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**Subject:** As Five-Year Sandy Anniversary Nears, NPS Looks Back on Recovery Projects at Fire Island National Seashore  
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# Fire Island

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fire Island National Seashore  
Long Island, New York



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## As Five-Year Sandy Anniversary Nears, NPS Looks Back on Recovery Projects at Fire Island



Fire Island Lighthouse Tower (Photo by Volunteer Chad Gallagher)

**Patchogue, NY** - Hurricane Sandy made landfall nearly five years ago, on October

29, 2012. Among the hardest hit by the record-breaking storm were coastal communities in New York and New Jersey and 15 national parks, including Fire Island National Seashore. Since 2012, the National Park Service (NPS) has invested more than \$273 million in federal recovery funding to restore access to and enhance resiliency at these coastal parks.

"In the months following Hurricane Sandy the path to recovery was not always obvious," said Fire Island National Seashore Superintendent Chris Soller. "But what has become clear in the years since the record-breaking storm is the importance of building with an eye toward sustainability to ensure seashore facilities can be enjoyed for years to come."

Since the storm hit Fire Island, recovery funds have supported scientific studies and planning to help the NPS better understand and respond to natural changes caused by powerful storms. Funding also supported repairs to facilities on Fire Island and mainland Long Island.

Seashore Facility Manager Jim Dunphy said, "nearly \$1 million was invested in the months following the 2012 storm to clean up Fire Island." During this time, the NPS worked to remove debris; reroute and resurface boardwalks; restore administrative buildings and maintenance facilities; upgrade damaged fuel tanks and dispensing equipment; and, replace wayfinding and educational signage.

In 2017, the NPS completed a \$1.2 million rehabilitation of the historic Fire Island Lighthouse terrace. The project reinforced a portion of the terrace that was undermined during the storm and addressed deferred maintenance of the substructure.

In addition to recovery projects managed by the NPS, six construction contracts totaling \$16.4 million have been funded through a partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to restore access by rehabilitating roads, boardwalks, and marinas on Fire Island. Five of these projects have been completed in the last five years:

- The first project included \$2.2 million for boardwalk construction at the Fire Island Lighthouse on the west end and the Wilderness Visitor Center on the east end of Fire Island. Nearly 9,000 linear feet of boardwalk were damaged or washed away by storm waves. Approximately 5,220 feet of boardwalk were replaced. Flood-prone sections of boardwalk were rerouted to higher ground in an effort to make boardwalks more sustainable and reduce repeated maintenance costs.
- In 2015, a \$4 million dredging project was completed to restore navigational channels impacted by the storm and provide safe access to Sailors Haven and Watch Hill.
- The Fire Island Lighthouse entrance road was raised in 2015. The half-million dollar project will help prevent future flooding.
- At the Fire Island Lighthouse a new, million-dollar 350-foot dock was built in

2015 to replace the dock that was destroyed in the storm.

- In 2016, the Sailors Haven marina was rebuilt with material better equipped for the marine environment. The \$1,087,000 project also replaced utilities at the 45-slip marina, which was undermined by the storm.

The sixth and final NPS-FHWA project began last fall at Watch Hill. Woodstock Construction started work in September, 2016 to replace electrical and lighting systems, and marina bulkhead and boardwalk. Plans call for the 50 year-old marina to be updated to ensure the structure is more resilient to future storms.

The multimillion dollar contract for the Watch Hill marina project was recently extended to allow time to address unforeseen and necessary repairs to the substructure. Upon completion of the substructure repairs, composite lumber decking and new pedestals will be installed on the adjacent boardwalks. While work on the marina contract is underway, the NPS will replace the roof and siding on the Watch Hill Visitor Center and build a new 150-foot section on the nature boardwalk trail. Construction at Watch Hill will be completed by the end of the year and the updated facilities will reopen for the 2018 season.

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### ***About Fire Island National Seashore***

*About Fire Island National Seashore. Fire Island National Seashore encompasses 26 miles of ocean and bay shoreline, maritime forests, and residential communities. Fire Island's dynamic coastal landscape is home to a diversity of plants and wildlife and offers a retreat from nearby metropolitan New York. Please visit us online at [www.nps.gov/fiis](http://www.nps.gov/fiis), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/fireislandnps](https://www.facebook.com/fireislandnps), on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/fireislandnps](https://www.twitter.com/fireislandnps), and on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/fireislandnps](https://www.instagram.com/fireislandnps).*

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