

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Assateague Island National Seashore

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Vision Statement

Treasured by millions, Assateague Island National Seashore provides an oasis of relaxation, enjoyment, recreation, and hands-on learning experiences. Assateague is one of the few publicly accessible coastal environments in the densely populated northeastern United States where people experience clean water and beaches, unspoiled bays and marshlands, natural sounds, quiet, night skies and solitude. Through intensive public scoping in 2006, the Seashore is armed with a clear understanding of the public's expectations, needs, hopes and desires, and uniquely positioned to preserve and protect the dynamic barrier island ecosystem while exceeding the expectations of visitors of all ages and backgrounds. Through new public and private investments, as a part of the National Park Service Centennial Initiative, over the next 10 years the Seashore will:

1. Restore and preserve treasured resources: By 2016, the Seashore's unique aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and natural processes upon which they depend will be understood, restored to unimpaired condition, and be fully protected for their intrinsic value and for visitors to experience pristine nature based recreation in perpetuity.
2. Showcase environmental leadership and sustainable design in all facilities, infrastructure, and management activities: By 2016, the Seashore will exemplify environmental stewardship and demonstrate how to co-exist with the dynamic barrier island environment while sustaining coastal watersheds and the fragile marine ecosystems they support.
3. Offer superior resource-based recreational opportunities: By 2016, teenagers, seniors and visitors of all ages, cultures and backgrounds will forge intellectual and emotional connections to the Seashore as they take pleasure in high quality recreational and educational opportunities that are in harmony with the resources.
4. Foster a stewardship ethic that connects all people to the Seashore through exceptional learning experiences: By 2016, the hidden worlds found throughout the Seashore will be unveiled to the public in new, relevant and compelling ways that capitalize on emerging technologies.
5. Demonstrate excellence in management and partnership practices: By 2016, the Seashore will cultivate the next generation of employees, leaders and partners with the skills and vision necessary to achieve its purpose with efficiency, transparency and accountability.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Scott J. Bentley, Superintendent

Site: ASIS

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

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

ASIS will improve the condition of all components of the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station to "good" condition, including both structures and landscape elements, and develop partnerships within the community to help maintain and utilize the facility for educational purposes.

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

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

ASIS will achieve control of the most significant invasive plant and animal species affecting the park environment including Phragmites Australis, feral horses and Sika deer, and manage populations of those species at levels minimizing adverse impacts on native habitats and communities.

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

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

ASIS will improve the FCI of high priority assets by replacing deteriorated facilities and infrastructure supporting visitor use on Assateague Island, including the day use bath house, north beach parking lot, campground restrooms and showers, Bayside picnic area restroom, and Ranger Station.

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

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

ASIS will reverse a declining trend in the quality of the park's estuarine waters to ensure that dependant aquatic ecosystems and recreational opportunities return to pristine condition.

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

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

ASIS will complete an archeological overview and assessment of its terrestrial lands to identify existing and potential archeological sites, and guide future identification studies.

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

Site: ASIS

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Conserve Ocean Resources. ASIS will complete a basic inventory of the park's ocean resources, initiate appropriate long-term monitoring, and develop the operational capacity to effectively manage and protect its diverse ocean resources.

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

Site: ASIS

STEWARDSHIP

Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Tell Untold Stories. ASIS will develop interpretive media and programs to tell presently untold stories related to watermen, the lifesaving service, Assateague's hunting camps, and other aspects of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia's coastal heritage.

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

Site: ASIS

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Conserve Ocean Resources. ASIS will establish a no-take marine sanctuary to preserve sensitive aquatic resources and provide a natural laboratory to gain an improved understanding of ecosystem function, marine biodiversity, and the effects of commercial fishing.

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

Site: ASIS

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Encourage children to be future conservationists. ASIS will develop a new web-based Junior Ranger Program and provide young people with expanded opportunities to become more fully engaged in park conservation efforts through new internship, apprenticeship, and environmental camp programs.

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

Site: ASIS

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

ASIS will eliminate all wastewater discharge on Assateague island by removing existing septic systems and treating all wastewater in its mainland treatment plant. The mainland plant will be upgraded to increase nutrient removal and to eliminate discharge into Sinepuxent Bay by directing effluent to a constructed wetland for final treatment. In addition, the primary visitor use parking lots on Assateague Island will be retrofitted with stormwater management devices to contain and treat run-off.

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

Site: ASIS

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

ASIS will demonstrate sustainable construction practices by constructing roads and parking areas with clamshell surfaces and by replacing all treated wood boardwalks with recycled plastic wood substitutes.

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

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

ASIS will use photovoltaic electric power to provide water for public beach shower facilities, and utilize environmentally friendly products including but not limited to: bio-diesel for all diesel fuel applications, recycled motor oil, bio-tran/hydraulic oil, bio-automatic transmission fluid, bio-hydrostatic fluid and bio-penetrating oil.

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

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

ASIS will develop its new Barrier Island Visitor Center to serve the needs of both the National Seashore and Assateague State Park and incorporating LEED standards whenever practicable.

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

Site: ASIS

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish Partnerships for Conservation and Education. ASIS will create a permanent endowment with community partners to institutionalize a long-term cooperative program of marine resource environmental education and conservation focusing on the Maryland/Virginia Coastal Bays.

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

Site: ASIS

RECREATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Improve Access to Recreational Opportunities. ASIS will work with Assateague State Park (ASP) and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR) to remove barriers to visitor use on Assateague Island by developing a joint ASP/NPS entrance/information station for the Maryland District, and by merging operations of the NPS and CNWR to provide seamless visitor services in the Virginia District.

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

Site: ASIS

RECREATION

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

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

ASIS will establish a new permanent full-time volunteer coordinator position to stimulate new and expanded volunteer opportunities for all segments of the community and beyond, and increase the number of volunteer hours by a minimum of 25%.

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

Site: ASIS

RECREATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish partnerships for Conservation and Education. ASIS will expand its fledgling partnerships with local school systems in MD and VA to introduce minority youth to the pleasures of the park through a continuing program of diverse hands-on recreational and educational activities.

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

Site: ASIS

RECREATION

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

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

ASIS will expand its operational capacity through contributions from friends and partners and significantly increase the number and scope of ranger-led and facilitated programs to better meet the demands of a diverse and growing audience.

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

Site: ASIS

EDUCATION

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

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish Partnerships for Conservation and Education. ASIS will expand its new visitor center to provide dedicated space for educational programs, increase participation by school groups in formal, park-based learning opportunities by 20%, and provide diverse online curriculum materials and activities.

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

Site: ASIS

EDUCATION

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

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

ASIS will engage, captivate and inspire young people worldwide by presenting a new movie about the park's most well-known and charismatic inhabitants - the wild horses of Assateague.

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

Site: ASIS

EDUCATION

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

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

ASIS will develop a new web-based Junior Ranger Program that will increase participation by 25%.

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

Site: ASIS

EDUCATION

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

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

Provide Spanish Language Interpretive and Educational Materials. ASIS will develop and provide a full range of interpretive and educational materials in Spanish to assure that most non-english speaking visitors are able to understand and appreciate the park, and participate fully in activities and programs.

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

Site: ASIS

PROFESSIONALISM

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

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

ASIS will expand and institutionalize a partnership with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a historically black university, to develop environmentally literate and technologically capable candidates for federal employment through park-focused learning opportunities and a summer internship program.

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

Site: ASIS

PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

Visitor Satisfaction and Safety. ASIS will create and maintain a safe environment by increasing the capacity of the park to make personal contact with, and provide information and assistance to, all visitors.

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

Site: ASIS

PROFESSIONALISM

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Establish Partnerships for Conservation and Education. ASIS will develop a new capacity to identify, establish and maintain meaningful community partnerships to increase the public's understanding of support for park values, benefits and opportunities.

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

Site: ASIS

PROFESSIONALISM

Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

Improve communications and marketing capacity to increase public understanding of our mission, opportunities, and benefits.

ASIS and its community partners will establish a non-profit friends group to enhance community relations, philanthropic giving, and public understanding of the park's mission, values and significance.

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