

Looking Back: Milestones for the National Seashore and Surrounding Communities

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1961

President Kennedy signs the legislation establishing Cape Cod National Seashore.

The Atwood-Higgins property on Bound Brook Island in Wellfleet, encompassing an original 1730s Cape Cod style home, is donated to the National Park Service.

Cape Cod Community College is established as the second institution in what is now a 15-member community-college system in Massachusetts.

1964

A storm surge breaches the Long Point spit in Provincetown. National seashore staff repair the break with bulldozers and sand bags.

1965

Salt Pond Visitor Center opens in Eastham.

1966

Cape Cod National Seashore is dedicated in a ceremony at the Salt Pond Visitor Center.

1968

The Fine Arts Work Center is founded at the former Days Lumberyard Studios in Provincetown.

1969

Province Lands Visitor Center opens.

1970

The Wellfleet Tavern archaeological site at Great Island is excavated. Most of the artifacts uncovered are drinking vessels and pipe stems.

1971

The Castle Hill Center for the Arts opens in a former barn in Truro.

1972

Thousands of people attend a rock concert staged at the Province Lands Visitor Center's amphitheater. Cars are parked all along Route 6 in Provincetown, and the crowds cover the dunes around the visitor center.

1973

A storm uncovers timbers from the *H.M.S. Somerset*, the British Man-of-War wrecked off Peaked Hill Bars in North Truro during the Revolutionary War. It is the first time remains of the wreck have been seen since the 1880s.

1974

The Marconi Station Site, commemorating Italian wireless inventor Guglielmo Marconi, is dedicated in a ceremony in South Wellfleet.

1975

The Dolphin Fleet whale watch is founded in Provincetown.

1976

The Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies is founded with a mission to conduct scientific research related to marine mammals and ecosystems of the North Atlantic. Since 1984, the Center has been freeing whales from life-threatening entanglements using a modification of an old whaling technique.

1977

The Old Harbor Life-Saving Station is moved from its original location at Old Harbor in Chatham due to concerns about erosion. After spending a winter

aboard a barge anchored in Provincetown Harbor, the 1898 station is relocated to Race Point Beach.

1978

The infamous Blizzard of '78 sweeps the Outermost House from the spit south of Eastham's Coast Guard Beach into the sea. The shack was immortalized in Henry Beston's account of his time living there in the 1920s.

The first Beach Apparatus Drill demonstration is performed at Coast Guard Beach in Eastham. Today the drill is performed every week in July and August at the Old Harbor Life-Saving Station at Race Point Beach.

1981

Cape Cod National Seashore celebrates its 20th anniversary.

The Eastham Painters Guild is founded. The Guild holds outdoor art shows throughout the summer on the lawn of the School House Museum in Eastham.

1985

The Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater is founded in a small, former nightclub beside Wellfleet Harbor. In 2007, WHAT opens the more accommodating Julie Harris Stage in a former post office building off Route 6 in Wellfleet, but still uses the original Harbor Stage for small productions.

The Peaked Hill Trust is founded in an effort to protect the dune shacks in the Province Lands. Today the non-profit organization manages some of shacks, and runs an artist-in-residence program in collaboration with the Castle Hill Center for the Arts, Provincetown Art Association and Museum, and the Fine Arts Work Center.

1986

The piping plover becomes a federally protected species under the Endangered Species Act.

1989

The Three Sisters Lighthouses in Eastham are restored and opened to the public.

The Keeper of the National Register determines that the dune shacks and the surrounding landscape are eligible to be listed as a historic district on the National Register.

1990

Eastham resident Dan Carns discovers the remains of a prehistoric hearth at Coast Guard Beach in Eastham. An archaeological survey of what is known as the Carns Site followed in 1991 and revealed a treasure trove of 2,000-year-old artifacts from the Middle Woodland Period, including shards of pottery, stone tools and projectile points.

1991

The Atlantic Ocean breaches the dunes at Ballston Beach in Truro during the Perfect Storm.

1993

The Provincetown Community Compact is founded. The non-profit organization runs the annual Swim for Life AIDS fundraiser in Provincetown, and manages artist-in-residence and writer-in-residence programs in the dune shacks.

1994

Cape Cod National Seashore is desig-

nated a prototype park in the National Park Service's Inventory and Monitoring Program, an effort to comprehensively catalogue and monitor flora and fauna in federally protected areas.

The National Seashore acquires the former North Truro Air Force Station. The 110-acre campus overlooking the Atlantic is now the site of the Highlands Center.

1995

A negotiated rule-making process began for off road vehicle use resulting in new regulations intended to provide management flexibility without additional threats to resources.

1996

Highland Light is moved 450 feet back from its precarious spot on the bluff in North Truro. Two weeks later, Nauset Light is moved back 300 feet from the edge of the cliff in Eastham.

1998

Cape Cod National Seashore's "Forging a Collaborative Future" General Management Plan is finalized.

2001

Cape Cod National Seashore celebrates its 40th anniversary.

2003

Marconi Day commemorates the 100th anniversary of the first two-way trans-Atlantic wireless communication, transmitted in Morse code between President Theodore Roosevelt and King Edward VII from stations in South Wellfleet and England on January 18, 1903.

2010

The North of Highland Camping Area in North Truro is permanently protected from development through a conservation easement managed by the National Park Service. The 57-acre campground was the largest remaining parcel of privately owned land within the National Seashore.

2011

Cape Cod National Seashore celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Scenic Routes and Overlooks



View of Nauset Marsh from Fort Hill area, Eastham

At Cape Cod National Seashore, opportunities for inspiration, reflection, and renewal abound. Use this information, in conjunction with the park map, to discover the drama of the ocean surf, or the subtle beauty of a cultural landscape. Allow 15 to 30 minutes at each site to take in the view, or walk to a scenic overlook.

Eastham

Fort Hill Area - off Route 6. Open fields, views of Nauset Marsh, historic Penniman House (occasional scheduled tours and open houses). Access to Red Maple Swamp Trail. Limited parking. Seasonal restrooms.

Coast Guard and Nauset Light beaches, Nauset and Three Sisters lighthouses - off Route 6 at the traffic light at Nauset Road near Salt Pond Visitor Center. Ocean View Drive in Eastham affords ocean and marsh views, and an opportunity to see historic lighthouses. Seasonal restrooms at beaches. Seasonal beach fee may apply. Highly congested in summer; spring and fall use recommended.

Wellfleet

Atwood-Higgins House - inquire at visitor centers for directions. 18th-century Cape house (occasional scheduled tours and open houses) accessed from true "back roads", to Bound Brook Island. Caution: Circuitous, narrow roads. Limited parking.

Marconi Station Site - off Route 6, at the traffic light at Marconi Station area. High sand cliffs above the ocean, and the history of Marconi and his wireless radio station. Interpretive exhibit. Overlook platform. Access to Atlantic White Cedar Swamp Trail. Seasonal restrooms.

Truro

Highland Lighthouse (Cape Cod Light) and Highland House - off Route 6, at the North Highland Road exit, North Truro. The oldest lighthouse on Cape Cod, and adjacent museum (open seasonally, fees). Overlook platform. Seasonal restrooms.

Pilgrim Heights - look for National Park Service sign off Route 6, North Truro. Viewpoint overlooks kettle hole, with distant views of the sand dunes of the Province Lands. Access to Pilgrim Heights Trail. Picnic area. Seasonal restrooms.

Provincetown

Old Harbor Life-Saving Station - at Race Point Beach, off Race Point Road. Historic structure at Race Point Beach (occasional scheduled open houses), with dune and ocean views. Seasonal beach fee may apply.

Race Point Road - off Route 6 at Race Point Road traffic light. Scenic, two-mile road through beech and oak forest, and the Province Lands dunes. Connects Race Point Beach to Province Lands Road. Herring Cove Beach loop (additional two miles). Access to Beech Forest Trail, Province Lands Bicycle Trail, and Province Lands Visitor Center (seasonal).