

SANDPIPER



A newsletter for VIPs. Sandy Hook/Gateway National Recreation Area

March 2009

MICHAEL'S COLUMN

By: Michael Thomas, VIP Coordinator

Hello Volunteers! Spring is rapidly approaching and before we know it, there will be hundreds of visitors at Sandy Hook.

The volunteer recognition ceremony was nicely attended with Bill Jackson and Richard Roper being honored for contributing over 500 volunteer hours to the park. Their names are now inscribed on the volunteer recognition plaque in the visitor center. Everybody enjoyed the gifts of mugs and water bottles. There were some volunteers there that I personally had not seen in a while and it was really fun for me. The park logged 41,851 volunteer hours for last year. Nice going!

One of us will be moving on to new pastures this spring. In the end of March, **Connie Witherby**

will be retiring. We will all miss her. Thomas Hoffman will be taking over her duties as the Interpretive volunteers supervisor.

The Park is doing its spring interpretive training for new volunteers on **Sunday April 19th 2:00 p.m. to 4:30.** If you are not very familiar with Sandy Hook or are a current volunteer and want to refresh your Sandy Hook knowledge, you are invited. If you are a new volunteer and planning on volunteering for the NJ Lighthouse Society call Ken Schumacher at 201-342-0108 or e-mail him at sandyhookken@optonline.net.

If you have any comments or questions about the Sandpiper or wish to write an article about your volunteering experiences, call me, Michael Thomas, at 732-872-5959 or e-mail me at mike_thomas@nps.gov.

HENRY HUDSON STUDENTS GO ABOVE AND BEYOND WHEN IT COMES TO VOLUNTEERING

By: Amanda Gluckstein, Biology Technician

December 28th, 2009, I was out with a group of students from Henry Hudson Regional High School monitoring the shoreline. On a typical winter day, we may find a bird in distress, have to tell a visitor to keep their pets on leash, or pick up some bulky pieces of trash. However, this freezing day before the students started their holiday break from school they spotted three stranded striped dolphins near the high tide line on Gunnison Beach. The Marine Mammal Stranding Center was contacted and they were able to instruct us by cell phone on what to do. The boys got their chest waders on in record time and we were able to right the dolphins and return two back out to sea. If it were not for their speedy reactions and assistance all three would have died. The third dolphin which unfortunately had already perished was taken by the Marine Mammal Stranding Center for necropsy. The boys were able to return to school knowing that they brought the true holiday spirit to life by

saving these helpless animals. One of the boys before leaving to return back to school enthusiastically said, "This was like a real live Animal Planet episode!"

I would like to commend and thank Sean Pharo (teacher), Jed Callinan, Ron Wilson, Jesse Toner and Park Ranger Jeanne McArthur-Heuser who assisted with the rescue.



Mr. Pharo, Ronnie, and I getting prepared to carry the dolphins back out to deeper waters.

HENRY HUDSON STUDENTS LOG ALMOST 10,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS AT SANDY HOOK **By Jeanne Heuser, Park Ranger**

This group of students has been coming out to Sandy Hook during school hours to gain hands on educational and work experience since 2001. They work with their teacher and assist the National Park Service staff with many projects. They are a dedicated group and truly has helped out with more projects than I can mention.



Justin and Bobby working with Ranger Heuser to learn how to use a fire hose.

The students are always eager to assist in any way they can. Each days activities vary from finding endangered species, conducting trail maintenance or tagging and releasing box turtles. Other days they may do a beach clean-up, monitor ospreys or look for injured wildlife.



Mr. Pharo, teacher, helping Justin and Gilberto install shorebird protection signs, while Jed measures the distance to the next sign.

These students are vital to the park's resource management staff and to the endangered and threatened shorebird program. In the spring they focus on protecting piping plover, least terns and oystercatchers. They really have it down to a science when it comes to building exclosures, making signs and installing miles of fence line.

This program has not only worked out well for the students but the park has benefited greatly. It has made these students hard working, self-motivated and disciplined people. Their enthusiastic participation and willingness to share what they know made them a valuable addition to our staff. Last summer, luckily, we hired one of the students for a seasonal position. I was very fortunate to recruit Jed Callinan to work with the Resource Management Division.

I would like to let these students know how important they are and what they do for the park makes a big difference. Some students participate in "Make a Difference Day" once a year but these kids make a difference every day they come out.



Jesse, Gilberto, and Mr. Pharo planting dune grass. The boys worked tirelessly on a restoration project planting hundreds of dune grass plugs to fight erosion and beautify the park.



Ron, on a cold day, decided he wanted to clean up the beach while we monitored for seals. He learned to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION DAY, APRIL 12

By Thomas Hoffman, Park Historian

We are offering our annual Sandy Hook **Orientation training on Sunday, April 19th from 2:00 p.m. until 4:30.** We will meet at the Sandy Hook Visitor Center, and then car caravan to various locations on Sandy Hook. This training is designed for new (or recurring) volunteers who would like a general orientation of Sandy Hook. We will also cover frequently asked visitor questions, and will help you to locate the various destinations and important places that visitors might look for on Sandy .

If any of you would like to join us, especially you new folks who have joined our volunteer ranks this winter or spring, you are welcome. If you have any questions, you can contact me at *Tom_Hoffman@nps.gov* or by phone at 732-872-5950

The staff of the Interpretive Division is looking forward to working with all of you and having a great 2008 season!

SAFETY FIRST: UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE, EMPLOYEE RESPONSE



The National Park Service continues to find various types of unexploded ordnance (UXO) throughout the park. Sandy Hook has seen military occupation and use for over three-hundred years, culminating with the transfer of the U.S. Army post in 1975 to the National Park Service. For forty-five (1874-1919) it was the site of the United States Army's proving ground before the function was transferred to Aberdeen, Maryland. Hundreds of ordnance items have been found through the years and we must respond to these incidents in a safe effective manner.

Ordnance is defined as any material designed to be of a weapons or explosive nature. All items suspected of being ordnance, will be treated as live and potentially dangerous until designated safe by the proper authorities. Unexploded ordnance may be found by park staff while in the park or by park visitors who bring UXOs to our attention or may actually have the UXO in their possession. Our response to finding unexploded ordnance is a paramount concern and must be done in an effective, professional and safe manner.

Proper response to found ordnance is the 3 R's

- 1. RECOGNIZE- Recognize you have possible UXO**
- 2. RETREAT- Retreat to a safe area.**
- 3. REPORT- Report the UXO to the Ranger Station.**

If you have further questions about UXOs, contact Michael Thomas at 732-872-5959.



SANDY HOOK VOLUNTEER CONTACTS

- Organized Youth Group Activities (Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, etc.):
Jeanne Heuser: 732-872-5936
- Beach Cleanup, Dune Grass Planting: Bruce Lane 732-872-5931
- Endangered Species Monitoring: Jeanne Heuser: 732-872-5936
- Interpretive Activities (tour guides, visitor assistants): Thomas Hoffman 732-872-5950
- Maintenance Activities (electrician, plumber, carpenter, etc.): Michael Thomas 732-872-5959
- Cultural Resource Activities (curatorial, internships, gun battery cleanups, etc.):
Mary Rasa 732-872-5953
- Administration (filing, office management): Michael Thomas 732-872-5959
- Volunteerism in other Gateway Units: Marisol Soto 718-354-4564
- Sandy Hook Park Partners:
 - Sandy Hook Foundation: Betsy Barrett 732-291-7733
 - New Jersey Lighthouse Society: Ken Schumacher 201-342-0108
 - Clean Ocean Action: Carl Guastaserro 732-872-0111
 - New Jersey Audubon/ Sandy Hook Bird Observatory: 732-872-2500
 - Monmouth County Audubon Society: 732-872-2473
 - Army Ground Forces Association: Mike Murray: 201-444-2024

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National Park Service
Sandy Hook
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.