



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway
National Recreation Area

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Gateway News Release

For Immediate Release

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Date: January 13, 2012

Gateway begins coastal habitat pilot project at Crooke's Point in Great Kills Park

Gateway National Recreation Area has started the restoration of a two-acre pilot project at Crooke's Point, a section of Great Kills Park in Staten Island, to create a barrier island habitat. This project will replace non-native and invasive plant species with native trees and shrubs that will nurture a more diverse wildlife population at the coastal area. The National Park Service (NPS) is partnering with New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and MillionTreesNYC.

"Crooke's Point has so much potential as a natural area, but that potential is being smothered, literally, by invasives," commented Superintendent Linda Canzanelli. She noted that NPS policy encourages the replacement of invasives with native species whenever possible and practical. "With our partners, we can turn a good park into a great park for wildlife and environmentalists alike."

The park intends to create a small version of what is natural for a barrier island habitat in the New York Harbor area. A barrier island habitat with native plants will be more inviting for migratory birds and insects. Most of these habitats disappeared on Staten Island by the Twentieth Century. This month, the park will begin clearing paths 8-10 feet wide for access, spaced 30-40 feet apart, by using earth-moving equipment. In February, herbicides will be used in accordance with the Integrated Pest Management plan developed by the NPS Northeast Region. Use of herbicides will be limited in scope to avoid adverse environmental effects in the soil, water or wildlife. (At this writing, no herbicide has been proposed or selected for use.)

The work will be done in stages so as not to displace an entire habitat or population and will be minimally disruptive. The timeline for the pilot area's restoration concludes in October 2013, when MillionTreesNYC will donate trees and shrubs sourced from local populations. Herbaceous and grass species will be planted as well. If the pilot area is judged to be a success, the project will expand to other sections of Crooke's Point.

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Limited use of approved herbicides and earth-moving equipment is consistent with U.S. Executive Order 13112, which calls for the replacement of non-native and invasive species whenever practical and possible. For decades, the park has conducted a number of small vegetation projects with limited success. This new systematic effort, aided by partner organizations, offers a much better chance of success.

Great Kills Park was built by the New York City Department of Parks under the direction of Commissioner Robert Moses. Much of the land area of the park, including Crooke's Point, includes fill material dating back to the 1930s. Great Kills Park was transferred to the NPS in 1972 when Congress created Gateway National Recreation Area. Crooke's Point has been designated as a "natural area" permitting low-impact public use, such as fishing. Despite its reinvention as a park through use of landfill, Crooke's Point is an important resting and feeding habitat for migratory bird populations as well as migratory insects.

About Gateway National Recreation Area

Established in 1972, Gateway National Recreation Area offers more than 26,000 acres of marshes, wildlife sanctuaries and recreational athletic facilities, miles of sandy beaches; indoor and outdoor classrooms; picnicking and camping areas, as well as historic structures and military installations, airfields, a lighthouse, and adjacent waters around New York harbor. The park offers urban residents in two states a wide range of recreational opportunities year round. With more than nine million visitors a year, it is the third most visited national park in the country. For information about Gateway's upcoming public programs, see the park's Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/gate/index.htm>

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