



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway National Recreation Area

*Gateway State of the Park 2007*



# *Introduction: Gateway NRA*



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

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

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

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

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*Front Cover: Officers' Row at Fort Hancock.*

*Back Cover: Marshes at Sandy Hook Bay*

*Photos by Klaus Schnitzer*



# Foreword

This report is part of our effort to showcase the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Gateway and all the contributing efforts of the staff, our volunteers, our friends and our partners. As you review this report you will see the five primary park goals that have been used to set priorities and guide activity in all areas of park operations; the narrative of this year's accomplishments are centered around these goals.

The accomplishments of the park this past year are impressive, reflecting the diversity of resources that make up the park itself. One only needs to look at three of our significant accomplishments to realize this: the dedication of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Contact Station—the first LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) certified structure in the Northeast Region of the National Park Service, ground-breaking for a \$1.2 million partnership dedicated to restoring historic Building 22 in Fort Hancock for use by the NJ Marine Science Consortium, and the multi-partner collaboration to restore 40 acres of fragile wetlands in Jamaica Bay. These accomplishments reflect the combined efforts that our staff and our partners have made to restore the significant cultural and natural features of the park, and provide environmental leadership within the region in a way that serves our visitors.

While Gateway is a showcase for the National Parks in New York and New Jersey, we must rededicate ourselves to use that status as a means to reach our future leaders. The range of our programs reflects our

commitment to reach the diversity of our visitors, to foster partnerships and work with our neighbors to protect our park resources, and provide opportunities for education and visitor enjoyment. All National Parks afford people an opportunity to experience their heritage; at Gateway the public is encouraged to help care for that heritage.

Established in 1972 Gateway is a relatively young park that is still in the process of reaching its potential, and recently we started a journey which will lead us closer to that goal. This year we started a multiyear process to write a new General Management Plan. This process depends on public involvement to be successful, and over the next few years numerous public meetings and other opportunities will be set up to allow participation in this planning effort. I encourage you to become involved so you can help Gateway reach its true potential.

Finally I wish to thank the staff and our partners who have worked so hard to serve the nearly ten million visitors who came to Gateway this past year. Faced with significant challenges you remain steadfast in your dedication to build an urban National Park that is the pride of the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, the nation and the world. The accomplishments chronicled in this report, including the fact that Gateway met or exceeded 100% of the 2007 goals set under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), are a tribute to your efforts.

*Barry T. Sullivan*  
General Superintendent

# Primary Goals

## GOAL 1: REVERSE DETERIORATION OF ALL PRIMARY PARK RESOURCES

### Fort Hancock Leasing Program



The Fort Hancock Leasing Program received a major boost when the U.S. District Court decided in favor of the National Park Service's efforts to restore Fort Hancock. Although the plaintiffs have filed an appeal, the ruling was clear when it said, "...the Court finds that the

National Park Service decision to lease 36 buildings in the Fort Hancock Historic District to Sandy Hook Partners was not arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or contrary to any law."

This should remove the major stumbling block to Sandy Hook Partners' ability to finance the \$75 million rehabilitation project. Commenting on the court's ruling, Sandy Hook Superintendent Richard Wells stated, "We are extremely happy... that the National Park Service can move forward and fulfill its obligation to preserve the



buildings of historic Fort Hancock, buildings that are one of Sandy Hook's great cultural treasures." In addition to the work being undertaken by Sandy Hook Partners, the American Littoral Society and the New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium continue to make progress on the rehabilitation of Buildings 18 and 22.

### Sandy Hook Partners Begin Restoration Work on Chapel, Theater and Post HQ



Sandy Hook Partners began work this summer on the Preservation Maintenance Phase of three important buildings: the Chapel, the Theater and the former Headquarters Building. This phase of the project is designed to restore two buildings that

are currently used by the public and to bring online an additional building for public uses including educational meetings, visual arts classes, theater performances, workshops and seminars.

### Jamaica Bay Salt Marsh Loss

The Division of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection Plan Advisory Committee, released a report entitled: *An Update on the Disappearing Salt Marshes of Jamaica Bay, New York*.

The report provides further evidence of the increasing rate of salt marsh loss in Jamaica Bay and underscores the urgent need for programmatic and interagency action to determine the cause(s) of the salt marsh loss phenomenon. Extrapolation of the current salt marsh loss data to all salt marshes of Jamaica Bay indicates that most of the marshes will be gone by 2012 or about 10 years earlier than predicted by previous reports. This would have devastating consequences to the flora and fauna that use the estuary.



## Official Opening of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Contact Station



A gala ribbon cutting celebrating the official opening of the renovated, environmentally friendly Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Contact Station took place in June. This is the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rated building for the NPS in the northeast, with every

aspect of its construction planned for cost efficiency and environmental conservation. Attendees were treated to speeches by Congressman Anthony Weiner, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, Deputy Regional Director Chrysandra Walter, Denver Service Center project leader Carol Whipple, and GATE senior staff. An additional highlight was the reading of reflections about Jamaica Bay by marine science students from a local high school and green building tours led by the architects and sustainable design consultants.

## Endangered Species Program



During the summer of 2007, nineteen pairs of piping plover nested on the beaches of the Jamaica Bay Unit's Breezy Point District. This was the greatest number of nesting plovers at Breezy Point since 1990. Twenty seven chicks survived to fledge making this one of the best years for chick production at 1.42 chicks per pair.

At Sandy Hook an environmental assessment was prepared to update the park's 1992 Piping Plover Management Plan. The proposed plan includes species that were not present on Sandy Hook when the 1992 plan was prepared, includes all New Jersey listed threatened or endangered species, and includes both the ocean and bayside beach areas of the park. The updated plan was

needed to address declining shorebird nesting success and includes conservation measures related to human disturbance, predator management, and habitat protection.



## Restoration of Windows and Doors in Fort Tompkins

Fort Tompkins in Fort Wadsworth was constructed between 1859 and 1876 to serve as a fortified barracks supporting nearby Battery Weed. Declared in 1890 to be "the finest of its kind in the country," Fort Tompkins today is a well-preserved and prime example of Third System military architecture. This year the park completed a rehabilitation project within Fort Tompkins by replacing 132 windows and 62 doors with a style and finish that matched the originals.



## New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium Rehabilitation of Building 22

The NJ Marine Sciences Consortium, a long standing NPS partner, is undertaking the rehabilitation of its headquarters at Fort Hancock. The NJMSC conducts research, education and outreach programming and Building 22 is used year-round by students in grades K-12. Work being undertaken by NJMSC includes exterior restoration, a barrier free entrance, new restrooms, and an effort to bring the building up to code. The improvements for ADA compliance will allow the organization to sponsor new programs for disabled and special education student groups.

## Clearing Vegetation Around Historic Structures at Fort Wadsworth

Fort Wadsworth contains many Endicott Era gun batteries constructed between 1890 and 1920. This year the NPS incorporated a number of techniques to clear vegetation from these Fort Wadsworth batteries to avoid the serious impact vegetation has on the long term structural integrity of the fortifications.

Several partner and volunteer groups hand cleared historic gun emplacements. These included the NPNH Education Center, students from the America's Best Classroom program, and Boy Scout troupes from New York and New Jersey. Perhaps the most compelling of the vegetation removal efforts was the use of goats on Battery Duane. Seven goats on loan from Cihanek Farm in upstate New York chewed through an acre of poison ivy, mugwort, Ailanthus, Japanese knotweed and other difficult to control vegetation. The goats became valuable interpretive tools, educating hundreds of visitors about the park's stewardship efforts. Their work was also chronicled by major newspapers and television news programs.



## GOAL 2: PROVIDE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR SAFE AND ENJOYABLE PARK VISITS

### Accessible Boardwalk



With a grant from NPF Proud Partner Unilever, two decks and a handicap accessible boardwalk were installed in time for the grand opening of the newly renovated visitor contact station at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. The

recycled plastic lumber adds a further dimension to the green building and sustainability themes of the contact station since it will have a significantly longer lifespan than wood and reduce the cost of maintenance. This project also makes the Refuge more accessible for disabled visitors.

### Miller Field Planning

Miller Field, a 187 acre former U.S. Army base, accounts for more than one half of the active recreation needs of Staten Island's residents, serving over 1 million visitors annually. Soccer, baseball and football teams with children of all ages use these fields on weekdays and weekends, with approximately 10,000 visitors using Miller Field on the weekends during peak season. The NPS has undertaken a planning effort to ensure that Miller Field will continue to meet the needs of the community. This summer the park hosted a meeting so members of the public could provide input into the future direction of recreational activities at the site.



### Safe Beaches

Gateway finished yet another year with no drowning deaths at any of the park's lifeguard-protected areas. This outcome reflects the dedicated service provided by the park's lifeguard staff, which this year totaled 125. This also reflects the emphasis that Gateway places on preventive rather than reactive measures in lifeguarding, as well as the care taken to ensure that lifeguard applicants meet nationally recognized physical fitness standards and adequate in-service training.



## Lifeguard Tournament

In July 222 outstanding female competitors representing 32 lifeguard services from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Nags Head, North Carolina took part in the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Park Service All-Women Lifeguard Tournament, held at the park's Sandy Hook Unit. The annual tournament, the largest in the nation devoted to women's competition, features competitive events including running, swimming, paddling a surf-rescue board or an ocean kayak, and rowing a surfboat. The competition is part of Gateway's continuing effort to showcase impressive role models so others will consider this still-nontraditional line of work for women.



## Sandy Hook Summer Ferry

The number of visitors who embraced public transportation and traveled to Sandy Hook this summer doubled from approximately 7,000 in 2006 to 14,000 this year, a number that included many first time visitors to the park. Ferries operated on weekends through the end of September providing an excellent transportation alternative to Manhattan residents.



## Expanded Visitor Opportunities at Sandy Hook



Built in 1764, the Sandy Hook Lighthouse is the oldest, continually operating lighthouse in the United States, a status that attracts thousands of lighthouse enthusiasts and general visitors each year. This summer, with the combined efforts of three Student

Conservation Association interns and volunteers from the New Jersey Lighthouse Society, the Sandy Hook Lighthouse and Keepers Quarters Exhibits were open seven days a week for public tours. The SCA interns also conducted tours of Battery Potter and assisted with the Junior Naturalist Program.

## Have a Safe Trip



The Office of Interpretation & Education received one of 16 grants from the WASO Office of Public Health to develop and present public and educational programs that promote safe park visits. The \$7,500 grant funded a new park publication, *Have a Safe Trip: Enjoying Your National Parks*, as well as an SCA Summer Intern, equipment and supplies. The program will continue in 2008.

## GOAL 3: UPDATE AND REVITALIZE INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

### NPNH Education Center and the NPNH Education Network



The National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center, headquartered at Gateway's Fort Wadsworth, is forging a dynamic education network with New York Harbor's national parks to best serve over 1.5 million teachers and students in metropolitan area schools. The foundation for this network is woven from the outstanding stories and

resources of these 22 park sites, together with partner expertise at the City University of New York and the learning needs of K-12 students.

Working closely with its partners at Brooklyn College and the College of Staten Island, the Center's contribution to the network includes the ability to develop and deliver programs that focus on park themes in ways that engage and excite learners. These programs take the shape of student workshops, teacher training, conferences and year long projects. With access to college faculty and students, the National Parks can stay current in the best educational practices, scholarship and technology.



In addition to a 50% increase in the number of students and teachers that were served by the Center, this past year saw some other notable achievements.

### Study Center at Floyd Bennett Field

The Gateway Center for Science and Environmental Studies at the Jamaica Bay Unit is renewed and revitalized. This 30-year partnership between the New York City Department of Education and the Gateway National Recreation Area has gained new strength through its expanded partnership with Brooklyn College and the NPNH Education Center.

### History Channel Grant

The History Channel has awarded the NPNH Education Center a \$10,000 grant for a year-long project, *Immigrant Reflections: from Ellis Island to Staten Island*. This project brings together National Park staff at Ellis Island and the Education Center, along with educators at Save Ellis Island, Inc., and College of Staten Island faculty to work with 75 11<sup>th</sup> grade students of the College of Staten Island High School for International Studies. Students will learn how to preserve history by conducting oral history interviews.

### New Programs

Many of the teachers who attended the *Jamaica Bay: Plight and Promise* conference expressed interest in getting their students involved in Jamaica Bay research efforts,



so a citizen science program for high school students was developed by a team of educators, CUNY and NPS staff. The resulting *Marine Invaders of Jamaica Bay* provides protocols and equipment for students to conduct field studies at strategic locations around the Bay and to add their data to a national database on invasive species.

A new curriculum based program was developed by a team of 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and NPS staff for the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace NHS. *How Theodore Roosevelt Became a Leader* links the future president's childhood experiences with his later accomplishments as an author, soldier, politician and conservationist. This program – the first ever curriculum based program for the park - began pilot testing with 5<sup>th</sup> grades in the 2007/08 school year.



*Weather and Water at Wadsworth* brings middle school students to the historic resource at Fort Wadsworth's Battery Weed to take scientific measurements of air and water at the mouth of the Hudson River Estuary and compare their results with student readings of the Hudson's waters 20 miles north. Students make predictions and enter their findings on the international GLOBE website.

The Education Center, in partnership with Columbia University's Lamont-Dougherty Earth Observatory, participated in the annual *Hudson River Snapshot Day*, in which student groups collect samples and data from locations along the Hudson River. By involving classes from Brooklyn and Staten Island in sampling activities, the "Snapshot" was expanded to include Fort Wadsworth and Breezy Point—a distance of 167 miles from the northernmost classes at the Troy Dam.

## Sustainable Practices



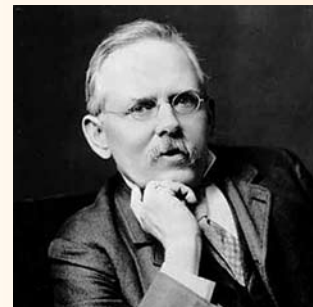
The Jamaica Bay Unit has made great strides in promoting sustainable practices and encouraging the public to incorporate these ideas into daily living. An example is the Building Blocks temporary exhibit at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge that interprets the "green" building materials and finishes, as well as the earth friendly utility systems that heat, cool and light the building.



## Historic Aircraft Fly-In

In an effort to bring the historic runways of Floyd Bennett Field back to life, the park staged a two-day fly-in of historic aircraft that represented the history of the field from the 1930's through the early 1970's. Over 16,000 visitors got an up-close view of 28 historic aircraft that packed the runways of the former municipal airport turned Naval Air Station, now an important National Park site. Other highlights included a fly-over by an F-117 Stealth Fighter, a keynote address from one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, and a recreation of a 1940's USO show.

## Jacob Riis Park Anniversary



The 75th Anniversary of Jacob Riis Park was celebrated this year, beginning with a parade on Memorial Day Weekend. Interpretive and recreation programs were presented throughout the summer with assistance from park partners such as the Rockaway Theater Company, Beach Channel High School and the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel

Authority. Park staff also worked with a local newspaper to develop feature stories on the life of journalist and social reformer Jacob Riis and the history of Jacob Riis Park.

## Global Learning

Several park staff have completed training in the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment program (GLOBE) and began incorporating elements into educational offerings. GLOBE is a world wide, hands-on primary and secondary school-based science and education program that promotes the collaboration of students, teachers and scientists in inquiry-based investigations of the environment and earth systems. As part of the program, standardized GLOBE weather stations were installed at Floyd Bennett Field and Fort Wadsworth. Students and educators record weather statistics and entered the information on a world-wide database that is used to study the dynamics of the Earth's environment.

## Envirothon



High school students from throughout New York City's five boroughs competed in the New York City Envirothon, a science competition testing their science skills in the fields of ecology, biology and botany. The event was hosted at Great Kills Park where the ranger staff helped to develop themes, subject matter and questions relevant to the site.

## Junior Ranger Program



A one-week Junior Ranger program was presented at Great Kills Park by the ranger staff in conjunction with representatives of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences. Live specimens including insects, reptiles and amphibians were part of the program held in the Education Field Station.

## GOAL 4: EXPAND OUR CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT PARK PROGRAMS

### New Aircraft Exhibit



The National Park Service, in partnership with the Experimental Aircraft Association, dedicated a replica 1903 Wright Flyer for permanent exhibition and interpretive programming at Floyd Bennett Field. The display represents the culmination of thousands of

hours of painstaking craftsmanship from hundreds of volunteers across the country. This new exhibit, located in one of the historic hangars, greatly expanded the public's opportunity to understand the beginnings of the history of flight.

### Healthy Park-Healthy Living

Gateway was again selected to take part in the Healthy Parks-Healthy Living Program, a program that provides Vitality Interpreters to National Parks across the country through the Student Conservation Association.



Healthy Parks-Healthy Living is designed to promote active recreation in a National Park setting. NPF Proud Partner Unilever/Lipton Tea sponsors the program. The interpreters promoted traditional recreation programs including sailing and canoeing on Jamaica Bay and touring the park by bicycle, but also assisted by promoting Gateway as a great place to run at the New York City Marathon Pre-Race Expo.

## College Internship



Brooklyn College provided a student intern to the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge this year as part of their Brooklyn Opportunities in Science and Careers and Jewish Foundation for Education of Woman internship programs. The journalism major interned 280 hours at the park developing interpretive flyers on the osprey population, diamond terrapin and raccoon interactions and the declining Japanese black pine in the Jamaica Bay area. She also developed a touch table exhibit, assisted with public tours and talks, staffed the visitor information desk, and helped maintain the native plant garden.

## Energy Fair



The Friends of Gateway (FOG) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, co-hosted a home energy fair at Fort Wadsworth and Floyd Bennett Field. A number of subject matter experts, contractors and utility companies set up tables and gave out information about energy conservation in the home. FOG, the primary organizer of the event, provided lunch and encouraged participants to join the Friends of Gateway.

## First Greenbelt to Gateway Nature Hike

The Staten Island Unit worked with the Staten Island Greenbelt Conservancy and the Protectors of the Pine Oaks Woods on a very successful nature hike. The 7-mile hike used existing trails in both the Greenbelt and Great Kills Park. The first of several such collaborations, staffs of both agencies and members of the Protectors of the Pine Oak Woods enjoyed beautiful weather and a hike from Staten Island's thick woodlands to the brackish shores of Great Kills Park.



## Habitat Restoration Effort at Sandy Hook

In 2005 the park closed a large overflow parking lot and began a restoration effort by seeding the area with a mix of native grasses and wildflowers. This year a crew from the Student Conservation Association's Native Plant Corps removed hundreds of non-native invasive trees from approximately 10 acres of land surrounding the site. Removing these trees allows native plants to thrive and supports the native birds and other wildlife found in the park.

## Student Conservation Association



The Natural Resource Program at Sandy Hook utilized four Student Conservation Association interns. Their efforts included protection of endangered species by installing signs, barriers and predator enclosures, and providing visitor information regarding

piping plovers, least terns, osprey, and other endangered plant and animal species. Information on saltmarsh distribution, shoreline positions and beach profiles, endangered species, and flood prediction mapping was also gathered by the team for use in the park's Geographic Information System.

## Ford Foundation Grant at Sandy Hook



A grant from the Ford Foundation, made through the National Park Foundation, was used to provide a Student Conservation Association intern who worked as a summer “Transportation Interpreter.” The intern rode the weekend visitor ferry from Manhattan to Sandy Hook where she made contact with visitors and explained the recreational resources available at Sandy Hook.

## Partnerships and Volunteer Beach Cleaning

Nearly 2,000 people participated in beach clean-ups at Sandy Hook this year. Schools, scout groups, private companies and individuals all conducted projects in the park. Clean Ocean Action, a park partner, coordinated several large corporate beach clean-ups with companies such as Goldman Sachs. They also staged their two annual “Beach Sweeps.”

Students from the Marine Academy of Science and Technology, located on Sandy Hook, continued to collect and record trash and marine debris as part of the Ocean Conservancy National Marine Debris Monitoring Program. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Corrections together conducted projects on Sandy Hook to remove wood timbers and other debris from several beaches.



## GOAL 5: IMPROVE OUR IMAGE AND IDENTITY AS PART OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

### Jamaica Bay BioBlitz

Over a 24 hour period the first-ever Jamaica Bay *BioBlitz* highlighted the natural resources of Jamaica Bay by bringing together 270 community volunteers and scientific experts to create a snapshot of the biodiversity found in and around the bay. Field teams explored the less studied areas of the park, identifying as many organisms as possible. Educational activities including ranger-led walks, interactive displays, creative workshops, and special laboratory stations that allowed participants to get an up-close look at some of the 665 species that were documented during the event. Organized as a partnership between Gateway’s Jamaica Bay Institute and Queens College, the event provided an opportunity for the public to contribute to a scientific inventory while learning about the natural history of species found at Gateway.



### Jamaica Bay: Plight and Promise Conference

This first joint conference for researchers and educators brought to light the impacts of natural events as well as anthropogenic activities on Jamaica Bay and the broader Hudson River/ New York Bay estuary. Made possible by collaboration between Gateway NRA’s Jamaica Bay Institute, the National Parks of New York Harbor Education Center, Brooklyn College and the College of Staten Island, the conference provided access to up-to-date scholarship and research that is critical to designing educational programs and fostering stewardship of our natural and cultural resources. Fourteen field scientists from the National Park Service, Hofstra University, St. John’s University,



McGill University, and the City University of New York presented findings on their research work in Jamaica Bay and painted a cohesive picture portraying the plight of one of the most rich and diversified ecosystems on the East Coast.

### Hudson River Snapshot



As part of its ongoing efforts to inspire and engage young people to be active stewards of our environment, Gateway joined other public agencies, academic institutions and environmental organizations as a host of the Hudson River Snapshot Day. The annual event raises public awareness about the Hudson River and other environmental issues by bringing thousands of students to its shores from the Troy Dam to Breezy Point, Queens. Students worked as citizen-scientists to collect environmental information that will later be used by researchers to chart the river's health.

### New York City Marathon

As it has for over a decade, the park hosted the start of the New York City Marathon at Fort Wadsworth. Over 40,000 runners from 180 different countries ran the 26.2 mile course which wound its way through New York City's five boroughs. The park worked with the event's organizers to take advantage of opportunities to publicize Gateway and the National Park presence in New York at the Marathon and at a pre-race Health and Fitness Expo held at the Javits Convention Center in Manhattan.



### Rip Current Awareness Week

Each year the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) holds a Rip Current Awareness Week at the beginning of the national beach recreation season to address the risks of rip currents to the visiting public. The National Park Service was selected by NOAA as a partner in the 2007 effort and Gateway was chosen to be the park that would host the media event that kicked-off the national effort. Gateway's General Superintendent Barry Sullivan spoke on behalf of the NPS and the other National Parks that were holding special events: Assateague Island National Seashore, Cape Cod National Seashore, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Channel Islands National Park, Fire Island National Seashore, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Olympic National Park, Point Reyes National Seashore, Redwood National Park, and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

## Youth Conservation Corps

The Gateway Youth Conservation Corps, operated by Gateway's Division of Operations Support, recruited twenty two minority and non-minority high school students for an intense, one-week immersion into the workings of the National Park Service. Topics included natural and cultural resources, park operations and management. In addition to classroom study, the program also featured extensive field work and overnight camping. At the end of the orientation fourteen students elected to stay at the park for the remainder of the summer to expand their learning experience.



## Recycling Leadership



Several initiatives took place this year to keep the solid and hazardous waste generated by park staff out of our nation's landfills. Over 100 pieces of computer equipment and approximately 200 pounds of miscellaneous "TechnoTrash" were recycled. Battery collection

centers were set up throughout the park to allow harmful metals to be recovered and recycled into new batteries. Small composting stations were installed throughout office buildings and employees were encouraged to deposit

food scraps and coffee grinds to be composted in a large, outdoor bin. Overall the program has reduced solid waste disposal by approximately one third.



## Five Boro Bike Tour

The 30th annual Five Boro Bike tour of New York City took place this spring. Over 30,000 cyclists rode 42 miles through the city's five boroughs, ending at Fort Wadsworth where riders were treated to music, food and NPS information. The park continues to work with event organizers to enhance the public's understanding of the role of Gateway and the National Park Service in New York City and beyond.



# Looking Ahead

Changes are coming—faster, broader and deeper than at any time in the history of the park. No program will be untouched; no aspect of the park unaffected. We must make room for innovation and improvement. We can't exactly know what the end results will look like, but managing change will dominate much of our efforts over the next four years.

Many factors are driving this situation. A few of the more notable include:

- a relatively flat operational budget
- increased funding for care of high priority park assets
- accelerated implementation of information technology systems
- larger numbers of new immigrants in the metropolitan area
- greater opportunities for leasing of excess park facilities
- opportunities for development of new visitor services
- better appreciation for historical resources throughout the park
- better understanding of threats to natural resources
- expanded collaboration and resource sharing among parks
- interest in using Gateway NRA as a model park for the 21st century

In an ideal world each of these concerns would be explored and considered as part of a comprehensive planning process. Unfortunately, revision of the park's General Management Plan is only beginning and will not be complete for several years. Decisions about many critical issues will not be able to wait; they will have to be part of an ongoing planning process.

Guidance will come from a number of sources. Decisions must be consistent with the mission of the National Park Service and applicable laws, policies and regulations. In addition, the park has its own enabling legislation, commitments for stewardship of the important natural and cultural resources entrusted to our care, precedents for the types of opportunities that we offer to visitors, and a growing number of plans, studies and reports.



Most important, Gateway NRA is operated by a dedicated staff, actively supported by a wide range of agencies and organizations, and committed to representing the National Park Service within the country's largest urban complex. Working together we will use each challenge to clarify our purpose, improve visitor opportunities, and strengthen protection of park resources. Working together we will continue "Building a Tradition of Excellence."

*Billy G. Garrett*  
Deputy General Superintendent

## *Service to Our Visitors*

The visitation of Gateway National Recreation Area reached almost 10 million during 2007, making it one of the most visited parks in the National Park System. Our visitors experienced and enjoyed our resources in a variety of ways including:

Swimming, sailing, surfing and fishing; learning about ecosystems and their relationships with city life; restoration of historic aircraft and touring historic fortifications; gardening, photography and poetry readings; plays, folk singing, kite flying and multi-cultural festivals; cricket, tennis and soccer matches; star gazing, bird watching, beach clean-ups and nature talks; archery, camping, cycling and... sunset walks.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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