,12)

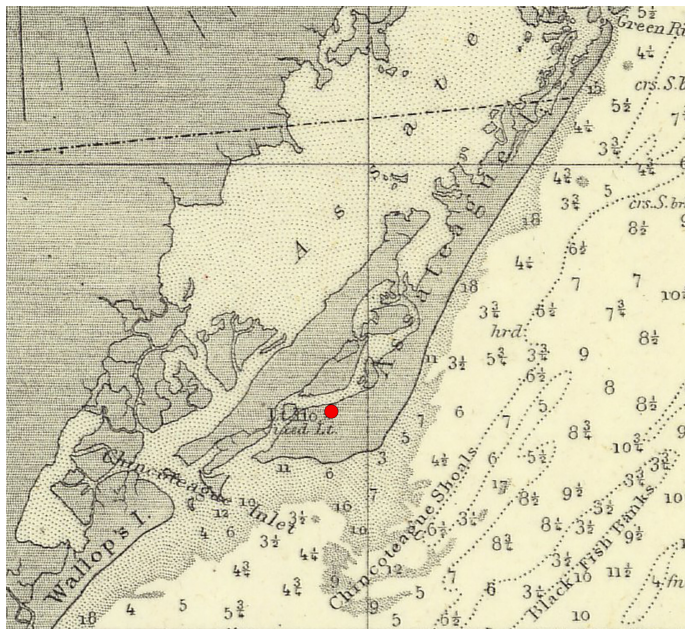


Figure 1. In this 1865 plan, Assateague Light is indicated with a red circle. (Wroten 1995: 57)



Figure 2. The 1885 Martinets Map of Assateague Island. Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is indicated with a yellow circle. (HSR 2007: 16)

BEACH COMMUNITIES AND THE U.S. LIFE-SAVING SERVICE, 1875-1922

The early twentieth century marked the peak of private community development on Assateague Island. In addition to Assateague Village, other small, mostly seasonal communities included North Beach and Green Run Inlet. Assateague Village was the largest of the three with a population of just over 200 at the turn of the century. (NR 2015, Sec.8: 15-16)

Settlement at Assateague Village increased with establishment of the Seaboard Fish Oil & Guano Company of Reedville, Virginia, in 1912. The factory produced fish oil and fertilizer and provided an important market for watermen's catch and employment for islanders. By this time the shifting sands at the southern tip of Assateague Island had pushed Fishing Point to the southwest, transforming the tip's fork shape into the hook shape that wraps around Toms Cove. The factory was located at the southeast shoreline of the cove, comprised of a complex of wharves and structures, most of which were elevated on pilings above tidal flats a short distance off shore. The factory was destroyed in 1916 by a fire and was never rebuilt. A second fish oil factory, the Conant Fish Oil & Guano Factory of Chincoteague, Virginia, opened one-quarter mile west in 1919, only to close it in 1926 when the anchorage had become filled in with shifting sands and made it impossible for fishing boats to dock. (NPS, Seaboard...archaeological survey; NR 2015, Sec.8: 15-16; Bearss 1968: 95)

Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station:

In 1848 Congress began appropriating funds for life-saving stations in New Jersey and Massachusetts. Between 1848 and 1854 other stations were built and loosely managed by the US Revenue-Marine (later renamed the US Revenue Cutter Service). They were run with volunteer crews. In September 1854, the Great Carolina Hurricane swept through the East Coast, causing the deaths of many sailors. The storm highlighted the poor condition of the equipment in the lifesaving stations, the poor training of the crews, and the need for more stations. While additional funds were appropriated by Congress, including funds to employ a full-time keeper at each station, the system languished. A series of fatal marine disasters in the winter of 1870-1871 led to a demand by the public for the government to take additional action. By 1878 the Treasury Department constructed the first staffed life-saving stations under the title of the US Life-Saving Service (USLSS). Sumner I. Kimball became its first and only General Superintendent. (USCG historian's office, 2000, web)

Between 1874 and 1905, eight life-saving stations were constructed along the Atlantic Coast between Cape Henlopen, Delaware and Cape Charles, Virginia (Figure 3). On Assateague Island, the stations were placed near inlets where ships were likely to need assistance. The Green Run Inlet Life-Saving Station was built in 1875, 13.5 miles north of the Assateague Lighthouse, and Pope Island Life-Saving Station was built in 1879, 10 miles north of the lighthouse. In 1883 the North Beach Station was built at the northern end of Assateague Island and the Wallops Beach Station was constructed on the mainland of Virginia 1.5 miles south of the Chincoteague Inlet.

On the southern end of Assateague Island, a logical location for a station was near the Assateague Lighthouse, and in 1875 the Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station was constructed 1.2 miles south of the light on north shore of the Assateague Anchorage, present day Toms Cove, in the 5th District of the USLSS. Unusual to the siting of this life-saving station, however, was its positioning on Toms Cove where boats could be launched into the cove's relatively calmer waters rather than the coastline's roaring breakers (Figure 4). The plan for the station located the building 600 feet from Assateague Anchorage and with only one other building, a stable, for at least one horse that was used to assist in pulling surfboats to the launch site. The station's grounds, like many at this time, was defined by a 3-foot tall white picket fence centered on a narrow 175-foot wide tract of land. (USLSS n.d: plan of site)

John A. Jones recorded the first entry in the daily operational logbook for the USLSS on Dec. 1, 1875. There were many schooners and steamers passing in the waters, and round the clock patrols were kept. Jones was keeper of the station, possibly the same John A. Jones (1830-1911) buried at the Assateague Village Cemetery located 100 yards to the east of the Assateague Channel bridge. (Bearss 1968: 88)

The Assateague Beach Station's design followed the USLSS 1874-type standardized plan. A combination of Carpenter Gothic and Stick Style, it was the only one of its kind on the East Coast (Figure 5). The two-story building was distinguished by the exterior ornamentation of decorative

scroll work and bracketing beneath the gable and side eaves, as well as a center roof observation platform. From the original site plan and period photographs, it appears that the station grew to the west with a series of outbuildings that likely included additional quarters and perhaps a large barn (Figure 6). A white-washed split-rail fence extended around the buildings from the existing picket fence; possibly a corral space for the horse(s) and possibly other animals. The area enclosed by the picket fence may have been sodded with lawn to prevent the sands from eroding away, as was typical at life-saving stations. Photographs also show ornamental trees within the picket fence. (Shanks 1998: 110,120, 217)

Included at all life-saving stations was a wreck pole for apparatus drills and a 50-foot tall flagpole, later a tower, used for the International Code for signals practice. The practice was performed on Wednesdays and consisted of two strings of a series of flags from the top of the tower where each flag represented a letter of the alphabet. In 1900 a lifeboat house was built on Toms Cove with a long wharf/pier connecting it with land; this was likely a reaction to the silting in of the cove, which by 1920 was a quarter of a mile distant instead of the original 600 feet. The station also built a few "outlying" boathouses located closer to the Atlantic Ocean. (Shanks 1998: 40,120; USCG archives; USGS 1920 tactical map)

One of the most notable rescues occurred on October 10, 1891, when President Benjamin Harrison's official yacht, *Despatch*, was destroyed in a wreck three miles north of the south end of the island and seventy-five yards from shore. The records stated that ten trips were made to the wreck to save seventy-nine men; no lives were lost (Figure 7).

In 1898, the Navy tasked the USLSS with coast watching during the Spanish-American War. This same year the US Lighthouse Establishment took advantage of the "Appropriation for National Defense" and installed a telephone line linking the Assateague Lighthouse to the Life-Saving Station. In 1910 the Lighthouse Establishment became the US Lighthouse Service. (USCG, web; Bearrs 1968: 56)

Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station:

On January 28, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson signed an act that consolidated the Life-Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service (est. 1790 as Revenue Marine), as the US Coast Guard. The Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station was given the name "US Coast Guard Station No. 150" and assigned to the USCG 6th District (Figure 8). In general, the keepers, crew, and drills continued as usual. One of the first additions to the stations under the Coast Guard authority were storm warning towers. A 195 Coast Guard detail plan of a 50-foot tall steel storm warning tower appears to be the same type style seen in photographs of stations with the international flags flying from them, suggesting its dual uses of storm warnings and flag drills. Beyond the station property, the Coast Guard installed a signal located just off of the island's hook tip, which blinked every ten seconds. A 1920 map also indicates numerous buoys around the tip, as well as "iron stacks," likely remnants of the 1912 factory or the rebuilt 1919 factory. (Shanks 1998: 120)

With the outbreak of World War I, the Coast Guard was briefly transferred to the Navy Department in 1917 and then returned to the Treasury Department in 1919. By this time the operation of the station had become increasingly inefficient as the natural processes increased the size of the island's southern tip, adding sand to its south and west sides to enlarging its hook shape. This new landform increased the distance from the station to the ocean, and thus made rescues at sea more difficult to reach. As the station buildings were not in good enough condition to be picked up and moved (as the residents of Assateague Village had done), the Secretary of the Treasury acquired on behalf of the Coast Guard a 5.32-acre parcel from Dr. Samuel Field in 1921 for construction of a new US Coast Guard Station No. 150, located on the hook at Fishing Point (Figure 9). (NR 2015, Sec.8: 20)

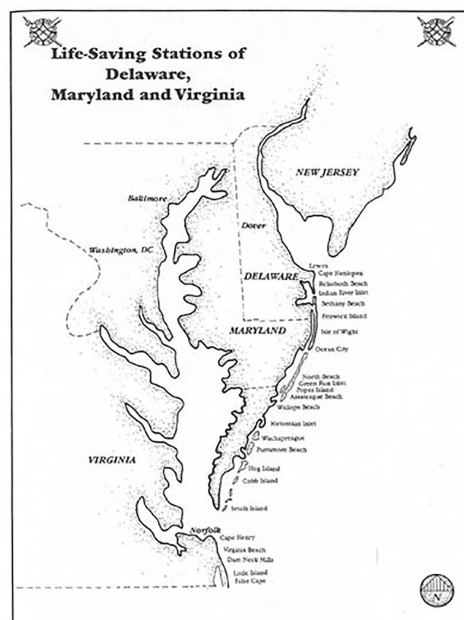


Figure 3. Early Life-Saving Stations of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. (Shanks 1998: 121)

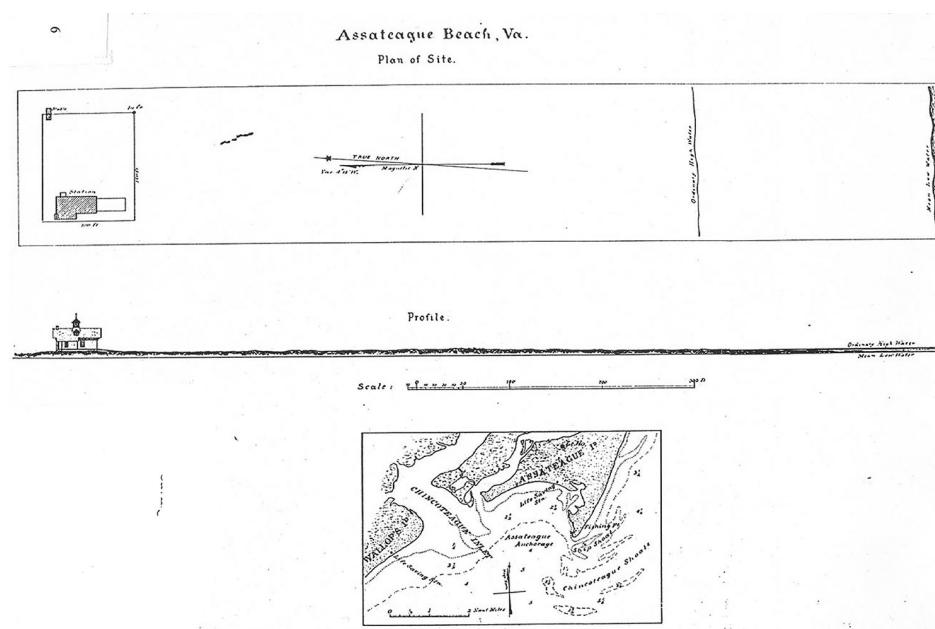


Figure 4. The 1874 site plan for Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station. (USCG Library, Microfilm Archives, New London, CT, nd)

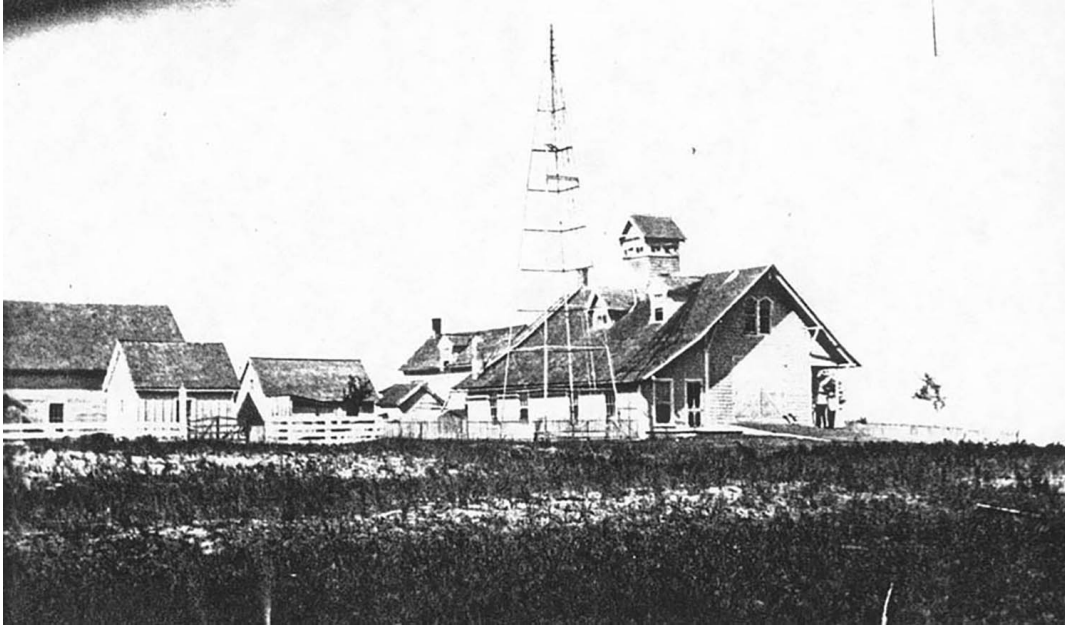


Figure 5. Undated photograph of the 1874 Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station. (USCG historian office, archive collection)

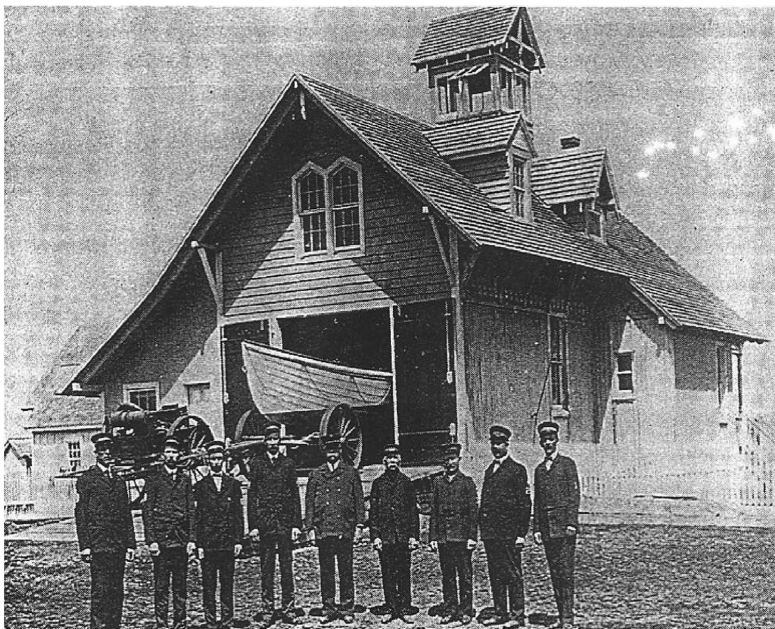


Figure 6. Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station, c.1905. (HSR 2007: 15)



Figure 7. Historical illustration of the wreck of the USS Despatch in 1891. (Reproduced in Langley 2002: 55)

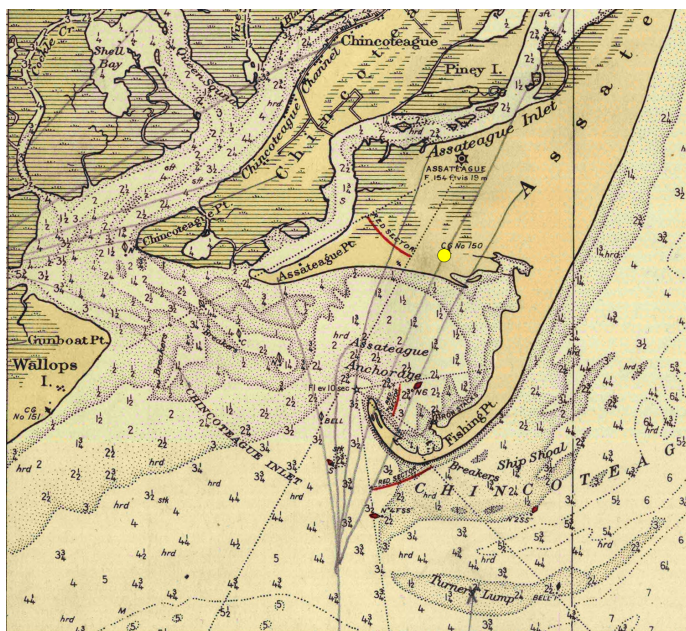


Figure 8. This 1920 map shows the location of the Life Station with a yellow dot, now named "US Coast Guard Station No. 150". (USCG Digital Library)

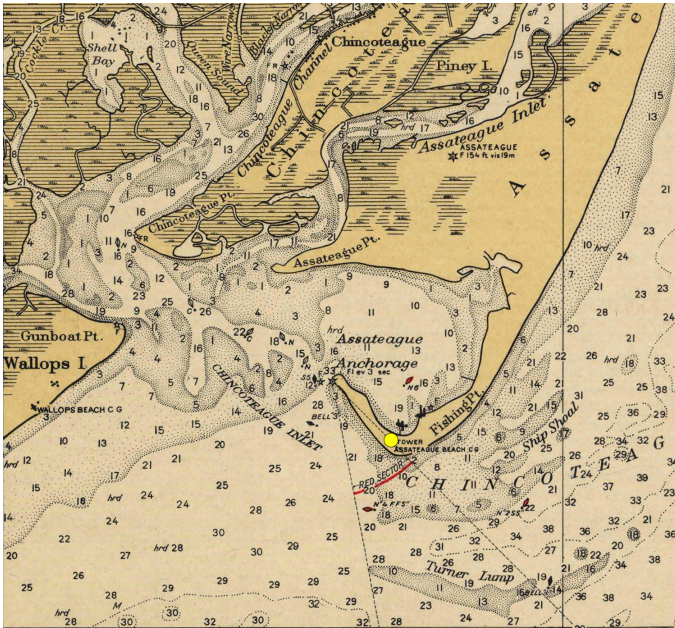


Figure 9. This 1925 map shows the location of the new US Coast Guard Station No. 150 with a yellow dot. (USCG Digital Library)

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW COAST GUARD STATION, 1921-1938

The new station was located on a narrow strip of land bound by the Atlantic shoreline and southeast shore of Toms Cove. A 1921 map shows the rectangular-shaped parcel around 200 feet wide extended north-south from Toms Cove to the Atlantic Ocean (Figure 10). The map suggested mostly flat and open conditions, except for a “shaded area” near the center of the property. The parcel abutted the Conant Fish Oil & Guano Company, which opened in 1919 and extended into Toms Cove.

Bids for the construction of the new station house, boathouse, and signal/flag tower were solicited and the contract was awarded to William Russell of Lewes, Delaware in 1921. Construction began the following year and was completed in December 1922. The station house was built in the center of the site and was designed in the “Chatham” style by the last official architect of the USLSS, Victor Mendleheff. The two-story, five bay, plainly detailed building featured a gable-on-hip roof and a columned hip-roof entrance porch. A one-story boathouse was located to the south and featured a simple, rectangular one room building with a hip roof and two double-wide “boat doors” facing the Atlantic Ocean to the south. (EA draft 2005: 3)

In 1922-1923 a two-story lookout tower was built between the station house and boathouse. It consisted of a small, square, hip roof structure perched on top of a steel girder base (Figure 11). The crew of Station No. 150 also erected a wreck pole, which represented the mast of a ship during beach apparatus drills (Figure 12). Around this time the station’s tallest tower, a signal/flag tower, was erected around 50 feet south of the lookout tower. (EA draft 2005: 3; Hartley 1984: 4,12; USCG logbooks 1922: 3 and 26 October, and 10, 11, and 24 November)

On Monday, November 27, 1922, John M. Richardson, Officer in Charge, received the keys to the new station and instructions to move in. By 6 pm. Friday, December 1, the station was fully operational; ironically, this was the 48th anniversary of the first day of operation of the original Assateague Beach Life-Saving Station. On the first day of 1923, the station received a new name, Assateague Beach Station. Richardson was officer in charge until 1936 when he retired after twenty years of service with the station. In the weeks preceding the move, the buildings at the old station were painted and cleaned even though the station was abandoned upon the move. In January 1923 the crew disassembled its signal and flag tower. (USCG logbook 1923, 1 January and logbooks 1916

-1936)

Telephone lines connected Station No. 150 to the other live saving stations along the coast. In the Assateague Beach Station area there were at least two patrol poles with key boxes on them at the north and south ends of the beach; the north patrol was half-way between the Assateague Beach Station and Pope's Island Station and the south patrol was at the southern tip of the island. The men would carry a key and turn a dial when they reached the north or south patrol to signify that the patrol had been carried out. It is likely that the poles were established before the new station was built due to a log entry stating that the key to the north and south patrol were moved to the new station on Dec. 1, 1922. (Noble, web; Interview, Bitner; USCG logbooks, 1922)

The Coast Guard continued the legacy of the US Life-Saving Service; duties were performed routinely with amendments added for technology and new responsibilities when appropriate. Certain duties and drills were performed as a daily routine. The morning and evening colors, or sunrise and sunset, were recorded, morning and evening patrols performed, and weather and surf conditions watched throughout the day. One of the first duties of the day was to inspect the station buildings, grounds, and apparatus and equipment. This was followed by regular drills and regulations that were determined by the day of the week and included: the international code of signals, motor boat laws, rules of road, general service signals, resurrection drill, occulting-light practice, wigwag practice, and the semaphore drill (signaling at a distance from a pole). The beach apparatus drill, which was performed until at least 1947, was the main life-saving drill; it was timed and the elevation and angle of the rope shot from the Lyle gun was recorded. Note: a Lyle gun launched a heavy line over the rigging of ships stranded near shore. (USCG logbooks, 1923; USCG log, 14 February 1947)

A 1932 station plan shows the location of the facility's buildings and towers (Figure 13). The two-story station house was located in the area marked as a "shaded area" in the 1921 plan, but this description does not appear on the 1932 plan. Historic photographs suggest this vegetation was likely removed during construction. The plan also indicates the boathouse, lookout tower, and wreck pole, as well as a "proposed" light tower due south of the boathouse and near the ocean shoreline. This light tower was erected soon after, as it appears on a 1933 map and is identified as flashing every five seconds. Beyond the station property, the adjacent fish factory closed in 1926, but one building was still shown on the 1932 station plan. According to a 1933 map, the flash frequency of the light at the island's hook tip was increased to five seconds (Figure 14). Additionally, by this time the telephone lines to Wallops Beach Station traveled by underwater cable between Chincoteague Point and Gunboat Point on Wallops Island.

Decline of Assateague Village:

In 1921 Samuel B. Field inherited much of the Virginia portion of Assateague Island. Fields had his land east of the village fenced and posted. His overseer, Oliphant, who lived in a bungalow across the road from the old Life-Saving Station, refused to permit the villagers to cross Field's property to get to Toms Cove. Without access to the resources at the cove and with the economic loss of the fishing factories, the residents of Assateague Village began lifting their homes and used barges to move them to Chincoteague. (Bearrs 1968: 87; <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/chincoteague/about-us>)

Hurricane of 1933:

The largest threat to the Coast Guard Stations has always been that of the vicious hurricane. A 1933 hurricane along the mid-Atlantic coast was no exception, creating disastrous tides and inland flooding that devastated the community of Chincoteague. The winds and tides destroyed nearby 1882 Wallops Beach Station and the empty fish factory adjacent to Assateague Beach Station. Although they don't appear on the 1932 station plan, the storm also destroyed three private cottages associated with the Assateague Station. The station crew made rescue efforts to the few residents who had made homes on the island. Although the tide was all over the beach and in the boathouse, the station house was on higher ground and the residents were brought there for safety. A photograph in the Coast Guard Archives is labeled with concerns about erosive damage of the grounds in the yard. Within days of the storm, a Coast Guard plane stopped at the station to refuel its gasoline; it is unknown whether the plane landed on water or ground. (Shanks 1998: 120; USCG logbooks, 26 August 1933)

New Dock, Wharf, and Boathouse:

In 1933 the Coast Guard completed a new T-shaped dock, wharf, and boardwalk on Toms Cove, based on a plan produced in April 1931. The plan included a reference to a contract with W. Henry Bartlett for \$8,925, dated in June. In 1935 the crew was employed painting the handrail on the dock and boardwalk and a small pumphouse located on the dock. (USCG logbooks, 23 August, and 3, 4 September 1933)

By 1938, the effects of shifting sands and larger heavier boats hastened the need for a new boathouse on Toms Cove. The new one-and-a-half-story structure had a rectangular hip roof with dormers, a porticoed entrance porch on the south elevation, and three wide boat doors on the north elevation that face the cove. Designed in the Classical Revival Style then in vogue, the 62 x 46-foot boathouse featured a more elegant design than the earlier boathouse (which was repurposed as a garage) (Figure 15, 16, 17, and 18). The structure was connected to the wharf via catwalks and surrounding walkways. To ease the heavy boats into the water and pull them back into the boathouse, a two-stall launchway equipped with three sets of marine railways and a motorized pulleys was constructed on the north façade. A water cistern was erected on the west side of the building around this time. It was set on a wood platform that cantilevered off of the walkway. (EA 2005: 3; HSR 2007: 47-48)

At the same time that the boathouse was being built, a porch addition was being added to the station house and the lookout tower was raised from two stories to three (Figure 19). Around this time a 50-foot-tall steel U.S. Navy Triangulation Tower was built on the Toms Cove shore west of the walkway/pier before 1939. Historic photographs also indicate several one-story structures and fencing just east of the boardwalk, possibly used as a stable and corral, or for housing (see Figures 15 and 17). (EA 2005: 3; Interview, Bitner 2000)

Changing Coast Guard Roles:

In the 1920s and the advent of prohibition, the Coast Guard became involved in policing the coasts to prevent rum-running practices especially active on isolated barrier island beaches. With Chincoteague Inlet a favorite place of smugglers, the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station was active in enforcing the law in this area until the end of prohibition in 1933 and again after the Anti-Smuggling Act was passed in 1935. (USCG 2000, web; Hartley 1987: 4; USCG historian, web)

New duties were also assigned to the Coast Guard as modernization advanced. It wasn't long before the traditional role of life-saving had declined due to improvements in equipment, weather forecasting, and safety regulations. In 1939 when the Lighthouse Service became part of the Coast Guard, the crew took over the responsibility of checking the light and maintenance of Assateague Lighthouse. (Hartley 1984: 4; USCG historian, web; USLSS web; USCG logbooks, after 1939)

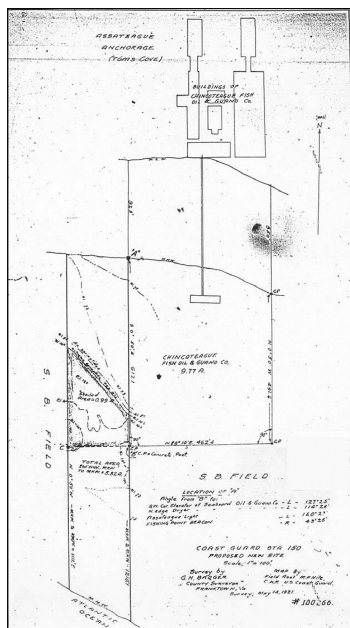


Figure 10. A 1921 survey map of the new Coast Guard Station No. 150" property. (HSR 2007: 21)

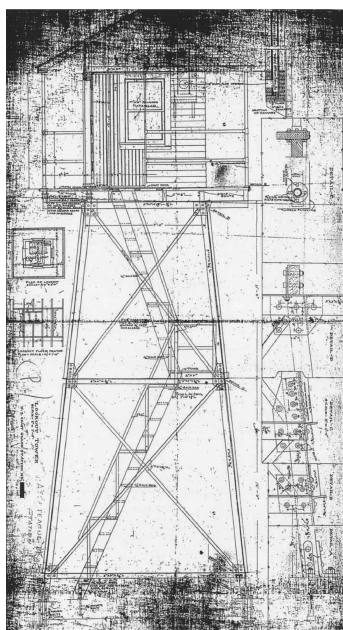


Figure 11. Plan for two-story Lookout Tower, 1920s. (HSR 2007: 19)



Figure 12. A c.1922-1923 photograph of the station complex looking north. From image left to right are the boathouse/garage, station house, and factory buildings. The structure in the foreground is a wreck pole. One of the two towers in the background is shown on the 1925 map, but it is unclear which one: the taller tower is a signal/flag tower while the shorter tower is the two-story lookout, prior to addition of a cabin. (USCG archives, Washington DC, from CLI 2004: 43)

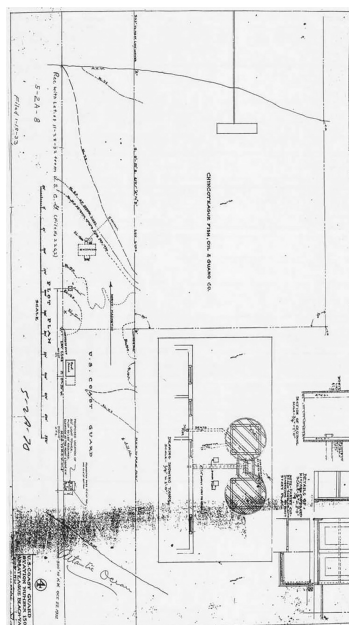


Figure 13. Plan from 1932 on a 1921 survey map of the new life station property. (CLI 2004: 39)

Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station
Assateague Island National Seashore

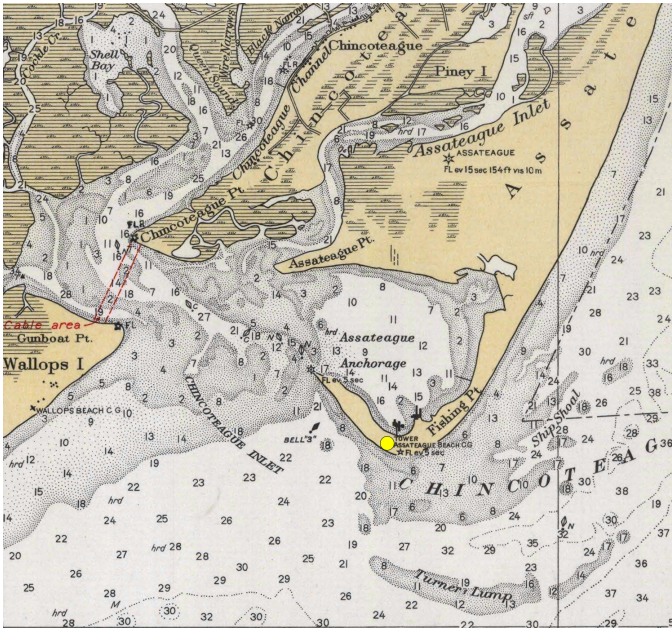


Figure 14. A 1933 USCG map showing light tower. (USCG Digital Library)



Figure 15. Boathouse construction in 1938 at the wharf. (USCG Archives, Washington DC, from CLI 2004: 44)



Figure 16. View looking northwest at the completed boathouse, c.1938. (USCG Archives, Washington DC, from CLI 2004: 45)



Figure 17. View looking south at the wharf and the completed boathouse, c.1939. In the background is the station house (to immediate left of boathouse) and other unknown buildings. (USCG Archives, Washington DC, from CLI 2004: 45)



Figure 18. View looking north at the boathouse, and walkway, c.1938. At image right is the wharf and bulkhead, and the pumphouse at the end of the wharf. (USCG Archives, Washington DC, from CLI 2004: 45)



Figure 19. View looking northwest at the lookout tower, raised in 1939 with a third story. (HSR 2007: 21)

PRESERVATION INTERESTS AND WORLD WAR II ON THE BEACH, 1935-1946

With the damaging effects of the 1933 storm, interests in Assateague Island and its value as an unspoiled beach were emerging. In 1935 the National Park Service surveyed seashore areas along the Atlantic and identified Assateague Island as one of twelve areas worthy of preservation for public use and enjoyment as a National Seashore. However, by this time there were many people living in the northern section of the island, but far fewer at the southern end. Despite several proposals introduced in Congress, no further land preservation actions except for one in 1936 that brought the enforcement of the Migratory Bird Act of 1918, which recognized Assateague Island as a major waterfowl flyway and popular hunting spot. (NPS 1965: 3)

In September 1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the country's neutrality in World War II and began a neutrality patrol, to which he directed the addition of 2,000 Coast Guardsmen to the coasts, many of whom were members of the Coast Guard Reserve created in 1939. With the onset of World War II, in 1941 the Coast Guard was ordered to operate as part of the Navy and in early 1942 assumed responsibility for wartime port security. At Assateague Station, former guardsman Louis Bitner remembered there being 50-60 men present during the war and that many of them were packed in the attic of the station house. A photograph taken in 1943 shows elevated housing units located south of the 1922 boathouse; they may have been used by the army who had men present to run a radar (Figure 20). (USCG historian, web; Interview, Bitner 2000)

The Coast Guard watched the coasts and surveilled local craft operating in home waters, and patrolled Chincoteague Inlet in a picket boat. Essentially an information system between the Coast Guard, the Army and Navy, and the FBI, any information they acquired was reported via a closed-circuit radio. At Assateague Beach, the Army would transport any prisoners to a German prison camp in Westover, Maryland and the FBI was ultimately responsible for investigations of sabotage. (Noble, web: Beach Patrol; Bishop 1997: 1-2; Interview, Bitner 2000)

A beach patrol at Assateague began in mid-1942. The early patrols consisted of round-the-clock watches from watchtowers and foot patrols, with truck, jeep, dog, and horse patrols added later. Although the North Beach and Ocean City stations had dog patrols, there is no evidence that dogs were at Assateague Beach; however, truck, jeep, and horse patrols were used. The army provided the horses, saddles and bridles, and uniforms and hats for the horse patrol. Mr. Bitner recalls there being 10-12 horses at Assateague and a stable and corral, which they called "the pound." A mounted patrol would ride 3 or 4 miles up the beach and meet a patrol from the Pope's Island Station at a key post located half-way between stations; patrols were not needed to the south since you could see to Fishing Point from the station's recently raised lookout tower at that time. The mounted patrol was especially unpleasant in the winter and Bitner recalls that the horses didn't even like it and would leave you if you dismounted. In mid-1944, the horses were taken away and the guardsmen went back to foot patrol. (Bishop 1997: 1,3-4; Interview, Bitner 2000)

In 1943 the Navy built Vertical Steel Radiator Tower south of the boathouse/garage (see Figure 20). The tower was part of a Test Station with plans for other high frequency towers to be located around two hundred feet away. This appears to have been an advancement to long range aid to navigation, which was stepped up during the war. The tower was approximately 80 feet tall with four large concrete anchors sunk into the ground below sea level. Other tower components included guy insulators, an isolation transformer, and a conduit for a lighting circuit. (USCG, Report to Build Steel Radiator).

Concurrent with military uses at Assateague Island was the establishment of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. In 1943, the S.B. Fields family, the principal land owners on Assateague Island, sold their property to the US Government for use as a national wildlife refuge. Created to protect migratory birds, the designation included almost the entirety of the island in Virginia. The refuge was operated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. At the end of the war, the Coast Guard was returned to the US Treasury Department on January 1, 1946.

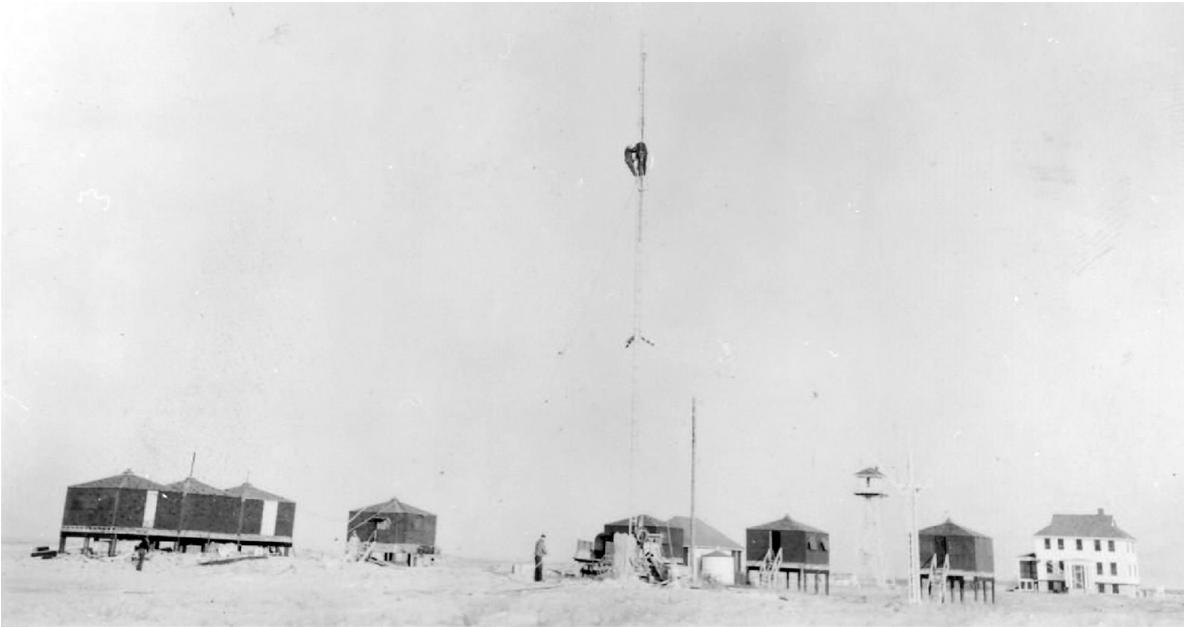


Figure 20. Photograph looking northwest at temporary housing south of the station house (image right), c.1943. Note the lookout tower and the wreck pole (visible just to its right). The tower and guy wires in the foreground are the Navy's Vertical Steel Radiator Tower. (HSR 2007: 22)

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL SEASHORE, 1946-1967

After World War II, the Coast Guard stations returned to their normal routine. However, the need for rescue crews had diminished with the advancements of radar, better equipment, and the research in aircraft rescues made during the war. Although Coast Guard aircraft had an early start in the 1920s, it wasn't until World War II that interest in developing air rescue began, and after the war, before it really developed. Helicopter rescues proved themselves during a series of floods in the 1950s and were present after a major hurricane at Assateague in 1962. An interview with former guardsman, Ed Switzer, confirms the logbook entries that helicopters landed at Assateague and further states that a helipad was present to the west of the station house. (Noble, web: Aviation; USCG logbooks, March 1962; Interview, Switzer 1990)

Station Additions and Removals:

In 1947 a "newly constructed walk" was built; the type of walk is unknown although it may have been a replacement to the on-shore walkway since a wooden platform was also built on the walkway and wharf at this time to support a pipe for pumping water to the station in event of a fire. By 1949, a fire pump house was constructed just north of the station house and sometime in the 1940s a water tank was erected on the east side of the boathouse/garage. Also, by 1949 the underwater telephone cable connecting to Gallops Island was moved from Chincoteague Point to Fishing Point. (USCG logbooks, 15 January 1947; Interview, Olsen; HSR 2007: 165)

A breakwater, or bulkhead, was added on the east side of the wharf around 1950 to protect against the damaging conditions and effects of wave action. In 1959 a concrete block, one-story electric generator house was added to the complex northeast of the station house. It was connected to the station house via a concrete walk. Prior to this, a generator was located in the basement of the station house. The Vertical Steel Radiator Tower and storage or housing structure east of the boardwalk were removed in 1957-1962; they appear in a 1957 aerial photograph but are not present in a 1962 oblique photograph. (USCG logbook, 28 June 1950; Phillips 2000: 24)

During the 1960s, the Assateague Beach Station was affected by the research taking place by NASA on nearby Wallops Island (to the southwest). The Wallops Research Station was experimenting with rocket-propelled aircraft, and on at least two occasions in 1962, the Assateague Beach Station had to be evacuated, "due to firing of rocket at Wallops Island." The need to evacuate the station may have been due to an earlier accident; Mr. Switzer reported in a 1990 interview that the northeast corner of the house was hit and damaged by an errant NASA rocket. The present station is the Goddard Space Flight Center and Wallops Flight Facility. (USCG logbooks 1962, 28 February and 29 March; Interview 1990, Switzer)

Renewed Interests in Public Land Studies and the Hurricane of 1962:

Interests in preserving Assateague Island were rekindled in 1954-1955 during a survey of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts by the NPS. By this time private development was at its peak, prompting the report to not recommend pursuing public ownership. However, in January 1962 the Congressionally-established Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission identified the importance of acquiring and developing additional outdoor recreation areas, particularly along shorelines, to meet the growing needs of an expanding, mobile, and increasingly urban population. (NPS 1965: 3)

Not but a few months later, in March 1962, a devastating storm known as the Ash Wednesday Nor'easter caused serious destruction throughout Assateague Island. The storm inundated most of the island and wrecked all but the sturdiest homes off of their pilings. The storm raised questions on the feasibility of private development on the island. The combination of the report and storm prompted a reevaluation of Assateague Island by the Department of the Interior. Another study aimed at recommending best use of the island was prepared and gained support, but no Congressional action on bills was taken. (NPS 1965: 3)

The Assateague Beach Station also suffered storm damage, which included the loss of the boathouse chimney, flooding in the structures, damage to signs to the station, and walkways covered by wind-blown sands (Figure 21). The crew eventually secured and deactivated the station and was airlifted to an old air station at NASA. Before leaving, the guardsmen rescued three men on foot who had been in a shipwreck just north of the station; they found a fourth man to whom they gave artificial resuscitation, and a fifth man on shore who was already deceased. (USCG logbooks, March 1962)

The storm exposed the need for large-scale beach protection if there were to be roads and other kinds of development on the island. A photograph from 1965 shows early mitigation strategies included erection of sand fences around the station property (Figure 22). The Fish and Wildlife Service also began sand fencing practices along the ocean shoreline of the wildlife refuge at this time. Some of the fences were incorporated into man-made dunes planted with beach grass by Fish and Wildlife, possibly including several in the Coast Guard Station area (Figure 23). Though located beyond the station's property lines, the dunes were intended to protect the buildings. Breaks were made in the fencing where vehicular circulation or other uses were present. (National Archives, History of studies leading to NS proposal)

The latter half of 1962 saw an increase in interest to access the wildlife refuge and the beach just north of Assateague Beach Station. The Chincoteague/Assateague Bridge and Beach Authority built a toll bridge to access the island from Chincoteague in 1962; prior to this the only way to access the island was by boat. Then, in 1963 the Fish and Wildlife Service leased the land north of the station to the Authority for a restaurant, bathhouse, restrooms, and parking along the oceanfront. A road and bridge to these areas was built around this time. (National Archives, 1960 NPS correspondence; NPS 1965: 11)

Establishment of National Seashore and Station Closure:

A 1965 report articulated management of the proposed national seashore:

"The island would be managed and developed for maximum public recreation use. A balance between intensive (high density) and extensive (low density) recreation would be encouraged so that the inherent natural values would be protected." (NPS 1965: 15)

On September 21, 1965, President Johnson signed the bill authorizing Assateague Island National Seashore, which stretched 35 miles from the Ocean City inlet in Maryland to Fishing Point in Virginia

(the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge retained its identity). An "Interim Development Plan" in 1966 proposed extensive development at the existing terminus of the road and bridge at Toms Cove: a motel and restaurant (500 rooms), trailer village (300 spaces), bathhouses (4 buildings), carry out food (4 buildings), picnic areas (320 tables), parking 3500 cars), fishing pier (200 persons), concession employee housing (100 rooms), and ranger and seasonal staff quarters (3 buildings). Additionally, new road was proposed to access a new campground at the island's tip that would accommodate 1,200 sites and a boaters beach. Another plan from 1966 indicated the new road terminating at the station. (NPS, eTIC, Dwgs. 622-60010 and NS: AI 3003A)

During this time Coast Guard was in the process of determining which Atlantic coast stations to retain and which to consolidate. The creation of the National Seashore seemed to ensure that the Assateague Beach Station would be closed; both the North Beach and Pope's Island stations had been disestablished in the 1950s. (GMP 1982: 11)

The Assateague Beach Station received its orders to close and disestablish the station via a verbal order from Group Chincoteague on Jan. 10, 1967. On the evening of Jan. 16, 1967 after all guardsmen had been transferred to other duty stations, the Assateague Beach Station was disestablished under authority of CCGD5 operation order No.1-67. This marked the end of the ninety-two years of operations at the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station. (USCG logbook, 16 January 1967)



Figure 21. Oblique aerial view of the station complex after the 1962 storm. Features from image left to right: boathouse/garage, wreck pole, lookout tower, station house, flagpole, fire pump house, generator house, triangulation tower, boathouse and wharf. (USCG Archives, Washington DC)



Figure 22. View looking west at the station, August 29, 1965, three years after the storm. Note the sand fences. (USCG archives, Washington DC)



Figure 23. Planting of American Beach Grass on man-made vegetated dunes in 1965. (USFW, www.assateague.com)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STEWARDSHIP, 1967-2025

Before the Coast Guard Station land could be transferred to the National Park Service (NPS), retention rights had to be signed over. The NPS was granted a License for Use from the Coast Guard from January 18, 1967 to January 15, 1968 pending the transfer actions. The transfer happened in the fall of 1967 and the NPS retained jurisdiction, accountability, control, and custody on September 1, 1967 (Figure 24). (National Archives, 1960s NPS correspondence: License of agreement; Letter dated 6 September 1967)

With the transfer, the NPS immediately made use of the station complex, housing lifeguard and interpretive staff in the station house and storing maintenance equipment in the boathouse/garage. They also used the grounds for maintenance storage and created an area south of the garage as a maintenance yard defined with sand walls (Figure 25). (Interview, 2000, Ish Ennis)

The man-made dunes in the station area were initially maintained by the NPS, but the costs were high and a more natural dune environment was encouraged in the park. In the early 1970s the massive attempts of stabilization on the island were abandoned. While not maintained in the recent past, the dunes can still be seen today and are an integral part of the landscape. At some point from this time to 1984, the light south of the Garage/Boathouse was removed, and between this time to 1994, the Triangulation Tower on the shoreline of Toms Cove was removed. (NPS 2000, web: Nat. Resources Fact Sheet)

Planning Reports:

A Development Concept Plan in 1971 updated the park's vision for the former station complex, proposing rehabilitating the interior of the station house for seasonal housing and the exterior for interpretation, and rehabilitating the boathouse for environmental study classrooms and a comfort station. Compared to earlier plans, the new road from the road/bridge only extended to the station area, along which were several parking areas. This plan also proposed a small camping site near the station rather than a larger campground on the tip, and interpretation of the Seaboard Fish Oil & Guano Company ruins to the northwest. Much of this plan was implemented, but in 1982 a storm destroyed the paved road and a deck built at the ruins. The campground was later abandoned. (eTIC, Dwg. #622-40004A, 1971)

In 1982, the park's General Management Plan called for the rehabilitation of the station's structures for adaptive use as housing, classroom for environmental education, storage, and maintenance. In the late 1990s, the park began focusing efforts to carry out the GMP recommendations, beginning with the collection of baseline information and treatment recommendations. This included a cultural landscapes inventory (2006) and a historic structures report (2007), both of which described the status of the site's historic resources, stating that "the overall landscape appears to retain a moderate to high degree of integrity from the period of significance" and that the station's buildings and structures have "excellent historical integrity." (EA 2005: 1-2)

In 2006 the NPS completed the "Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station Environmental Assessment (EA)." The EA evaluated several alternatives for potential future uses and treatment of the station, including:

- Alternative A, No-Action: maintain current management practices of stabilization and minimal rehabilitation with occasional short-term active use such as housing for visiting researchers and as storage;
- Alternative B, Rehabilitation for --Adaptive Use: accommodate a range of uses that fall under the umbrella of environmental research and education;
- Alternative C, Relocation of the Station Buildings: off of Assateague Island by a management entity other than NPS;
- Alternative D, Demolition: remove structures, rehabilitate the site and manage as a natural landscape. (FONSI 2006: 2)

Alternative B: Rehabilitation for Adaptive Use, was identified in the EA as the preferred and environmentally preferred alternative:

"This alternative best accomplishes the task of preserving the Station complex in its historic landscape, thereby maintaining its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. By developing partnerships with groups or institutions interested in utilizing the station for compatible research and education activities, it is expected that new funding resources would become available to augment federal expenditures for maintenance and rehabilitation. In turn, improved station facilities would support enhanced programs of environmental research and education, and thereby assist in achieving the park's overall goals for resource management and interpretation." (FONSI 2006: 2)

General Management Plan Update:

In the 2010s the park began updating its General Management Plan. Of the four possible management options, Alternative 3 was identified as the preferred alternative and the environmentally preferred alternative.

"Over time, visitor use infrastructure would evolve to more sustainable designs and likely shift to more stable locations both on and off the island. Most recreational uses and activities would continue while new water-based points of access would provide access to additional low density visitor use in the seashore's backcountry. Natural processes and the effects of climate change/sea level rise would be the primary forces influencing the condition and evolution of natural resources. Alternative 3 represents a long-term shifting of seashore facilities and assets to adapt to climate change." (GMP/EIS Final Abbreviated 2017: 5; GMP/EIS RoT 2021: 2)

References in the GMP/EIS Record of Treatment regarding the Assateague Beach Station were as follows:

--Cultural Resource Management: NPS will protect and maintain the former Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station and Green Run Lodge in situ as long as possible with improvements, subject to availability of funding. Adaptive reuse of both properties will provide additional protection. At the Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station, non-structural storm protection features, such as bayside stabilization, will be considered to protect the property from natural coastal processes and/or the effects of climate change/sea level rise. If it is determined that the historic structures and cultural landscape have become so damaged by coastal storms, sea level rise, or other climate change related issues that they create a hazard, NPS will document the resources in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (NPS 1995c) and other NPS policies, guidelines, and standards. Then NPS will likely demolish the damaged structures and rehabilitate the sites to foster a return to

natural conditions. (GMP/EIS RoT 2021: 8)

--Cultural Landscapes: Continued maintenance will have beneficial impacts on the National Register eligible cultural landscape at the former Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station. Adaptive reuse of the station will help to further stabilize and better maintain the cultural landscape, particularly with support from a partner. Beneficial impacts will also result from actions to protect the site as long as feasible from natural coastal processes and/or the effects of climate change/sea level rise. Eventually the cultural landscape will likely be significantly damaged or lost. Before then, the cultural landscape will be documented in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. (GMP/EIS RoT 2021: 19-20)

Conclusion:

The park has not used the station regularly as housing since 2002 due to outstanding maintenance and repair needs and recurring problems accessing the station by land during the Piping Plover breeding season March 15 to August 31. Access to the station is restricted to boat during the breeding season, and by boat, foot, or approved Over the Sand vehicles at other times. Additionally, due to high recurring maintenance costs, the Fish and Wildlife Service plans to relocate the public beach and associated facilities at Little Toms Cove to a new location 2.5 miles north beginning in 2025, which will further complicate station access. The ongoing effects of barrier island dynamics of shifting and siltating sands, and the damage of high tides during storm events, will continue to be a concern for the Assateague Beach Station complex. (FONSI 2006: 1-2; GMP 1982: 44)



Figure 24. Aerial view of the station shortly after the NPS took occupation. Note the topography change due to the sand fences. (Courtesy Larry Points, Assateague Island NS, c.1969-1972)



Figure 25. View looking north from "maintenance yard" created by park staff in the 1980s. (Courtesy of Mel Olsen, Assateague Island NS)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Defense	Coast Guard Facility	Coast Guard Facility	Yes	No	Yes
Domestic (Residential)	Multiple Dwelling	Dormitory (Bunkhouse)	Yes	No	No
Vacant (Not In Use)	Vacant/Maintained (Mothballed)		No	Yes	Yes
Landscape	Natural Area	Beach	Yes	Yes	No
Landscape	Natural Area	Dune	Yes	Yes	No
Transportation	Water-Related	Boat Launching Area	Yes	No	No
Defense	Naval Facility		Yes	No	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Other Restrictions

Public Access Narrative:

The Toms Cove Visitor Center is located on the south side of Beach Road, prior to the beach parking areas. The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is visible from Toms Cove. The station's grounds are open seasonally to walking and hiking. Public vehicular use along the ocean beach is restricted to Over Sand Vehicles (OSV), but no private vehicles are allowed at the site. Horse use is permitted year-round when the OSV areas are open. Non-commercial boats (except personal watercraft) can be beached at Toms Cove except from March 15 to August 31. Access to land and shoreline areas south and west of the station are closed from March 15 to August 31.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

The Coast Guard Station and the surrounding lands of the National Seashore and National Wildlife Refuge are located on the Indigenous homelands of the Pocomoke and Occohannock people. The 2017 GMP identified future park-wide planning projects, among them an ethnographic study of traditional uses of marine resources that would document and evaluate the significance of traditional uses of marine resources, including the use of oyster watch houses and duck blinds. (<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/chincoteague/about-us>; GMP 2017: 61)

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The historic integrity of Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance, 1922-1967, with the existing conditions as assessed in 2023-2024. Many landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain today. The station complex was designed and adapted for the purpose of saving lives and ships in distress. The siting of the station on a narrow strip of land between ocean and cove fulfilled this purpose in a unique way by allowing the crews to enter dangerous waters from the calmer waters of the cove. This relationship is still evident and is enhanced by the historic spatial organization and linear sequence of buildings, structures, and circulation features, as well as the surrounding maritime setting of beaches and natural and man-made dunes. The Station House is still the focal point of the station, where it sits on a low knoll. A Garage/Boathouse, Lookout Tower, Generator House, and Boathouse, along with water cisterns, a system of wood and concrete walkways, and a wharf remain today as surviving structures. The Entrance Road and interior roads are still distinguishable, though some have become traces due to infrequent use. Though now unused, the historic open yard used for life-saving drills fronting the Station House is still legible. A few electrical poles and concrete traces can be found throughout the property. Views to and from the property add to the story of the Coast Guard history by providing a visual of how life may have been for the life-savers of the surf on an isolated barrier island along the Atlantic coast.

Since 1967, some landscape characteristics and features at Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station have changed. The dynamic nature of the island continues to shift the ocean shoreline southwesterly and away from the station. A natural succession of vegetation has also grown up around the complex, but so far the road corridors and yard remain open and free of invasive shrub growth. The NPS once used the facility for seasonal housing and storage, but is now vacant. Most buildings and structure show evidence of damage and deterioration, particularly the wharf, breakwater, marine rail launchway, and wood walkways at Toms Cove. The T-dock has completely collapsed, with only pilings left today. Notably missing are the boats, wreck pole, flagpole, telephone poles, and other equipment that characterized a functioning life-saving station. As Assateague Island, including Toms Cove, continues to change dramatically in both shape and size. Ultimately, this will likely have a great impact on the Coast Guard Station property and its features.

Overall, the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association necessary to convey its significance. A summary of integrity findings is below:

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 1922-1967 period of significance for the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station.

Location:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The location of the station complex has not changed, and except for the Boathouse water cistern, the site's buildings and structures are in their original locations. However dynamic barrier island processes continue to shift the ocean shoreline southwesterly.

Design:

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The design of the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station followed standard design protocol for the Coast Guard Chatham-type design, and nearly all of its functional elements are extant. The most important individual resources – the Station House, Boathouse, Garage/Boathouse, and Lookout Tower – retain sufficient integrity to convey their intended appearance and function from the period of significance and, in the case of the Station

House and Boathouse, demonstrate their origins from standardized plans as well as their important Colonial Revival architectural details. The design and function of the wharf, T-dock, breakwater, marine rail launchway, and wood walkway are still evident despite their deteriorated conditions. The open yard space fronting the Station House that once accommodated drills also remains intact, but the wreck pole and flagpole, and other training apparatus, are missing.

Setting:

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. The setting of a Life-Saving Station along the oceanfront is somewhat diminished due to the gradual movement of the shoreline itself. However, the ocean is still visible from the station grounds, as is Toms Cove. The surrounding vegetated dunes and adjacent beaches contribute to the site's marine setting.

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 original wood, steel, and concrete materials that comprise the station's buildings and structures are still present, though many show signs of deterioration from prolonged exposure to maritime conditions. Vegetation at the site is typical of the barrier island environment.

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 best observed in the buildings, structures, and concrete walkways built in the 1920s-1930s. Of particular interest are the remaining water cisterns constructed with vertical staves held in place with metal compression rings and turnbuckles.

Feeling:

Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. The bustle of a working life-saving station has been replaced with quiet and solitude that characterizes much of Assateague Island. The constant roar of crashing waves, the pelt of windblown sand, and the sound of distant buoys dominate the visitor experience. Though currently vacant, the station's extant historic resources allow visitors to imagine the many activities that occurred during its operation. However, the absence of historic training and drill apparatus, flagpole, boats, and equipment somewhat diminished the historic feeling.

Association:

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. The site's historic resources continue to convey their associations with the life-saving operations of the US Coast Guard.

The next section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding Historic Structures Inventory (HSI, formerly List of Classified Structures) names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1922-1967), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, 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).

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

Historic Condition (to 1967):

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, climate, and native vegetation. The relationship between life-saving stations and the natural systems of Atlantic coastal barrier islands, marked by the frequent extremes of weather and the shifting nature of the landscape, was clearly a critical factor in the development of Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station, including site planning and the types and designs of specific features.

The life-saving stations, later the Coast Guard Stations, of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia watched over ship approaches to the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays. Most of these stations were located on the barrier islands that paralleled the mainland because they provided the most practical locations for watching for and acting upon ships in distress or warning them of dangerous shoals offshore. Both the first (1875) and second (1922) Assateague Beach Stations were unique in their orientation to the calm waters of a cove. The first station was located across from the present station on a then open cove created by the fork shape of Assateague Island's south end. The cove provided a calm water for surfboats to enter during a storm rescue. This location became untenable when barrier island processes extended the southeastern end of the fork southwesterly, which eventually created the hook shape present today. The foreshore of the cove quickly filled in, distancing the station from both the cove and the ocean. Between 1924 and 1970, the hook grew approximately 2 miles westward and by 1929 silting conditions in the cove made it impossible for ships to dock at the nearby fish factory or drag for oysters, an industry and resource that people of nearby Assateague Village depended upon. (Shanks 1998: 115)

When the Coast Guard relocated the station complex in 1922, it was built on a narrow strip of land on the hook and oriented nearly north-south, between the ocean to the south and cove to the north. Site development responded to this location's natural features. The Station House was sited on the central and highest part of the island, at approximately 12 feet above sea level. A boathouse was built approximately 250 feet from the ocean and oriented to the ocean. On a plan edited in 1932, the boathouse to ocean distance was 300 feet and it appears that an addition to the boathouse was sketched out. The addition was never built; instead a new wharf and boathouse were constructed extending into Toms Cove in 1939. The siting of the second Boathouse in Toms Cove shows that the Coast Guard was confident that their rescue operations would run much smoother by entering into the calmer waters of the cove than the turbulent surf of the sea, and the new building would be better protected on the cove.

The southwestern migration of the shoreline prompted the Coast Guard to add a third story to the Lookout Tower in 1938-1939. Shifting sands and storm events also impacted the reservation property and its surrounds, and after a particularly devastating storm in 1962 a full network of sand fences was erected to surround the station and presumably shield it from wind-blown sand. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the Coast Guard, also constructed man-made vegetative dunes paralleling the ocean in hopes of minimizing washovers.

The Coast Guard also took advantage of the natural systems by collecting rainwater. The Station House was constructed with two cylindrical cisterns supported on wood pilings at the rear of the building. The cisterns captured rainwater from the rooftops, recycled it into the house for plumbing, and plumbed out into a cesspool approximately 75 feet to the northeast. This system of capturing rainwater in cisterns was eventually used at the 1922 boathouse and the 1939 boathouse. Although not seen on the site visit, an artesian well is believed to be to the east of the station proper. The well was likely used by the Coast Guard and the adjacent fish factory.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Today much of the relationship between the Coast Guard Station and the natural features is evident (Figure 26). The building cluster remains centrally sited on the high point between the ocean and cove, the wharf and boathouse extend into Toms Cove, and the cisterns remain adjacent to the Station House and Garage/Boathouse. However, the T-dock and the northern half of the wharf have collapsed, and the cistern at the Boathouse is now stored on land.

The shape of the island continues to change, with sand deposits continuing to forge the way south and west. Since 1962 the hook has continued to shift southwesterly, Fishing Point continues to shift westward, and the narrow strip of land that connects the hook to the rest of the island has in effect rolled over itself into the cove a full width of itself. Based on the history of barrier island dynamics, it is possible that the leg of the hook may eventually wash away and become an inlet, leaving the hook landform an island of itself. (Duffy, 2000, digital file)

Much of the hook is beach and duneland with the Coast Guard Station set within this varied beach habitat. Many of the dunes are natural; however, around the station is a prominent system of dunes that formed along the lines of the sand fencing system constructed between 1962-1965. In addition, a marsh environment is supported where blowouts and other depressions occur close to the water table; there are several of these environs around the Coast Guard Station. (Perry 1989)

The dune and marsh environments have matured a great deal since the station was operational, and their ecosystems can provide for a number of animal species. In the interdune area the yellow-rumped warbler can be found eating on bayberry shrubs, the hognose snake, Fowler's toad, and Earthstar fungi may also be found. The famous Chincoteague Ponies roam the Toms Cove area and are often seen eating in the marsh. The Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company owns the ponies in Virginia and is allowed to graze up to 150 ponies on refuge land through a special use permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge that surrounds the Coast Guard Station. (Perry)

Birdwatchers will find many species to watch including the snow goose, a variety of herons, egrets, terns, and the threatened species, the piping plover. The piping plover nests in the unique habitat created by the Toms Cove Hook dune, beach, marsh, and ocean system. To allow the plover an undisturbed mating and nesting time, the entire area of Toms Cove Hook from just south of the public beach to Fishing Point is closed from the public during the period of March 15 through August 31.

Marine life on the island includes the mud fiddler crab, mud snail, and ribbed mussel. The large knobbed, lightning and channeled whelk shells are a popular shell collected by visitors and gift shops from Chincoteague. Other marine life and items found on the shore include Atlantic Bay Scallop, Eastern Oyster, Northern Quahog, Ponderous Ark, Angel Wing, Slipper Shell, Atlantic Jackknife, Stout Razor Clam, Atlantic Moon Shell, Horseshoe Crab, Skate Egg Case, Whelk Egg Capsules, Spider Crab, Moon Jellyfish, Keyhole Sand Dollar, Driftwood.

Evaluation:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station retains its historic connection to the island's natural systems and features, including the layout and development of the station's original facilities in 1922. The station also illustrates its response to changing conditions through the development of the facilities on Toms Cove in the 1930s, the addition of a third story to the Lookout Tower, and the erection of sand fences and dunes to promote dune formation that would protect the station's infrastructure.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 26. View looking northwest from the dunes southeast of the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation--hereafter OCLP--2023)

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Historic Condition (to 1967):

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. When the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station was constructed in 1922, it occupied roughly the middle of the island's hook. Here, the facility occupied a 5.32-acre rectangular reservation oriented north-south, within which was a core area oriented south towards the ocean. Sitting on a high point and facing south, the Station House was the focus of the complex with the Lookout Tower offset to the southwest, which was not common in Chatham-style station designs. In line with the Lookout Tower to the south was a boathouse and between the two was a signal/flag tower. Fronting the Station House was a level and open yard area where drills were performed and equipment was maintained or stored. One of the drill apparatuses, a wreck pole, was originally in line with the Station House and just south of the original boathouse but was later relocated to nearly the same location as the signal/flag tower.

The decision to build new wharf, dock, and boathouse facilities on Toms Cove in the 1930s changed the orientation to the north towards the cove. In 1931-1935 a new wharf, dock, and wood walkway were built in a direct line heading north from the Station House. In 1938-1939 a new boathouse was built adjacent to the wharf, which aligned with the towers and the original boathouse. At this time a person could walk in a straight line from the T-dock and wharf, along the wood walkway, to the concrete walks around the Station House, and across the yard to the wreck pole and then the ocean.

There were periods when housing, utility buildings, and barns were added to the complex, and

historic photographs show some of them were organized along the east side of the wood walkway. During World War II additional housing appears to have been organized in a right angle just south of the original boathouse. Off-site structures associated with the factory did not appear to follow a particular layout. (Interview, 2000, Bitner)

It is difficult to determine where roadways were prior to 1966; however, it is clear from aerial photographs throughout time that the primary land route into the station complex came from the southeast on the ocean side of the island. Within the complex, rough roads connected the various facilities and spaces, with several spurs heading west across the dunes.

As a result of the devastating storm of 1962, sand fences and man-made vegetated dunes were constructed around the station. This created a physical boundary that extended beyond the reservation boundary and blocked the historic linear connection with the ocean. Openings in the fence allowed for two vehicle access points at the southeast corner and one on the west. Fencing is seen in two other locations on the 1966 aerial; near the cove and to the west of the property there are rectangular areas divided into fenced compartments. It is unknown whether these spaces were used to pen animals or for another use.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

The site's linear organization is very much the same today as it was in 1967. The Station House remains the most prominent building on a low knoll, while the Lookout Tower and 1922 boathouse round out the original core (Figure 27). Although the dock and portions of the wharf and wood walkway have collapsed the remnant piers of these sections still convey their linear alignments, and along with the Boathouse, their spatial relationship with the original core area (Figure 28). Vegetated dunes have established along the sand fences, creating a subtle boundary in the landscape. Missing, is the linear sequence extending south to the ocean, which was blocked by the man-made vegetated dunes built in the early 1960s. However, these dunes have left a physical border that reveals the location of the ocean shoreline at that time.

Evaluation:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station retains its historic spatial relationships and linear layout through extant buildings and structures, circulation features, and open spaces. Sand fences and their resulting dunes have visually enlarged the site beyond its original boundaries. Primary vehicular and pedestrian access is still from the southeast, but boat access from Toms Cove is limited due to the collapse of the T-dock and portions of the wharf.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 27. View looking north-northwest at the spatial relationship of the station's original facilities. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 28. View looking north at the 1930s facilities built north of the Station House. (OCLP 2023)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Historic Condition (to 1967):

Land uses are the principal activities in a landscape that form, shape, and organize the landscape as a result of human interaction. The Coast Guard Station operated on Toms Cove hook from 1922-1967 after being located at a site across the cove that could no longer serve the crew. In addition to assisting, sheltering, and protecting the lives of those in need, the Coast Guard was charged with other responsibilities. The station was involved in policing the shore during the "rum-running" years of the 1920s. During war time periods the station was transferred to the both the army or navy and given responsibilities of surveillance for enemy ships and saboteurs. The station was always considered a part of the community of Chincoteague, and with that came duties of assistance in fire and hurricane events. Over the years as life-saving needs decreased and communities left or grew, the duties of the Coast Guard had come to include policing of waterfowl hunting and boating regulations.

The 5.32-acre reservation tract ran from ocean to cove, and although the property lines were a mere 200 feet wide, the Coast Guard was given permission in title to use the land beyond this narrow strip of deeded property. Aerial photos indicate roads, small-scale equipment, even small structures and towers beyond the boundary that were part of the Coast Guard operations. In 1943, the lands bordering the reservation became part of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

The Station House housed the crew and gave shelter to shipwrecked victims. It also included offices, baths, recreation spaces, and a kitchen. The new boathouse built in 1938-1939 was used for launching heavy surfboat and motors into the cove. At this time the 1922 boathouse was reused as a garage. With the duties of life-saving came the need to conduct life-saving drills with the equipment used to aid in rescues. It is likely that the yard fronting the Station House was used for such drills, as the signal/flag tower was located on its west side, the wreck pole was originally at its south side and then moved to the west side. A 1966 aerial photograph suggests recreational sports may also have occurred in the yard.

Additional housing for families and barns for horses are known to have been in existence at various times at the station. Temporary housing and stables were built during World War II to house the 50 men present, the 10-12 horses, and perhaps the men's families. Also in 1943, the station was a test station for the use of a vertical steel radiator tower. A helipad is believed to have existed west of the station house. (Interview, 2000, Bitner; USCG Report on the Erection of Vertical Steel Tower; Interview, 1990, Switzer)

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

When the station property was transferred to the NPS in 1967, all Coast Guard and Navy facilities beyond the reservation tract had been removed. The park used the Station House as seasonal housing for lifeguards and interpretive staff, and for maintenance storage. In the 1980s the NPS used the area south of the Garage/Boathouse as a maintenance yard where they moved sand to form a protected area for stored lumber and other materials. The maintenance yard has since been moved to another location. (Interview, 2000, Ennis, Olsen)

By the early 2000s use of the station complex was limited to the buildings and structures and the areas immediately around them. The Station House served as temporary housing for visiting researchers and for storage, while the Garage/Boathouse was used for storage. The Lookout Tower was used by NASA, which installed several small meteorological devices in various locations on the property. Long-term plans for the station at this time included its development as an environmental education center. However, the unreliability and difficulty in accessing the station, and restrictions associated with the Chincoteague NWR, made such uses difficult to sustain.

Today the station buildings and structures are vacant and exhibit signs of deterioration. The Lookout Tower is unused and closed to all access. The T-dock has collapsed, and portions of the

wood walkway, wharf, and breakwater are missing or in poor condition. The Entrance Road and interior roads have been narrowed to fairly distinct one vehicle widths, as compared to earlier times, and vegetation has grown up in areas where previously activities kept the vegetation minimal. Surrounding recreation includes boating, surfing, fishing, crabbing, clamming, off-road-vehicle use, and numerous opportunities for interpretation. Hikers occasionally visit and explore the site, but there is no longer any active on-site NPS interpretation.

Evaluation:

Historic land uses are no longer practiced at the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station. Buildings and structures are vacant, and most show signs of deterioration. Damage to the wood walkway and wharf has prompted the NPS to erect barricades and "Do No Enter" signs. Landscape spaces are likewise abandoned but are still visible. An occasional hiker can be found exploring the site, but there are no waysides or interpretive signs at the site.

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
Station House Yard	209888	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Historic Condition (to 1967):

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). As mentioned in the history chapter, the landmass on which the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station sits upon did not exist above sea level until around 1906. When the station was built in 1922 the landmass appears to have been a mostly level beach environment from ocean to cove with a very slight elevation change that extended into the ocean. The site's high point was a low knoll approximately 50 feet east-northeast from the Station House. The 1921 site plan and the Station House elevation drawings both indicate an elevation of 12 feet above sea level for the Station House at ground level. The annotated 1932 site plan indicated the original boathouse at an elevation of approximately 7.5 feet and the Lookout Tower between 8 and 10 feet.

As sands shifted to create the island's hook, naturally occurring dunes gradually began to form. The topography also changed when man-made dunes and sand fences were constructed in the early 1960s. The dunes were built parallel to the ocean shoreline and were typically between 10 and 15 feet tall. Sand fences were also erected east and west of the station to encourage dune development. Collectively, these new barriers encircled the various station features on all sides except the cove and blocked off direct access to the ocean. Openings were left in the fences where vehicles and/or equipment could enter and exit. The intent was to protect the station grounds from the accretion of blowing sand and prevent or slow stormwater washovers.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

The topography surrounding the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station today is low with elevations ranging from 0 feet at the shorelines to 12 feet above sea level at the center of the property. The Station House still occupies the site's high point, from which the landform gently slopes down to the ocean and cove, dotted with sporadic low points of blowouts and depressions populated with marsh plants. Remnants of the man-made dunes, some around 10-feet high, are visible but increasing cloaked in vegetation (Figure 29).

Evaluation:

As time has passed, barrier island dynamics have continued to alter the shape and elevations of the hook and will continue for many years. The historic high point of the site remains, as do natural and man-made dunes. The sand dunes, depressions, and increased sand deposition to the south have contributed to protection of the station's facilities and have been an example of how humans can change the natural environment.

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
Remnant Man-Made Dunes	209889	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 29. View looking north-northwest toward the Boathouse at Toms Cove. Traces of now-vegetated dunes (image right) are still visible along the sand fence northeast of the Station House. (OCLP 2023)

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Historic Condition (to 1967):

Vegetation includes deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous plants and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced in the landscape. Details regarding the vegetative state of the hook in its initial existence are unknown. Early establishment and survival of vegetation was dictated by the marine environment shaped by the frequency and intensity of storms and the area's susceptibility to storm overwash. Period photographs indicate that the area was an open level area of sand and grass. The 1922 site plan indicates a pocket of vegetation near the site's high point. The earliest photos of the Station House indicate that a grass was cut around the buildings. Although the Life-Saving Service often sodded their stations to prevent erosion in the yard areas, it is unknown whether the Coast Guard sodded the yard at Assateague Beach; a former guardsman states that they mowed the grass in the yard twice week but does specify what type of grass. (Interview, 1990, Switzer)

Aerial photographs from 1949 and 1957 indicate sparse vegetation, but in the early 1960s man-made vegetated dunes were constructed all along the ocean shoreline and sand fences were erected surrounding the station proper, creating a barrier for natural processes to continue blowing over the area.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

The 1966 aerial photographs and period photographs suggest a denser vegetative cover in the area, especially along the man-made dunes edging the property. In 1965 and again in 1993, American Beach Grass was planted along the sand fences to stabilize the dunes. A 1974 Natural Resources Report found that the vegetation was mostly beach and vegetated dune systems.

According to aerial photographs, by 1997, the dune vegetation was well established. The predominant vegetation is naturally occurring with little evidence of ornamental or managed vegetation in the area of the station complex. According to the 1994-1995 Natural Resources Vegetation Inventory, three major ecological communities exist at the Coast Guard Station, including beaches, vegetated dunes, and salt-marshes (Figure 30).

--Shrubland

- 1) Groundsel Bush/High Tide Bush (*Baccharis halimifolia*), Marsh Elder/Big-leaf Sumpweed (*Iva frutescens*), Saltmeadow Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*)
- 2) Wax Myrtle/Tallow Shrub/Southern Bayberry (*Myrica cerifera*), Groundsel Bush (*Baccharis halimifolia*), Saltmeadow Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*)
- 3) Southern Bayberry (*Myrica cerifera*), Penny-wort (*Hydrocotyle* spp.)
- 4) Northern Bayberry (*Myrica pennsylvanica*), Buttonweed (*Diodia teres*)

--Dwarf-Shrubland

- 1) Sand Heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*), Switchgrass (*Panicum amarum*), Panicgrass (*Amarulum*)

--Sparse Shrubland

- 1) Northern Bayberry (*Myrica pennsylvanica*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* ssp. *littorale*), Hyssopleaf Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium hyssopifolium*)

--Upland Herbaceous Vegetation

- 1) American Beach Grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*), Switchgrass (*Panicum amarum*), Panicgrass (*Amarulum*)

--Wetland Herbaceous Vegetation

- 1) Saltmarsh Cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), Seaweed fucus (*Ascophyllum nodosum*)
- 2) Saltmeadow Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), Inland Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), Bushy Seaside Tansy (*Borrchia frutescens*)

--Beach

- 1) naturally occurring sandy area

In addition, several eastern red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) are found around the Coast Guard Station complex. While this is a native species presently found widely on the island, it is also a species that is widely planted for ornamental purposes in the region. However, period photographs do not show the presence of these trees during the period of significance.

The patterns that the vegetative groups form describe the ocean to cove landscape and are reflective of the fencing practices of the 1960s. From the shorelines moving towards the center of the island there are the following general vegetation distributions: naturally occurring unvegetated areas, or beach, moving to dwarf shrubland, shrubland, and mixed herbaceous species, or dune. Pockets of marshland can be found within the interdune area as well as closer to the shorelines. The taller dunes consisting of dwarf shrubland clearly reflect the man-made dunes and fencelines seen in the 1966 aerial photograph.

Evaluation:

It would be very difficult to determine what kind of vegetation existed prior to the Coast Guard Station, as the island was in a constant state of flux, but it is known that the hook landform was lower, subject to more frequent overwash, and likely dominated by various grass species. Today, shrubland dominates all but the sand and grass areas around the site's buildings, structures, and roads. However, as use of the site continues to decrease, some of these spaces are beginning to transition to more established vegetation. The open yard space south of the Station House, and spaces around the perimeter of buildings, are mowed and bushhogged twice a year to keep vegetation growth in check.

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
Beach Vegetation	209890	Contributing					No
Dune Plant Community	209891	Contributing					No
Marsh Plant Community	209892	Contributing					No
Saltmarsh (Cove-side) Plant Community	209893	Contributing					No
Junipers	209894	Noncontributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 30. View looking northeast showing a transition from shrubland to grasses. The water cistern at image left was formerly located on the west side of the new boathouse. (OCLP 2023)

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Historic Condition (to 1967):
Circulation refers to the spaces, features, and applied material finishes that constitute systems of movement in a landscape. While the Coast Guard Station was certainly accessed from the water, the development of early roads and paths is not well understood, as they do not appear on historic maps or photographs. However, it can be presumed that a road or path that accessed the station from the east, and that it connected to the various facilities around the Station House and beyond

the reservation boundaries toward the ocean.

This circulation system was expanded toward Toms Cove when the wharf, T-dock, and wood walkway were built in the early 1930s. Pedestrian circulation features included a 5-foot-wide wood walkway to connect the Station House area to the wharf area. The walkway featured a railing on its east side, except for an opening where a short walkway accessed a structure that may have been housing or storage in the 1930s-1940s. At the Station House a system of concrete sidewalks began at the front door. A concrete pad approximately 6 x 8 feet was located at the bottom of the building's porch steps stamped with the date, "1934." A 3-foot-wide concrete walkway headed south from the pad for approximately 24 feet where it abruptly ended. Another 3-foot concrete walkway ran from the pad along the south and east sides of the building to the north porch. Around 1959 a concrete sidewalk was built from the north porch to the Generator House.

An aerial photograph from 1966 indicates more distinct road patterns. An entrance road approached the station from the southeast and branched into two roads that entered the site through two openings in the eastern sand fence: one branch headed northwest to terminate as a parking area on the east side of the Station House, the other branch headed west to the Garage/Boathouse and then turned north to pass the Lookout Tower and west side of the Station House, and then jogged slightly to parallel the wood walkway that connected to the wharf. Another road headed west from the Station House to an opening in the western sand fence, from which it branched into numerous roads that tracked through the dunes. These roads may have led to a helipad or and perhaps later, a trash dump. (Interview, 2000, ASIS park staff)

Period photographs indicate loose gravel (or oyster shell) and sand as the primary road surface. There is no evidence that the roads at the station were paved. However, records indicated that an asphalt-paved road ran from the visitor center at Little Toms Cove along the island toward the station. This asphalt road washed out in the 1980s and was not replaced. (Statement for Management, 1982)

Post Historic and Existing Conditions: Catwalk.

With construction of the new Boathouse in 1938-1939 at Toms Cove, two catwalks with railings were constructed to connect the boathouse walkways to the wharf. Today only the south catwalk remains.

Entrance Road and Trace.

Current access to the property is by boat or a four-wheel-drive vehicle over sand. Upon arrival to the site from the east, a sand-covered entrance road curves through the dunes. Where this road once split, the branch heading northwest is only a trace, but the branch heading east remains as the primary entrance (Figure 31).

Interior Roads.

Two interior roads trek through the site from the Entrance Road and almost form a loop. One segment heads north, tracks east of the Station House, and ends on the north side of the Station House (Figure 32). Another segment heads west and then turns north, tracking west of the Garage/Boathouse, Lookout Tower, and Station House, and then jogs slightly to parallel the wood walkway to Toms Cove (Figure 33). Road surfaces range from all sand, to two-tracks of sand and groundcover, to all groundcover. Only traces remain of the parking area east of the station and the road heading west and off-site to the dunes. In the early 2000s the park added recycled asphalt chips to keep the roads stabilized and distinguishable; some of this aggregate material remains today.

System of Concrete Walkways.

The concrete path system relating to the Station House is mostly intact. A 6 x 8-foot square concrete pad fronts the front steps of the building. From the pad a 3 x 24-foot walkway extends south and a 3-foot wide walkway heads east and then turns north to the porch steps on the north side of the building (Figure 34). Another concrete walkway heads southwest from the Generator House to this area; it connected to this walkway until 1999 when a section was removed for the

installation of a new septic field (Figure 35).

Wood Walkway.

Portions of the wood walkway linking the Station House area to the Wharf and Boathouse area are extant, but some sections are missing (Figure 36). The park has closed the northern part of the walkway, which still has railings, due to unsafe conditions on the wharf. The short walkway extension to the east has been removed.

Evaluation:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station includes several original circulation features that convey the historic character of the station, including an entrance road, interior roads, a wood walkway, and concrete walks. Other circulation features now exist as traces or were lost to storms and shifting sand.

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
Catwalk	209895	Contributing					No
Entrance Road and Trace	209896	Contributing					No
Interior Roads	209897	Contributing					No
System of Concrete Sidewalks (around Station)	209898	Contributing					No
System of Concrete Sidewalks (Landing Pad at Front Porch Steps)	209899	Contributing					No
System of Concrete Sidewalks (Generator House)	209900	Contributing					No
Wood Walkway	209901	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 31. View looking west at the Entrance Road. A grass-covered trace of the Entrance Road segment that once headed northwest is visible at image right. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 32. View looking northwest at one of the roads in the station grounds. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 33. View looking north at one of the roads in the station grounds. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 34. View looking north at some of the concrete walkways at the Station House. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 35. View looking southwest at the concrete walk that connects the Generator House to the Station House. The two water cisterns collected water from the Station House roof. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 36. View looking north-northwest damaged portions of the wood walkway that connects the Station House to the facilities at Toms Cove. (OCLP 2023)

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Historic Condition (to 1967):

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 Station House was the most prominent building at Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station. Built in 1922, the architecture of the new station appeared to follow standard design protocol for Coast Guard stations of the period rather than drawing from the vernacular of the area. The 2-story building was of the "Chatham" style used by the Coast Guard and designed by the last official architect of the Live-Saving Service, Victor Mendleheff. Two cylindrical rainwater collection cisterns set on wood supports were located at the north side (rear) of the building. In the 1930s a covered porch was added to the west side of the building. Wall screen inserts were installed in the new porch and on the south (front) porch sometime before 1943. A sign above the front door read, "U.S. Coast Guard Station 150." (NR 2015, Sec.7: 7-8)

The Coast Guard built additional support structures to the south and southwest of the Station House in 1922. A 1-story boathouse was built approximately 250 feet south of the Station House. The simple rectangular building featured a hip roof and two double-wide doors facing the ocean to the south. A water cistern was built a few feet from the boathouse in c.1940. In 1922-1923 a Lookout Tower was erected between the station house and boathouse. It was 2 stories high and topped with a small wood-frame cabin until 1938-1939 when the tower was raised to 3 stories, presumably because the ocean shoreline had migrated farther east and south.

A wharf, T-dock, and new boathouse were built north of the Station House in the 1930s. The wharf and T-dock were built in 1931-1935 and extended north into Toms Cove. A small transfer pump house was erected on the T-dock by 1939. A 1.5-story boathouse was built on pilings in 1938-1939 just west of the wharf and featured a rectangular hip roof with dormers, porticoed entrance, and three bay doors facing the cove. Signs reading "U.S. Coast Guard Assateague Beach Station" were affixed above the north and south doors. Wood walks with railings extended from the building, and continued without railings northward to flank both sides of a marine rail launchway aligned with the three bay doors. The walks were connected to the wharf by two catwalks with railings. When the new boathouse was completed, the original 1922 boathouse was converted into a garage. Around 1943 a water cistern supported on pilings was erected on the west side of the boathouse. Around 1950, a breakwater structure was added to the east side of the wharf to protect the wharf pilings against wave action.

Through the years that the Coast Guard Station was in operation, several other structures were built throughout the within and beyond the reservation boundaries. East of the wood walkway, historic photographs from the 1930s indicate several buildings. An interview with former guardsman, Louis Bitner, revealed that these were homes, a bungalow, and a houseboat when he served in 1943-1944. Stables may also have been present in this area as part of the horse patrol in 1942, and perhaps at an earlier date. An electrical plan drawn in 1960 shows a paint locker on the east side of the walkway with a wood platform over fuel tanks; the building may have been one of the aforementioned structures. South of the Garage/Boathouse, temporary housing units were present in 1943. North of the Station House, a small, 1-story, rectangular fire pump house was constructed in 1947-1949 on the west side of the wood walkway. According to NPS personnel it had a support platform for a pipe that was mounted on the boardwalk and ran to the new boathouse. Nearby on the east side of the wood walkway, a 1-story concrete block generator house was built in 1959. (Interview, Bitner 2000; Interview, Olsen, 2000)

Off-site structures adjacent to the site in the 1920s included a number of "outlying" boathouses and the buildings of the fish factory. The fish factory closed in 1929 and the buildings were cleared after a storm in 1935 destroyed them.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

USCG Boathouse and Marine Rail Launchway.

The Boathouse, built 1938-1939, is a one-story, hip roofed, wood and steel frame, rectangular building that stands on pilings (Figure 37). It has a three-bay-by-five-bay (approximately 46-by-62-foot) rectangular plan and is in the Colonial Revival style. The building's south facade is oriented toward the Station House and the north facade faces Toms Cove. The red, wood-shingled roof has three gabled dormers on its east and west slopes, a single dormer on the north slope, and a copper

gutter set under the shallow overhanging eaves. Both identification signs are missing. The surrounding wood walks are extant but most of the railings are missing, and only one of the two catwalks that once connected to the wharf remains. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 6)

The Marine Rail Launchway runs from the boathouse interior, out the three double doors, then down into the water of Toms Cove where it continues for an unknown length below the watersheet (Figure 38). This launchway is a wood pile-supported, frame structure topped with three steel marine railway track systems bolted to timber stringers and surrounded by a wood plank deck. Portions of narrow wood pile finger piers flanking the three railways extends approximately 100 feet north from the level deck of the launchway, which is also beginning to fail. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 7)

USCG Garage/Boathouse.

Located approximately 450 feet southwest of the Station House, the 1.5-story, three-bay-by-one-bay, rectangular, hip-roofed building is sheathed in white painted clapboards and the roof is clad in red asbestos tile (Figure 39). The wood frame building is seated on a wood-frame base supported by 6-inch diameter wood pilings; at one time the pilings were exposed 4 feet above the ground, but shifting sands have buried the posts and sill of the building. The building has entrances on the east and south elevations consisting of green-painted vertical board double doors. The southern entrance faces onto the road and has two sets of doors, accessed by low concrete ramps with embedded metal traction rings. The eastern entrance, at the north end of the elevation, consists of one set of vertical board doors accessed by a low concrete ramp, which was likely used for smaller boats and pedestrian access. The building was converted to use as a garage after the completion of the Boathouse on Toms Cove in 1939. After acquisition of the property by the NPS, the building was used as a maintenance shop. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 9)

USCG Generator House.

Built in 1959 northeast of the Station House, this utility building has a shallow pitched shed roof with deep plank fascia boards, painted concrete block walls, and a concrete slab foundation (see Cover). A pair of wood doors, accessed by a low concrete ramp, sits just off center in the south elevation. Window openings in the east and west elevations are covered over with plywood, and a pair of former window openings in the north elevation are filled with concrete block. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 10)

USCG Lookout Tower.

Erected between 1922-1923, the 37-foot-high Lookout Tower consists of an open-frame steel tower seated on four concrete pads and topped with a 7-foot-square frame cabin with a wood platform with galvanized pipe railings (Figure 40). The tower's steel frame is bolted together from rolled L-channel members. The cabin at the top of the tower, providing 360-degree views of the surrounding ocean, is accessed by a wood ladder with two intermediate landings. The cabin is topped with an overhanging hipped roof clad in wood shingles, has clapboard walls, one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows, and a paneled wood door. The structure was raised to its current height of three stories in 1938-1939. It is inaccessible due to missing rungs on the access ladders. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 8)

USCG Station House.

Built in 1922, the Station House is approximately 700 feet south of the USCG Boathouse and oriented facing south toward the Atlantic coast (see Cover). The 2-story Colonial Revival style building has a gable-on-hip roof, a raised poured concrete basement, and a five-bay-by-two-bay (approximately 40-by-26-foot) rectangular plan. A small entry porch is centered on the south elevation. A hip-roofed porch added in 1938 extends across the west end of the building. Both porches were later screened but in 2009-2015 the screens and screen doors were removed. The red, asbestos shingle-clad roof has a single brick chimney set off-center on the ridge line, plank gable rakes and deep soffits, and a copper gutter system. The wood clapboard-clad walls terminate at simple plank corner boards and are punctuated with regularly spaced windows. The wood windows are covered with aluminum storm units, some of which are broken. A painted wood sign on the front porch architrave reads "U.S. Coast Guard Assateague Beach Station." It is unknown when this sign was changed from the earlier signs, or by whom. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 7-8)

USCG Wharf and Breakwater.

Built 1931-1935, this structure extends approximately 400 feet north into Toms Cove from the shoreline adjacent to the Boathouse (see Figures 37, 38). The wharf is in the form of a finger pier with an attenuated "T" plan and is constructed in a typical early twentieth-century design with wood piles, caps, stringers, and plank decking. The breakwater, added along the east side of the wharf in 1950, is a wood sheet pile structure topped by a timber fender system and bolted to the east wharf stringer. Since 2015, a portion of the wharf and breakwater, and the entire T-dock, have collapsed, leaving only support pilings. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 9)

Boathouse Cistern (Platform and Pilings).

The cistern was originally built ca.1943 at the northern end of the boathouse's west elevation on a platform supported by cluster of wood piles. It was fed by the gutter downspout from the boathouse drainage system.

The cistern was removed before 1987, then reconstructed by the NPS c.1992. It was removed sometime after 2015 and is currently located in the dunes west of the Garage/Boathouse (see Figure 30). The cistern consists of a cylindrical tank, 8 feet in diameter and 10 feet high, constructed of white painted vertical staves held in place with metal compression rings and turnbuckles. It is topped with a board and batten, conical roof with a decorative finial at its peak. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 7)

Fire Pump House Foundation.

The concrete foundation is all that remains of the 1-story fire pump house built in 1947-1949 just north of the Station House, on the west side of the wood walkway.

Garage Cistern.

Erected c.1940 when the 1922 boathouse was converted into a garage (see Figure 39). The cistern is situated at the southern end of the east elevation of the Garage/Boathouse, and consists of a cylindrical tank, 8 feet in diameter and 10 feet high, constructed of white painted staves held in place with metal compression rings and turnbuckles. A conical roof, constructed of board and batten, was once painted red and accented with decorative finial. Gutter downspouts from the Garage/Boathouse drainage system supply water to the cistern. The structure no longer holds water. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 9)

Station House Cisterns.

Built at the same time as the Station House, they are situated just off the building's north wall (see Figure 35). The cylindrical cisterns are 8 feet in diameter and 10 feet high, constructed of white painted staves held in place with metal compression rings and turnbuckles and topped with red painted, board and batten, conical roofs. Both were topped with decorative finials at the peaks, but only one remains today. The tanks are seated on timber bents that extend 12 feet above grade and are each composed of 12-inch-diameter piles reinforced with plank cross-bracing. The cisterns are fed by a pair of gutter extensions from the Station House drainage system. (NR 2015, Sec.7: 8)

Evaluation:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station includes several original buildings and structures that convey the historic character of the station, including the Station House, Lookout Tower, Garage/Boathouse, Boathouse, Wharf, Breakwater, Generator House, and cisterns. However, all are exhibiting various stages of damage, deterioration, or collapse.

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
USCG Boathouse and Marine Rail Launchway	209902	Contributing	7744				No
USCG Garage/Boathouse	209903	Contributing	7743				No
USCG Generator House	209904	Contributing					No
USCG Lookout Tower	209905	Contributing	7746				No
USCG Station House	209906	Contributing	7742				No
USCG Wharf and Breakwater	209907	Contributing	7745				No
Boathouse Cistern (Platform and Pilings)	209908	Contributing					No
Garage/Boathouse Cistern	209909	Contributing					No
Station House Cisterns	209910	Contributing					No
Fire Pump House Foundation	209911	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 37. View looking northwest at the wharf (1931-1935), breakwater (1950), and Boathouse (1938-1939). (OCLP 2023)



Figure 38. View looking north-at the marine rail launchway and flanking finger piers, built in 1931-1935. In the background at image right are the remnants of the wharf and T-dock. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 39. View looking northwest at the Garage/Boathouse and cistern, built in 1922. (OCLP 2023)



Figure 40. View looking northwest at the Lookout Tower, built in 1922-1923 and raised in 1938-1939. (OCLP 2023)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Historic Condition (to 1967):

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. From the establishment of the Coast Guard Station in 1922, before advancements in radar technologies, the most critical views were those from the Lookout Tower looking east, south, and west across the dunes and shoreline towards the ocean to search for potential ships in distress. In 1938-1939, the tower was raised in response to the ocean shoreline's southerly migration. The view looking north from the Lookout Tower to Toms Cove, the factory, and the Assateague Lighthouse in the distance would also have been unobstructed, although this view was initially not as critical as the view to the ocean. The scene in this north view changed in the 1930s with construction of the new wharf, T-dock, and boathouse and removal of the adjacent factory buildings and associated docks.

The 360-degree view from the Lookout Tower also revealed interior views, namely the linear layout of the station complex, anchored by the Station House. Though less critical, internal views were also important between the Station House and the wharf and from the Station House looking south across the yard and the dunes beyond. There were also views looking toward the station complex from the beach, the Entrance Road, and Toms Cove.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Although the ocean shoreline continues to migrate, views from the Lookout Tower looking east, south, and west toward the ocean and looking north to Toms Cove and the lighthouse remain intact. However, public access to the tower is prohibited due to its poor condition. Views are also extant between the Station House and wharf and from the Station House looking south, though the scene has certainly changed with the loss various towers and equipment, and deterioration of the wood walkway, wharf, and T-dock. The views of the station complex from the beach, dunes, Entrance Road, and Toms Cove also remain intact.

Evaluation:

Views to and from the station add to the story of the Coast Guard history by providing a visual of how life may have been for the life-savers of the surf on an isolated barrier island along the Atlantic coast. The site retains key outward views that were critical to life-saving operations, as well as numerous internal views within the station complex. Regardless of the direction one looks today, there are no modern intrusions in these views.

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
Views from Lookout Tower to Ocean and Cove	209912	Contributing					No
View from Lookout Tower of the Station Complex	209913	Contributing					No
Views between Station House and Wharf	209914	Contributing					No
View looking South from Station House to Yard and Dunes	209915	Contributing					No
Views of Station Complex from Beach, Dunes, Entrance Road, and Cove.	209916	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

Historic Condition (to 1967):

Small-scale features are elements that provide detail and diversity for both functional needs and aesthetic concerns in the landscape. Training features were present at all original life-saving stations during their years of operation. At the Assateague Beach, historic photographs show various equipment scattered about the yard and its surrounds, and beyond the reservation property line, illustrating the extensive use of the landscape. The typical life-saving equipment included a beach apparatus cart, a Lyle gun, breeches buoy apparatus, a life car, flotation devices, wreck pole, and other life-saving gear such as ropes and poles. Drills were performed at a wreck pole located south and east of the 1922 boathouse until sometime between 1943-1962 when the pole was relocated or rebuilt between the Garage/Boathouse and Lookout Tower. Historic photographs of the pole's first location indicate it was supported by cables attached to square concrete pads. (Instruction book 1918; logbooks; Shanks 1998: 33)

Communication towers were also important features at the station, including a signal/flag tower, light tower, triangulation tower, radiator tower, and telephone lines. A signal/flag tower was located west of the reservation boundary in 1922-1923 but its exact location is not known. It was likely used for the international code of signals as well as a storm warning tower. The four-legged tower was topped with a long single pole; historic photographs suggest the structure was around 50 feet in height. The tower is not seen in later photos, at which time single flagpoles with the American flag are seen at different locations. A light tower proposed on a 1932 station plan was built in 1933 south of the 1922 boathouse. Identified as flashing every five seconds, the light tower was removed at an unknown date. Before 1943, a 50-foot tall steel US Navy Triangulation Tower was built on the Toms Cove shore west of the wood walkway before 1939. In 1943 the Navy built a Vertical Steel Radiator Tower south of the garage/boathouse. It was removed between 1957-1962. Lastly, historic photographs indicate telephone poles at the station, including a distinct line of poles that paralleled a rough road heading northwest from the station. This line was likely in place by 1949 when it led to the underwater telephone cable connecting Fishing Point to Gallops Island. Some of the station's telephone poles likely carried electric lines after the Generator House was constructed in 1959. At least two patrol poles with boxes on them were present at the north and south ends of the beach.

Several forms of signage were present at the station. When the Station House was built in 1922, the sign above the door read, "U.S. Coast Guard Station 150." When the new Boathouse was built in 1939, signs above the north and south doors read, "U.S. Coast Guard Assateague Beach Station." Sometime before 1976, the sign on the station house was changed to include, "Chincoteague District." A free-standing vertical sign was present on the east side of the station yard beginning in 1943. The sign was washed away in the 1962 hurricane and replaced by 1965. The station also had a horizontal sign, which simply read, "150." This sign was attached to a 3-foot-tall platform of boards upon which the Coast Guard painted the station number to aid in identifying stations from airplanes. Located south of the Entrance Road, the horizontal sign was visible in a 1966 aerial photograph. (Shanks 1998: 104)

An above-ground oil tank was installed on the north side of the Station House in 1955 as part of a new heating system, which replaced the building's interior radiators with oil-fired hot-water heating. Near the oil tank was the buried septic tank that was installed sometime after 1950.

Boats present at various times included a paver boat, a small liberty boat, a picket boat that had a pilot house, and a lifeboat. The picket boat was the main patrol force after 1925 and likely before 1939 when a larger 30-foot lifeboat arrived. The lifeboat was the main boat used for rescues and had to be pulled on the marine railway into the Boathouse by a motor. Other vehicles present included a truck, a jeep, and briefly a duck vehicle that ran on land and water. Off-site, but very important to marine navigation, were the various light and fog buoys that surrounded the island's hook as seen in the 1920, 1942, and 1943 USGS topographic maps. The crew of Assateague Beach Station maintained the buoys and nightly performed the duty of checking their lights. (USCG

logbooks, 1924-1925; Interview, Bitner, 2000)

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:

Entrance Sign.

A vertical entrance sign attached to wood posts stands in the yard south of the Station House, where the Entrance Road meets the Loop Road (see Cover). The sign reads "U.S. Coast Guard Assateague Beach Station" and includes a logo and two graphics. The current sign is a replica that was installed in 2018. A former park VIP and lifeguard created the digitized design based on the original sign. NPS maintenance staff built the sign frame.

Flagpole Foundation.

An exposed concrete slab sits on the east edge of the yard, directly east of the Lookout Tower (Figure 41). It is likely the same slab that supported a flagpole as seen in the 1962 oblique photograph.

Navy Triangulation Tower Foundation.

Four 24 x 24-inch concrete footings are all that remain of this 50-foot tower, located on the Toms Cove shoreline just west of the wood walkway. Several guy line anchors can be found in the surrounding dunes and grasses, as well as one exposed on the beach. The tower was taken down between 1976 and 1994. This feature is unrelated to historic-period life-saving operations.

Oil Tank.

The oil tank is a concrete form structure approximately 5 x 10 x 3 feet in size that stand atop an earthen mound on the north side of the Station House, next to the two water cisterns.

Picnic Table.

A typical wood and metal picnic table stands near the Generator House.

Remnant NASA Weather Equipment.

NASA once installed and maintained modern meteorological equipment in various places on the station complex, remnants of which remain today: equipment on the lookout tower, a wood post that supported a precipitation measuring device between the Lookout Tower and the Garage/Boathouse, a wooden box north of the Lookout Tower that housed a device; and a short metal pole next to a tall wood pole near the Toms Cove shoreline. The installation and removal dates of these features are unknown. These features are unrelated to historic-period life-saving operations.

Septic Tank and Cover.

A concrete hatch and portions of the top of the septic tank are visible on the north side of the Station House, adjacent to the oil tank and water cisterns. The septic system has been abandoned.

Power Poles.

There are far fewer utility poles at the station, as most telephone poles and the patrol boxes have been removed. Three utility poles currently stand on the west side of the wood walkway, while a fourth pole is located east of the Generator House. They were likely installed in 1959, when the Generator House was built. Some of the poles still support transformers and wires, while other wires are down and sway in the wind. Lines also extend from the poles to the Station House and Boathouse. The power lines are not currently operational.

Unknown Concrete Pad.

A small concrete pad is located just west of the fire pump house foundation, but its purpose is unknown. Additional research is recommended.

Wood Fence Post Remnants.

Four wooden posts stand near the Toms Cove shoreline where a fenced area existed in the 1960s. They may have been part of a sand fence or possibly a corral. Additional research is recommended.

Notes:

Remnants of the 1922 Coast Guard's light tower and the Navy's Radiator Tower were not observed during field work for this CLI in 2023. Additionally, according to recent maps, off-site there are least five buoys in the Chincoteague Inlet today and a few in the Chincoteague Shoals in the Atlantic Ocean. The US Coast Guard continues to maintain the buoys.

Several small-scale features identified in the 2004 CLI could not be located during the 2023 field investigations:

- A 1933 US Coast & Geodetic benchmark set in a concrete core that was found discarded under a cedar tree next to the Generator House. The marker's original position is not known.
- A 1976 USNOS metal benchmark positioned on the south side of the Entrance Road.
- Station number platform south of the Entrance Road.
- Fenced area west of the reservation boundary.

Evaluation:

Few small-scale features remain from the period of significance, namely the wreck pole, flagpole, and various equipment that would have characterized its use as a life-saving station. However, utility poles and a flagpole foundation are extant. Remnant fence posts and a concrete pad remain, though their functions are unclear. Several other features are not historic and do not relate to the site's historic themes and contexts.

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
Flagpole Foundation	209917	Contributing					No
Power Poles	209918	Contributing					No
Navy Triangulation Tower Foundation	209919	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Picnic Table	209920	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Remnant NASA Weather Equipment	209921	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Septic Tank and Cover	209922	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Entrance Sign	209923	Undetermined					No
Oil Tank	209924	Undetermined					No
Unknown Concrete Pad	209925	Undetermined					No
Wood Fence Post Remnants	209926	Undetermined					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 41. View looking northwest at the foundation of the flagpole that appeared in a 1962 photograph. (OCLP 2023)

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 in approved National Register documentation are identified in this report. The property's 2015 National Register documentation does not identify archeology as an area of significance and does not identify archeological sites. According to the 1999 Resource Management Plan, no prehistoric archeological studies have been formally documented for the island and no archeological surveys have been performed at the Coast Guard Station. Although discoveries of aboriginal projectile points have been made in the ocean surf zones, the potential for finding prehistoric archeological sites is considered minimal due to the dynamic nature of the island. (RMP 1999: 15)

In 1984, an archeological survey was completed at the Seaboard Fish and Guano Company located a short distance east of the station complex. However, no study has been done for the Chincoteague Fish, Oil, and Guano Company located adjacent to the Coast Guard Station. (Interview, 2000, Finlay & Cooper)

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 5

Next Assessment Due Date: 07/16/2030

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 07/16/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station is in “Fair” condition. All buildings and structures show evidence of deterioration or damage. Of most concern are facilities at Toms Cove and the poor condition of the wharf, breakwater, marine rail launchway, and wood walkway. The T-dock has collapsed and only its pilings remain above the waterline. The landscape is better condition, despite storm events and blowing sands that continue to reshape it. A natural succession of vegetation has grown up around the complex, but so far the road corridors and yard remain open and free of invasive shrub growth due to NPS mowing practices.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/25/2023

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to the effects of Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed. Planning and scheduling for this update will occur in FYs 2023-2024.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 08/09/2013

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

In consulting with Bill Hulslander, and with concurrence from the Superintendent, the Beach Coast Guard Station landscape is in fair condition. The definition of “fair” is as follows: “The inventory unit 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 inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.”

According to project statements in PMIS, there has been a park-wide effort related to initial storm response and emergency stabilization (PMIS 194615). There is also a significant funding request to repair the LSS dock system, ancillary structures, and equipment (199556). Hurricane Sandy inflicted some additional damage to the boathouse wharf, breakwater, and boat ramp, but the other structures are in relatively the same condition as before.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/28/2007

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

A "Fair" rating indicates the inventory unit 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 inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 10/01/2001

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 03/29/2001

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Impacts

Type of Impact: Erosion

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: With the frequency of storm events, erosion around the structures and perhaps the surrounding dunes is a concern to the protection of the landscape.

Date Identified: 07/29/2005

Type of Impact: Exposure to Elements

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: The entire station complex is exposed to barrier island dynamics, which constantly reshape the land and can damage the built environment. The wharf, breakwater, and marine rail launchway have suffered severe damage due to the results of wave action, and the T-dock has collapsed. Wooden walkways and handrails to the boathouse are deteriorating in some locations.

Date Identified: 07/16/2025

Type of Impact: Inundation/Flooding

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Historically, the station has experienced severe flooding during large storm events. The Station House basement, Generator House, Garage/Boathouse, and wood walkway, are at greatest risk to damage.

Date Identified: 07/16/2025

Type of Impact: Inundation/Sea Level Rise

Other Impact:

External or Internal: External

Impact Narrative: The high point of the station complex is 12 feet above sea level. Future increases in sea levels will have a major impact on the station's resources.

Date Identified: 07/16/2025

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Rehabilitation

Treatment Completed: No

Document Type: General Management Plan

Document Date: 2017-01-01

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

In the 2010s the park began updating its General Management Plan. Of the four possible management options, Alternative 3 was identified as the preferred alternative and the environmentally preferred alternative. "Over time, visitor use infrastructure would evolve to more sustainable designs and likely shift to more stable locations both on and off the island. Most recreational uses and activities would continue while new water-based points of access would provide access to additional low density visitor use in the seashore's backcountry. Natural processes and the effects of climate change/sea level rise would be the primary forces influencing the condition and evolution of natural resources. Alternative 3 represents a long-term shifting of seashore facilities and assets to adapt to climate change." (GMP/EIS Final Abbreviated 2017: 5; GMP/EIS RoT 2021: 2)

References in the GMP/EIS Record of Decision, completed in 2021, regarding the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station were as follows:

--Cultural Resource Management: NPS will protect and maintain the former Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station and Green Run Lodge in situ as long as possible with improvements, subject to availability of funding. Adaptive reuse of both properties will provide additional protection. At the Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station, non-structural storm protection features, such as bayside stabilization, will be considered to protect the property from natural coastal processes and/or the effects of climate change/sea level rise. If it is determined that the historic structures and cultural landscape have become so damaged by coastal storms, sea level rise, or other climate change related issues that they create a hazard, NPS will document the resources in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (NPS 1995c) and other NPS policies, guidelines, and standards. Then NPS will likely demolish the damaged structures and rehabilitate the sites to foster a return to natural conditions. (GMP/EIS RoT 2021: 8)

--Cultural Landscapes: Continued maintenance will have beneficial impacts on the National Register eligible cultural landscape at the former Assateague Beach U.S. Coast Guard Station. Adaptive reuse of the station will help to further stabilize and better maintain the cultural landscape, particularly with support from a partner. Beneficial impacts will also result from actions to protect the site as long as feasible from natural coastal processes and/or the effects of climate change/sea level rise. Eventually the cultural landscape will likely be significantly damaged or lost. Before then, the cultural landscape will be documented in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. (GMP/EIS RoT 2021: 19-20)

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

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Lee, M. Amanda	Electronic correspondence with Elizabeth Igleheart, National Register Coordinator, National Park Service Northeast Region. April 24.	2014	On file at National Park Service, Northeast Region History Program, Boston, MA.			
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National Park Service	Abbreviated Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Assateague Island National Seashore, Maryland and Virginia	2017	n/a			
National Park Service	Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station: Draft Environmental Assessment	2005	Prepared for National Park Service by Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin, MD.			
National Park Service	Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station, Assateague Island National Seashore.	2004	National Park Service, Washington, D.C.			

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National Park Service	Resource Management Plan	1999	n/a			
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Wroten, William	Assateague	1972	Schiffer			

Supplemental Information:

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Supplemental Information Narrative:

2000; J. Hau, NPS, Philadelphia office files

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Natural Resources Vegetation Inventory

Supplemental Information Narrative:

Digital ArcView file of Vegetation Inventory provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1994-95

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Period Photographs 1880-1965

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Supplemental Information Title: Period Photographs 1960s-1980s

Supplemental Information Narrative:

ASIS park courtesy Mel Olsen, Larry Points

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Supplemental Information Title: Report on Erection of Vertical Steel Radiator; Assateague Test Station

Supplemental Information Narrative:

1943; U.S. Coast Guard Archives, Washington D.C.

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: U.S.G.S. topographic Maps:
1920 U.S. Army Tactical Map; Chincoteague Is.
1942 War Department, U.S. Army; Chincoteague Is.
1943 U.S.G.S. War Department Quad; Chincoteague, VA
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Supplemental Information Title: www.assateague.org and www.assateague.com

Supplemental Information Narrative:
Information on history, vegetation, wildlife, historic photograph

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Chronology of Early Lifesaving by the U.S. Life-Saving Service Heritage Association

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: www.wm.edu/geology/virginia/phys_regions.html#coastal_plain

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Supplemental Information:

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Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Digital Information from ASIS Park via Chris Finlay, Mark Duffy

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Digital 1966 & 1997 aerial photographs, 1980s topo map, base drawing, shoreline drawing, AutoCAD and ArcView

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Interview with ASIS staff/Philadelphia Support Office: Chris Finlay, Mark Duffy, Larry Points, Ish Ennis, Mel Olsen, A. Cooper

Supplemental Information Narrative:

2000; J. Hau, NPS

Supplemental Information:

Supplemental Information Title: Interview with Ed Switzer

Supplemental Information Narrative:

1990; courtesy Larry Points, ASIS

